

**MINUTES
PINE TREE WATER CONTROL DISTRICT
SPECIAL SUPERVISORS MEETING
HELD MONDAY, MARCH 23, 2026
AT TOWN OF LOXAHATCHEE GROVES
155 F ROAD
LOXAHATCHEE, FLORIDA 33470**

Pursuant to the foregoing notice, a meeting was held for the Pine Tree Water Control District Board of Supervisors on Monday, March 23, 2026 at 6:00 PM at Town of Loxahatchee Groves located at 155 F Road, Loxahatchee, Florida 33470

Members present were:	Kerry Hitt, Chairman Charles Brown, Supervisor Ruben Ferrazzano, Supervisor
Others Present:	Charles Schoech Eric Grainger Betty Camplin

1. Call the meeting to order

The meeting was called to order by Kerry Hitt, Chairman, on Monday, March 23, 2026 at 6:00 pm.

2. Everyone rise for the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. Consent Agenda
4. Betty Camplin presented the financial report for the period
5. Eric Grainager gave an engineer's report. Eric has been doing some background work and checking numbers on cost that were presented previously regarding some of the potential roadway improvements and general permit administration on various sites that have been making their way through the process right now.
6. Ruben Ferrazzano reported the squiggles. Ruben has a meeting with Patrick of Professional Grading on Wednesday at 9:00 AM.
7. Norris Road Pilot Program:

Mr. Charles Schoech reports that this is a multi-step procedure for a number of reasons. Sixty-six percentage of the benefited the property owners agreeing to do the pilot paving program. Once we have that vote the we need to have the engineer work with the district to amend the water control plan. Because this is a capital project it will require amendment to the water control plan which has to be presented to their board adoption and approval. The cost of the project needs to be determined and then once we have all that information we need to end up

at the conclusion with 51 plus 1 percent of the property owners agreeing so that we can move forward. Benefited property owners could include some of the property owners that are at the end of Norris Road on the adjacent road. That has to be determined with the engineer to determine that there is a benefit and whether it is the same benefit that the people on Norris Road receive. But it's not all the landowners within the district. It's only those benefiting from the pavement.

Eric Grainger benefit or not benefit would be if the road is paved starting on the eastern most limit where it connects into the existing paving road and it heads westbound, if it goes as far as the last driveway of the house that is addressed on Norris Road that would be limited to the residents on Norris Road because nobody on Skipiks or any other road is required to go down Norris Road. If they really wanted to go down a dirt road still, they could down one road North and travel East or West. So that would be my opinion if you are talking about strictly limiting it to the benefit of the Norris Road benefits you would run the paving as far as last entrance driveway of properties that are addressed on Norris Road and no further. It's not a dead-end street so we don't need a turnaround or cul-de-sac. It would just be the end of pavement. Similar to what is happening now when you come off the main road where it is paved. If it continues beyond there and all the way to the intersection of the next street, then I think we need to start having a conversation or not whether it benefits other residents. Again, they aren't forced to use the road. It wouldn't be the stop sign, it would be the last driveway.

Mr. Charles Schoech said you need to have the Board authorize moving forward and then we can put all the steps in place to allow the property owners on Norris to ultimately make the decision as to whether or not they want the road paved.

Kerry Hitt asked Mr. Schoech if we make a vote to move ahead with this, then do we also have an opportunity to layout the criteria that's needed to address not just the paving of the roads, not just the horse trails but a combination of paving of the roads, horse trails, the swales being covered, the entire engineering system. All of that has to be addressed and we're not locked into anything until we address that, is that correct?

Mr. Charles Schoech says that's correct.

Kerry Hitt makes a motion that Pine Tree move forward with the Pilot Project for Norris Road and the criteria for making that decision is going to be looked at after the vote is done.

Mr. Schoech says Kerry can't make that motion because he's chairing the meeting, but he can second the motion.

Charles Brown makes a motion to vote on the approval of Norris Road Pilot project. This has been discussed before and actually approved several months ago. The Pilot project is an advance of the ultimate vote. I make a motion to vote on the Norris Road Pilot project to move to an ultimate vote. Kerry Hitt seconds the motion.

Eri Grainger said just to clarify you're voting on right now is to move forward with the pilot project and initial evaluation. So that would include time that I would spend on cost estimating and the preliminary plans. Those will be suitable for getting a preliminary estimate. And as we mentioned earlier there are contingencies built into the estimates to cover us for unexpected costs for unforeseen circumstances and we also put a 20% contingency on top of that because of the fluctuation of the prices of oil and some of the other costs right now that are varying daily. The big cost that we are talking about for this, you will recall we upped the budget for annual administrative fees to include the fact that the roadway project was going to be a known project that we were evaluating this year. So, we already increased that by 50% when we did the vote last October. The budget was approved for the 2025-2026 we had already built in an additional fee because we knew this project was going to be discussed and evaluated. That's already in there. But the cost of preparing the plans and design which is a large number wouldn't move forward and wouldn't be applicable until we get through the initial phase. We asked people to vote on it based on the budgeted numbers and then if it's approved to move forward at the 51% then the actual design fees come into play.

