

The following is a summation of the interview of Commissioner Paula DeLaney by EPAC member Douglas Lawson on the issue of the EPAC review of AEPD. The five key questions are listed with the commissioner's response to each immediately thereafter.

- Is EPD effective and efficient?

Commissioner DeLaney expressed that she was not in a position to answer for a department but her general impression is that EPD is both effective and efficient.

She mentioned that some of EPD's staffing is supported by grants and she understands that they try to get as much productivity as possible from those funds but that those services could be lost without the external funding.

- Do any of EPD's services duplicate services provided by other agencies?

To this question, Commissioner DeLaney laughed. She used the analogy that you wouldn't call the army to perform local law enforcement. She also believes that many community members feel that the State EPD wouldn't be as concerned as a local agency when it comes to local issues.

In general Commissioner DeLaney is very supportive of having the AEPD. If Alachua co didn't have an EPD, then she expects that Gainesville would have implemented one of its own.

- Does EPD faithfully carry out the Commission's policy guidance?

They attempt to execute the policies that have been laid out. Commissioner DeLaney thinks that it is challenging for any department or individual to appropriately interpret the comp plans set forth by the BoCC, but expects that the EPD tries to do so faithfully. Commissioner DeLaney does not think that EPD has ever overstepped beyond the guidance of the commission in the entire time that she has been involved in local government. She further stated that Chris has the utmost respect in the official process of local government and that he always tries to do things by the book. EPD takes a lot of the flak for the rules that the BoCC comes up. She recalls prior instances when the BoCC came up with new ordinances that they later retracted because they decided that they were unreasonable, but EPD took the blame for enforcing them in the interim.

- Should EPD's roles be changing given diminished budgets in other agencies (i.e. water management districts)?

Commissioner DeLaney stated that if a current service is critical for the environmental health for Alachua Co, then we need to make sure that services is still provided even if an partner agency decides to no longer provide it. If it was something that we never would have started without a partner, then we may have to let it go. She is concerned that we may get left without state support for things that Alachua County values more than people at the state level. It depends on what the topic is.

- What should EPD's future priorities be?

Commissioner DeLaney's prime directive is to stay on top of air and water monitoring. She has faith that the air monitoring will take care of itself, but that it is essential to have professional staff staying on top of the water policy. That is probably her most important environmental issue. Alachua county shouldn't be covering the costs for other other rural counties, but we should protect our own. She would like to see the EPD take a position on water consumption and protection and that they present recommendations to the BoCC to do likewise.

She has found in the past that water restrictions draw environmental protection to the top of people's policy concerns more than any other environmental impact.

General notes:

Commissioner DeLaney offered for one of us to speak to owners of Maddox (her family's business) as an example of a small manufacturing business, who gladly works closely with AEPD. She feels like her family business gladly works as partners with the AEPD (particularly with Gus) so that they can have as little negative impact on the environmental health of the community as possible.