

# Cox: ‘If you’re going to maintain a fishing industry in Taylor County, you’re going to have to have a spot to load, unload’

## SEAFOOD

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Infrastructure Fund (RIF) grant the county received from Florida Commerce for the project.

During a lengthy discussion, both English and Moody raised objections to the proposal, along with several commercial fishermen from Keaton Beach, who said they spent their own money to secure offloading sites for their respective businesses.

Meanwhile, three commercial fishermen from Steinhatchee, including Capt. Jim Zurbrick, who had championed the study since it was first proposed last year, spoke on the need for a site to offload commercial catches after losing access to the remaining marinas in Steinhatchee and Jena.

Ultimately, the board passed a pair of motions, both in 3-1 votes, to reject the proposed contract with Lampl Herbert and to reject the grant outright.

Commissioner Michael Newman, who had proposed the commission seek the grant last year, did not speak during Monday’s discussion except to voice his “no” vote on both motions. Commissioner Pam Feagle was not present at the meeting, as she continues to recover from hip surgery.

The discussion began with County Grants Writer Melody Cox asking the commission to approve the contract with Lampl Herbert after awarding the bid to the company at its Sept. 8 meeting.

However, once Cox concluded her presentation, English said, “I would like to speak a little bit on this. I know we do have some citizens here that would probably like to speak as well.

“First, I’ll say we do have some of the best fishing that the Gulf Coast has to offer in the state of Florida,” English said. “We’ve heard a lot of positives on this item that we’ve talked about over the course of the last year.

“I would just say that there’s been quite a few – several folks – that have reached out about the negative impacts that this could potentially have on our local fishermen. Long term, it really could affect our local tourism on our coast,” English added.

English then asked to hear from those in the audience who wanted to speak on the matter.

Zurbrick was first, stating, “I’ve been involved with this from day one. The governor came and handed us \$300,000. The governor wanted to see seafood in a community that is notorious for producing seafood for years and years, long before we generated a huge recreational industry, which we have.

“We can coexist. This is a feasibility study. If it turns out to be that it doesn’t fit Steinhatchee, then that’s going to show up in the feasibility study.

“I think everyone knows that my wife and I just had to make a huge investment



Steinhatchee commercial fishing Capt. Jim Zurbrick (right), shown above addressing the Taylor County Commission, championed the county applying for a Rural Infrastructure Fund (RIF) last year to fund a feasibility study exploring the creation of a commercial seafood off-loading, processing and distribution facility in Steinhatchee. At Monday’s board meeting, he again argued for the need of an offloading facility along with several other Steinhatchee captains. However, other captains from Keaton Beach urged the commission to stop the project, stating that they had purchased their own offloading locations and expressed concerns that a county-owned facility could attract larger commercial enterprises that would threaten local businesses. The commission ultimately voted 3-1 to stop work on the study and return the grant back to Florida Commerce.

to bring seafood over to Taylor County,” Zurbrick said, noting that the captains he works with lost the ability to unload at local marinas.

“We did this as a band-aid,” he said. “I have five fishermen, five boats, two guys on a boat. That’s 10 people that, if I didn’t go out and invest at my age to do that, they don’t have a place to land fish.

“That’s why we have working waterfronts. Working Waterfronts is not designed to set up a playground for kids to play next to the water. It’s designed to be an economic engine.

“We can limit this thing. Some people are thinking 25, 30 slips, a marina type of seafood facility. That’s not what any of us really envisioned. We envisioned a number of slips for the people we have here. Plus, what happens when two fishermen retire? Does that mean we just don’t replace them?

“It sends the wrong message to fishermen when you say, no, I think we’re just going to let you die out in Taylor County, and we’ll replace you with recreational folks,” Zurbrick said.

“I know some of the folks are not happy that the government might provide a facility. But keep in mind, the facility is not free. If we did go the cooperative route, people are going pay for slip rents,” Zurbrick said.

Next to address the commission was Capt. Paul Reeves, who said, “Basically, we’re being pushed out. We just don’t have the dock space at the marinas to work out of anymore. We’re literally going up and down the river looking for a place to tie up, trying to unload our fish and keep our businesses going.

“That’s where we think this is a great opportunity to at least do a feasibility study, because we’re just being pushed out,” Reeves said. “We just got pushed out of another marina. Jim stepped up a lot, so at least we put that fire out right now. There’s not space for us anymore. They want to build condos.”

Next to speak was Capt. Howie Woods of Keaton Beach, who voiced his

opposition to the feasibility study.

“I’m going to represent Woody’s Fisheries. We started our business in 2006 -- myself, my son Eric Woods, my late wife Pam Woods and Eric’s wife, Hannah.

“We started in 2006 when the [Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ)] just started. We’ve been in the fishing business ever since then. We knew going into it that we were going to have to buy a boat with a permit on it. Then, we realized we had to have a federal offload approved spot. When we got back to Keaton, we designated three different places.

“One was Keaton Beach boat ramp, one was the marina at Keaton Beach and then one was at my house. We stepped out and made sure that we had those spots. When the marina closed, that’s where our primary place was. We knew if we stayed in business, we would have to get a better spot. We stepped up and went in debt and bought another lot which had deep water,” Woods said.