Charles Schoech says if you're contemplating a financing and you're going to do a bond issue or a promissory note through a bank, you have the ability to adopt a resolution prior to the financing which allows you to be reimbursed from the cost of the financing for all of the engineering and design work. So, if the district were to spend money and you have adopted that resolution then you go forward with the financing, the financing would include those costs and the district would be reimbursed from the financing for those costs. So, it wouldn't come from the pocket of anyone except those on Norris.

Kerry Hitt asked where is the financing going to come from?

Mauricio Urbina says the Village of Wellington has agreed to finance the project. They have agreed to either secure the bond or finance it themselves.

Kerry Hitt asks Mr. Schoech, one question about that is, so you said we can apply to get the money paid back as the project goes through. What happens if we pay for the engineering costs and the vote is, we don't get the two thirds vote. So, the engineering has been done. Who's stuck for it? Is it still the taxpayers?

Mr. Charles Schoech says It's a district responsibility. And then the question is how much of that is Wellington willing to absorb? But it's either gonna be Wellington or Pine Tree.

Kerry Hitt: Or can it be stipulated upfront that it is paid for by who wants to do the road?

Eric Grainger: We don't know who that is yet, Kerry, because it hasn't been taken yet.

Kerry Hitt: We do, we do.

Eric Grainager: Well, no, but we determined at the last meeting, and it's been brought up three times now, 67%, no, or whatever it was. It was determined at the last meeting that that ballot was so poorly written that it was confusing. And it was throwing numbers out there like \$12 million.

Charles Brown: I would like to amend my motion and cap the engineer at \$10,000 limit. Kerry Hitt seconds the motion.

Charles Brown: All in favor of doing the pilot program on Norris Road with a spending cap of \$10,000, in favor raise your hand.

Mr. Schoech says there's a motion and a second to a motion to amend the previous motion to include a \$10,000 cap. Of the three board members all in favor signify by saying aye. Kerry yes, Charles Brown Yes and Ruben Ferrazzano No. So, the amendment passes (2-1). All those in favor of moving the pilot project forward with a \$10,000 cap signify by aye. Kerry yes, Charles yes and Ruben No. So that motion carries 2-1.

Kerry Hitt says the next step is have the engineer go through and start putting costs together.

Charles Schoech says and we will ask for a vote of the residents to determine that there are 66% of landowners on Norris that want to proceed.

Aldo asked if we have to wait 90 days until the next meeting?

Charles Schoech said No. I will get with Mr. Barnes and I will get with Kerry and we will move it forward.

Mauricio Urbina asked Mr. Schoech Is there any way for the residents to communicate as to the progress and how to better assist the board so that the process doesn't get so bad?

Mr. Schoech say there certainly should be. So let me discuss that with the chairman, and let's see if we can put something in place so that you are informed and aren't sitting in the dark.

Whatever communication you have with the people of Norris is shared with the rest of the community so we know updates and everything that's going on.

Mr. Schoech says it's a public record, so the answer to your question is yes. We'll just make sure it's available, and I'll sit down with them and see if we can put together a program so that you have that information.

We can set up a special meeting once we get together with Mr. Schoech, Mr. Barnes, myself, and Eric...

Mr. Schoech says yes, we can.

How about what we'll do is we'll get together and do that, and the meeting, we need a two-week notice. Is that correct for the cards to go out? It's a seven-day advertised notice. OK.

We have two more things we need to discuss. One is the discussion on making Pine Tree Water Control District a dependent district of Wellington. And we need to do that with a vote. And that has to be with a vote of the people. And there is a proxy form that has been done, has

been approved by Mr. Schoech. It is on our website. And we need to set up the time for a vote for that. Is that something that we need to work out the procedure further, Mr. Schoech?

Mr. Charles Schoech says Yeah, I think we need to sit down and have a discussion and work out that procedure. But just so everyone knows, the proxy pursuant to Chapter 298 of the Florida Statutes has to be signed by the property owner. If it's not signed by the property owner, it's not a valid proxy. It can be sent in person by the US Mail or by fax or any other electronic means. But it must be signed by the property owner. And that information is on the web page.

Jenny Carlson asked Mr. Schoech. It seems like this is dated for only the June meeting. Is that correct? So, this is only for the annual election meeting? Proxy is dated for the June 16, 2026 meeting?

