

ALACHUA COUNTY COMMISSION EMAILS

4/3/2019

Good Morning –

Here are some brief responses relative to your original email. We are pulling together additional information to share when it is available. As it relates to your request:

- ❑ We do not support the removal of any grass or plants. Practical experience suggests that turf replacement often fails due to lack of sustained interest by homeowners and original plantings are restored. As to St. Augustine, it is a biologically drought-tolerant turfgrass variety that is overwatered by some homeowners and routinely mislabeled as water thirsty. Even so, new turf varieties requiring less water and nutrients are being introduced regularly. In addition, homeowners are continuing to adopt water-conserving approaches to landscaping as evidenced by programs like Florida Friendly Landscaping and Florida Water Star, which we endorse when applied as written.
- ❑ We support the implementation and incentivizing of water conservation – the opportunities are plentiful and affordable with savings of 30-40% achievable in most instances. Let's try seatbelts before we get rid of the cars. As a parallel, consider what was happening in the mid 1990's with water use in the Southwest Florida Water Management District. The District was very concerned about water conservation and salt-water intrusion. Local governments and industry felt threatened and had their lawyers going at full speed as compliant permits were being targeted with burdensome rules and limitations. Then calmer heads prevailed. Leadership at the District got folks collaborating rather than fighting, incentives were put in place, alternative water supplies exploded, and water conservation became a wonderful norm. The battle was averted and goodwill among the District and those it regulates remains high even now, decades down the road – we're all still pulling the same rope. This should be a lesson to us all right now as the similarities are striking. Who is going to step up to the role of being a calmer head?
- ❑ Efficient irrigation design specifications need to be incorporated into the Florida Building Code – currently they are inexplicably a voluntary appendix. You all could be very influential in fixing this absurd situation.
- ❑ Industry professionals and their companies have various means of sharing education with their customers through invoice stuffers and otherwise. We have provided you with our brochure as an example.
- ❑ **We would encourage you to spend a few minutes with us in person. You might just like what you see and hear. We would welcome the opportunity**

to work with you and any local governments on these matters. In fact, we would encourage Alachua County to briefly defer this decision until further workshopping could happen. We believe there is significant additional data which would be useful to you in making a fully-informed decision. There may also be opportunities for reasonable and effective alternatives. This is not a stall tactic at all – a short time out would be useful for everyone and an investment in good policy making.

As a heads up, and given the drive to what feels like an up or down vote on a 9-month ban, you will be receiving a couple of fairly extensive informational emails from us in the next few days which speak candidly to key aspects of this issue. We respectfully request your thoughtful consideration of what you see.

Thank you.