“It doesn’t feel good to me that we’re gonna go down there and pretty much develop a big facility. My biggest fear is – what we’re trying to head off – is you put a big facility in. It’s going kind of feel like the old gas station operator, the ‘mom and pops’ go out of business, and it’s gonna be designed for the bigger boys.”

William Padgett spoke next, stating, “He’s right, commercial fishing is getting pushed out. But it’s not the land and the ability to do it. What’s pushing that is the IFQ.

“If you build this facility, the one with IFQ is going to make all the money,” Padgett said. “The ones that are out there catching the fish are going to make \$2 a pound. There’s no way to keep this thing small. If you take it, they’re coming in. I just want to tell my grandkids I’ve done everything I can do to stop (it).”

English asked Padgett if he had an offload location, and Padgett said he had two.

“You’ve got to keep in mind, Taylor County doesn’t allow a boat to

pull in and unload its catch on the docks (at public boat ramps),” Zurbrick interjected. “You can’t unload stone crab traps at the Steinhatchee boat ramp. You can put a boat in and take a boat out with fish on it, but there is no unloading.”

Next to speak was Jason Cox, a local stone crabber.

“I respectfully understand everybody’s concerns that they have,” he said. “I’d just like to add that I also have a house in Keaton Beach where I crab out of.”

Jason Cox said his biggest concern was that sometime in the future the county would prohibit him from unloading at his house.

“I’ve seen it,” he said. “I’m not from Taylor County originally. I’ve been here 17 years, but I’ve come from South Florida. Sooner or later, people are going to want to stop us from being able to load and unload and work out of our homes. It’s going to happen. I’m already hearing the complaints. If you’re going to maintain a fishing industry in Taylor County, you’re going to have to have a spot to load and unload.

“I understand everybody’s concerns about building a big facility and letting it get out of hand. That’s a concern that we should be able to work through and try to mitigate. But sooner or later, we’re going to have to have a place,” Jason Cox said.

The last person to address the commission was Mike Hunter, who described himself as a recreational fisherman.

“I support business people trying to work, trying to make a living. I work, trying to make a living. I also know that when I’m recreational fishing and I pull up on those commercial boats or I see them come in, and they’re offloading tons and tons of fish, it limits my catch,” Hunter said.

“I spend a lot of money to go out there to recreational fish,” Hunter said. “So do a lot of people. If we can’t go out there and catch our limit because these guys can just haul them in... I’m not against the ones that’s getting along, but if you build a fishery here in our county and create more,

and they come in from South Florida, West Florida, wherever they come from, with bigger, bigger boats like I see in Tampa and Panama City, I see commercial fishermen, our sports fishermen and charter fishermen will come in with fewer catches because they get fished out.”

“Obviously, we know we have some of the best fishing in our Gulf waters in the state of Florida,” English said after the speakers were finished. “There’s a lot of different moving parts to this item.

“The commercial fishermen that we’ve heard speak built their businesses and have a plan. We have offloading sites today with some of our local fishermen, and they have visions to have fish houses and they’re spending their own money, investing their own time in permitting all this stuff. And, to see the county go in and put a facility such as this in, you’re almost working against what guys have done for years and years,” English continued.

“I feel like if we’re going to go in and put something like this, and some of these guys have put all their money in it to do just what we’re about to do, why don’t we just give them their money back? One of the guys may have spoken on how they don’t have anywhere to offload. A lot of these guys didn’t have anywhere to offload.

“And, I’ll go even further than that. Other businesses in our community would probably like to expand their business, but is the county going to go pay to expand their business? We’re in trucking, and we might like to get in the logging business. Is the county going to give us the money to get in the logging business? I don’t think so.”

“I don’t see that as expanding business,” one of the captains said. “I see it as preservation.”

“We don’t want a big facility,” Zurbrick said. “The last thing we want to do is invite South Florida up here. We just want a piece of dirt to work from.”

Ultimately, English said he could not support moving forward with the feasibility study.

“Y’all who got businesses

down there, y’all been getting by some kind of way, unloading and loading on somebody’s lot or something,” Commissioner Jim Moody said. “If I was going to start a restaurant, the first thing I’d do is buy a piece of property to build it on. I’m not for the taxpayers building a place for fishermen or restaurants or anything else. I’m looking out for the general public more than I am individuals.

“If you want to unload your boat, you need to band together and buy a lot or two where you can build your own business,” Moody said.

Cox reiterated his concern that the county could in the future prohibit him and other commercial captains from operating from their lots.

“Can this county commission guarantee that in five or 10 years that you’re not going to vote and demand that we stop commercial activity there, because I promise you, I’ve seen it in virtually every other spot in the state,” Cox said. “People are banned from using their houses to park their boats at and load and unload fish.”

Moody admitted that it was a possibility, noting that he has seen people move into the county’s coastal communities and then complain about the commercial activities. However, he said he would not vote for any such restrictions during his tenure on the commission.

Back in 2020, Moody proposed allowing commercial crabbers to use a county-owned lot at Keaton Beach for loading and unloading, but ultimately dropped the idea after nearby property owners and other commissioners at the time raised objections.