Charles Schoech says I did a sample proxy. It was my understanding that when I did the proxy, it was for voting at that meeting. If it's going to be used for something other than that, it'll have to be modified.

Kerry Hitt: OK, let's work on getting that modified. And we'll put that proxy out. And we should do one just for the pine tree dependency with Wellington. Would that work, Mr. Schoech?

Mr. Charles Schoech says yes.

Mr. Schoech say dependency with Wellington means that you will not elect your own board. The Wellington commissioners will be the Pine Tree board.

Okay. I have a question. Go ahead, Laura. I'm glad you mentioned that these proxies need to be signed by the homeowner, which leads me to my next question, Mr. Schoech. You haven't responded to me.

Charles Schoech: I responded to the board. And I will be happy to tell you what my response was. I researched the issue of contesting elections. Florida has an election code. The election code is several state statutes combined to be the election code. It applies to county, city, and state elections and elections that are conducted through the supervisor of elections office. It does not apply to special districts that have landowner meetings and one acre, one vote

elections. And there is absolutely nothing in the statutes that address the issue of contesting an election for special districts with the one acre, one vote. In researching this, it is my legal opinion that in order to contest an election, back up, the election code also says that the contest of the election has to be by filing an action in the circuit court within 15 days of the election. It is my opinion that in order to contest an election of a special district, it also requires a lawsuit to be filed in the circuit court within a reasonable time after the election. I reviewed a number of the proxies. A number of the proxies were improperly executed or they were not executed at all, not signed. And it's my opinion that at this point in time, it's too late to contest that election. The board has been seated for six months or more and that the proxies need to be reviewed in June for the June election to make sure that they are properly signed by the landowner. If they are not, they will not be counted.

Laura: Which statute are you getting the 15 days from?

Charles Schoech: It's the state election code.

Aubry Burke: The signatures of the landowner be notarized?

Charles Schoech: They do not have to be notarized.

Aubrey Burke: So, where's the authenticity there?

Charles Schoech: The statute says it has to be signed by the landowner. That's all the statute says. It does not require a notary. There are two statutes that come into play. The first statute is chapter 298, which says that it must be signed. There's also a statute, I don't have the number in front of me, dealing with proxies. That statute doesn't even require the proxy to be signed. It requires evidence that it is being sent by the landowner. So, if it came from the landowner's email address, that would be evidence. But 298 overrides that and says it must be signed. But the statute dealing with proxies says that it does not have to be hand-delivered. It can be sent by fax or email. But there's no requirement for a proxy to be notarized.

Ruben Ferrazzano: What is the law on signatures? Can you print? Does it have to be cursive? Can it be an X? I mean,

Charles Schoech: yes, it can be an X. And yes, if the person prints their signature, we would have to verify that that is, in fact, that person's way of signing their name. But an X could be a valid signature. As you well know, some signatures are totally illegible. And you have no idea what the name is. But if there's a question, the law in Florida is that the person can verify their vote. So, if there's a questionable ballot, somebody checked the little circle instead of filling it in solid, you can get the person to verify that it was their vote. It's my opinion that if there's a question as to whether the X or the printed name is their signature, we would have to ask the property owner to verify that that, in fact, is their signature or their mark and that it is a valid proxy. But I think there's no issue that it was not signed by the landowners. There were several that were not signed by the landowners.

Laura: I guess my question is, where are we getting the 15 days that had to have been filed in circuit court? The election code states 15 days. I said for the special districts that it has to be a reasonable period of time following the election. And it's my opinion that it's too late to contest that election at this point.

That's your opinion? Correct. Okay. All right.

Kerry Hitt: The meeting is set for June 15th. However, it looks like we're going to have a meeting after we get together and make a decision on the voting within the next couple of weeks, I would think.

Charles Schoech said Well, I would recommend that you do the voting for the issue of the dependent district question at the annual landowners meeting, which is the June 15th meeting.

I think that way you can do everything with the single proxy. Because that proxy is for any action that the landowner would be entitled to vote on at that meeting.

Kerry Hitt: I think we've had enough board comments. Are there any more?

Betty Camplin: Mr. Schoech, do we need a vote to accept the proxy? Or that's it?

Charles Schoech: You don't have to, but I think it would be a good idea to have on the record a vote of the board to approve the form of the proxy. So, we'd need a motion by one of the board members to approve the form of the proxy.

Ruben Ferrazzano made a motion to accept the proxy as presented and posted online. Kerry Hitt second the motion. All those in favor? Aye. I think that vote is three to zero.

There being no further business motion made by Ruben Ferrazzano and second by Kerry Hitt to adjourn meeting at 8:21 pm.