



**Position Statement UPDATE
SECO Special Use Permit**

Horse Farms Forever® has updated its position from Opposition to **Neutral** on the application by Sumter Electric Cooperative (SECO) for a Special Use Permit to build a utility company service yard on 3 parcels inside the CR 475A Visual Enhancement Gateway Development Overlay Zone (Overlay Zone) for the Florida Horse Park.

In February, Horse Farms Forever issued a position statement in opposition to an application from SECO for a Special Use Permit to allow a utility company service yard on parcels with a zoning classification of Community Business B-2. At that time, it was our position that the application for a Special Use Permit violated the intent and integrity of the Overlay Zone for the Florida Horse Park.

Since that position statement was issued in February, Horse Farms Forever has had multiple interactions with the leadership of SECO seeking to address the concerns of both the organization and our many members in that area. At the same time, SECO has been an active partner in seeking to fulfill their nonprofit role as a community service provider while being respectful of the intent and integrity of the Overlay Zone.

The Overlay Zone helps protect the rural character of the area along CR 475A, which is the gateway to the Florida Horse Park and the Cross Florida Greenway. The Overlay Zone is a good example of how the County's Comprehensive Plan helps to protect horse farms and rural areas. Without it, the character of that area could be threatened by intense development driven by population growth.

SECO agreed to make significant changes to their original site and building plans to align with the intent of the Overlay Zone and the concerns of the neighbors. The SECO leadership is to be congratulated on their willingness to listen and address those concerns. We especially wish to thank Curtis Wynn, Chief Executive Officer, and Tracy de Lemos, Vice President and General Counsel, for their sincere willingness to act respectfully and responsibly in an effort to be a good neighbor.

Horse Farms Forever® Mission

The mission of Horse Farms Forever® is to inspire conservation of horse farms through education, awareness, and idea exchange so as to preserve the character and culture that horses and the Farmland Preservation Area make unique to Marion County. We are watchful of government and others to preserve and protect horse farms and farmland for future generations, especially in the Farmland Preservation Area. We are neither anti-growth nor anti-development, rather encouraging urban growth to remain inside the Urban Growth Boundary.



Horse Farms Forever® is registered with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services as a charitable organization and approved as a tax-exempt 501 (C) (3) corporation by the Internal Revenue Service. Horse Farms Forever does not have a political mission. Our status as a 501(c)(3) charitable organization does not allow us to participate or intervene in political activities. The organization will neither advocate on behalf of political candidates nor advocate for the passage of legislation.