“I hate to say it, but the only thing I know I eat from the saltwater is a mullet,” Commissioner Thomas Demps said. “Do you need all this to get that other fish? Is there any other fish out there besides them?”

County Administrator LaWanda Pemberton pointed out the commission had approved applying for the grant last year, agreed to go out for bids for consulting firms to conduct the study this past summer and awarded the bid last month.

English acknowledged the commission’s previous actions, but added that he was not opposed to turning back the grant.

At the end of the discussion, Moody made a motion to reject the grant and notify Florida Commerce. The county had not yet received the funding, so no financial transfers will be required.

Demps seconded, and the measure passed 3-1 with Newman voting against.

Moody then made a motion to reject the contract with Lampl Herbert to conduct the study. This time, English passed the gavel to second the motion, which also passed 3-1 with Newman voting against.

## LEGALS

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TIME PERIODS SET FORTH ABOVE, ANY CLAIM FILED TWO (2) YEARS OR MORE AFTER THE DECEDENT'S DATE OF DEATH IS BARRED. The date of first publication of this Notice is October 2, 2026. Personal Representative CAROLYN JAYNE MCCALL c/o Sally Roberts, PO Box 2026, Perry, FL 32348, Attorney for Personal Representative: Sally Roberts Florida Bar No. 102816, PO Box 2026, Perry, FL 32348, Telephone: 850-584-3812.

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE THIRD JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, IN AND FOR TAYLOR COUNTY, FLORIDA  
CASE NO. 25000057CAAXMX

LAKEVIEW LOAN SERVICING, LLC; Plaintiff, vs.  
ASHLEY MARIE BATTON, ET. AL; Defendants

### NOTICE OF SALE

NOTICE IS GIVEN that, in accordance with the Order Granting Plaintiff's Motion to Reschedule Foreclosure Sale dated August 14, 2026, in the above-styled cause, I will sell to the highest and best bidder for cash at the east steps of the Taylor County Courthouse at 108 North Jefferson Street, Perry, Florida, 32347, on October 15, 2026, at 11:00 AM the following described property: COMMENCE AT THE NORTHWEST CORNER OF THE SOUTHEAST 1/4 OF THE NORTHEAST 1/4 OF SECTION 19, TOWNSHIP 4 SOUTH,

RANGE 8 EAST, TAYLOR COUNTY, FLORIDA: THENCE RUN SOUTH 0 DEGREES 16 MINUTES 24 SECONDS EAST ALONG THE FORTY LINE 20.0 FEET; THENCE RUN NORTH 89 DEGREES 42 MINUTES 04 SECONDS EAST 33.11 FEET TO THE INTERSECTION OF THE EAST RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF ELLISON ROAD AND THE SOUTH RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF HOLLEY DRIVE FOR THE POINT OF BEGINNING; THENCE RUN NORTH 89 DEGREES 32 MINUTES 13 SECONDS EAST 20 MINUTES 34 SECONDS EAST 126.24 FEET; THENCE RUN SOUTH

89 DEGREES 32 MINUTES 13 SECONDS WEST 315.22 FEET TO THE SAID EAST RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF ELLISON ROAD; THENCE RUN NORTH 00 DEGREES 24 MINUTES 52 SECONDS WEST ALONG SAID EAST RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE 126.23 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING. SAID PARCEL CONTAINING 0.91 ACRES, MORE OR LESS. Property Address: 470 N ELLISON RD, PERRY, FL 32347  
ANY PERSON CLAIMING AN INTEREST IN THE SURPLUS FROM THE SALE, IF ANY, OTHER THAN THE PROPERTY OWNER AS OF THE DATE OF THE LIS PENDENS MUST FILE A CLAIM BEFORE THE CLERK REPORTS THE SURPLUS AS UNCLAIMED. THE COURT, IN ITS DISCRETION, MAY ENLARGE THE TIME OF THE SALE.

NOTICE OF THE CHANGED TIME OF SALE SHALL BE PUBLISHED AS PROVIDED HEREIN. WITNESS my hand on 29th day of September, 2026.  
Kathryn Lago  
Deputy Clerk of Court, Taylor County

### ADVERTISEMENT OF SALE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the undersigned intends to sell or dispose of personal property described below to enforce a lien imposed on said property under the Florida Self-Storage Facility Act Statutes (section 83.801-83.809).

The undersigned will dispose or sell by silent bidding on the 17th day of October 2026, at 10:00 am, on the premises where said property has

been stored and which are located at Lock & Key Mini Storage, 1309 S Jefferson St., Perry, County of Taylor, State of Florida, the following:  
Margie Medley D46  
Jennetta Miller A19  
Courtney Williams A14  
Ebony Pigford E26  
Mandy Blue A34  
Dewayne Williams E17  
Quental Harris D30

Purchases must be paid for at time of auction, in cash only! Or, pay with Credit Card (4% fee will be applied) All purchased items sold as is where is and must be removed and unit cleaned at the time of sale. Sale subject to cancellation in the event of settlement between owner and obligated party.  
Dated this 7th day of October, 2026.