

County holds One Charlotte, One Water Town Hall

By Hector Flores

Thank you to the residents who attended the Jan. 31 One Charlotte, One Water town hall at the Charlotte Harbor Event and Conference Center. Presenters used interactive tools to solicit feedback on the many issues surrounding water quality. They also briefed attendees on the history of water policy, current challenges and ongoing testing and monitoring projects. Staff also provided an update on the One Charlotte, One Water plan, which will be completed soon and presented to the County Commission for review.

The One Water concept behind the plan follows the U.S. Water Alliance's philosophy of treating all water — whether from the tap, a stream, a storm, an aquifer, or a sewer — in a collaborative, integrated manner. The goal is to explore all the issues before us and develop solutions. The approach is holistic and inclusive, taking into account all stakeholders, present and future, to ensure water quality.

During the input segment of the town hall, we asked attendees what concerned them most about water; what they knew about stormwater management methods; how familiar they were with the county's comprehensive plan; what they thought about the conditions of our canal system; drinking water quality; wastewater treatment methods; and what they would like to see the One Charlotte, One Water plan address. You can see the responses on the One Charlotte, One Water page on the county website. Visit www.CharlotteCountyFL.gov/OneCharlotteOneWater.

Public input

The town hall concluded a whirlwind two weeks of public input meetings, including a session to review the plans for the new Port Charlotte Beach Park recreation center and one to solicit input on the Burnt Store Road East-West Connector study.

There's an opportunity for residents to provide input on another important issue, the county's new watershed plan. We're looking for input on any impacts from flooding they may have experienced. To participate in the online survey, visit tinyurl.com/floodinput. The survey closes at 5 p.m. on Aug. 1, 2024.

This input will help us identify additional areas of concern. The input and ultimately the plan will provide us with a better understanding of how and where stormwater and flooding occur after rain events.

Readers may reach County Administrator Hector Flores at Hector.Flores@CharlotteCountyFL.gov.