

County Commission Meeting of September 23, 2014

Agenda Item #24 – the Settlement Agreement concerning the proposed gas station and convenience store at Crump and Miccosukee Roads.

Agreement was mediated among Leon County, Thelma Crump, William Glenn Brown and Keep It Rural, Inc.

Mike Rychlik's comments in support of the settlement agreement:

Sometimes adversity brings out the best in folks not the worst. Instead of allowing rancor and discord to predominate and break down communication, involved parties mediate in good faith to come to a mutually agreeable solution. Luckily, that is what we will celebrate here today, once our County commissioners do the right thing and vote to support the decisions made during the Crump and Miccosukee mediation process. All parties should be commended for their efforts.

The business applicant should be applauded for his willingness to take heed of the outcry from his neighbors by rescinding his gas station plan without making any profit. Of course, that means that both the county and the Keep it Rural coalition need to be commended for their willingness in this mediation to share in the expense of covering the applicant's basic monetary outlay.

Keep it Rural will forever be thankful for the efforts of both your County Attorney, Herb Thiele, and County Administrator, Vince Long, during this process. Not only did these two men help put a stop to this gas station proposal, they helped carve out a mediation agreement which could help eliminate any future gas stations on any of the endangered intersections in the Rural Future Land Use designated areas of Leon County, including our beloved corner of Miccosukee and Crump Road, which is why Keep it Rural is also very thankful for the bravery and the determination of Thelma Crump to join with us in this fight to save her grandfather's farmland. Throughout this very emotional ordeal, Thelma has faced the County, the press, and the public eye with courage, grace and style.

Finally, I must confess that being closely associated with the Keep it Coalition core group has been one of the most inspiring episodes of my life. Together we committed ourselves totally to this cause. We have written personal checks; we have fund-raised; we have repeatedly written to each and every one of our commissioners and their staff; we have attended and spoken at public hearings; we have met privately with staff and commissioners; we have put up handbills and posters; we have walked neighborhoods, we have solicited donors, we have held musical events, flea markets, silent auctions, Cajun dinners, and teach-ins and rallies. We are a determined bunch, but I believe that each and every one of our commissioners has come to realize that our hearts are full of nothing but love for the natural wonders of our County. Keep it Rural has never had anything to gain monetarily in this cause. We are an all-volunteer, non-profit organization. Every penny we raise and will continue to raise in this struggle

goes towards protecting the rural neighborhoods from what some have mistakenly called progress.

But progress does not have to be defined by corporate development and the spread of urban sprawl. And that's why Keep it Rural not only appreciates the concerted efforts of all parties involved during this mediation, but we have also been encouraged by our County commissioners and their staff's willingness to work together with us to help reshape the county's Land Development Code and its Comprehensive Plan.

We are allies not enemies in this journey, and our allegiance to this cause will not end today. Through the help and guidance of our learned and unpaid staff members, Dr. Pamela Hall, Jeff Blair, Rob Lombardo, Georgia Ackerman, Rick Zelznak, Laura Newton, Jerrie Lindsey, Terry Schneider, and Sarah Rychlik, we are crafting and fine-tuning our suggestions for amending the Comp Plan. Keep it Rural will be submitting our amendments in the next couple days, as we continue to volunteer our services and expertise to this County commission and to all of the good people of Leon County. Thank you, once again, Commissioners, and I encourage each of you to please support the approval of this mediation.