

Absentees abundant for today's Collier Commission/Naples City joint meeting

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Three elected officials will not be in attendance at today's joint Naples City Council and Collier County commission meeting.

Commissioners [Georgia Hiller](#) and [Tom Henning](#) will not be at today's meeting. Neither will Councilwoman [Teresa Heitmann](#). All three officials had a scheduling conflict.

"We get together once every four years and this is something that should be important to everyone that we sit down at the table at least as a group that represents (Naples and Collier County)," Naples Mayor [Bill Barnett](#) said.

Barnett said he didn't "even want to go there" when asked if he felt like commissioners intentionally snubbed Council.

"I don't want to say it's intentional, I don't want to say they don't care," Barnett said. "We have a good relationship with the county, our staffs work together every day. I have a good relationship (with county commissioners)."

Barnett said he plans to bring up the absences at the beginning of today's meeting.

Heitmann, who is on the chair of the Florida League of Cities environment and energies committee, is in Washington, D.C. meeting with elected officials. Heitmann, when reached by

phone this morning, said she felt it was important for her to be at the league's meetings.

“Being that there's not going to be a vote (at the joint meeting), it was really important that I come here today,” she said.

Henning this morning said he was invited to hear Gov. Rick Scott speak at the CATO Institute's Naples Policy Perspective. Henning said when he accepted the invitation there was nothing on his calendar for the day, and that county staff and commissioners knew he would not be able to attend today's meeting.

Hiller could not immediately be reached for comment this morning, but on Tuesday said she also planned to attend the CATO Institute event.

Henning said the conflict wasn't an intentional snub, and hoped the city and county would be able to better coordinate future meetings.

“It think it's a very important workshop today,” he said.

City Manager Bill Moss said he was informed of the commissioners absences late Tuesday afternoon. Moss said the city invited commissioners to have a meeting in early December, and on Dec. 20 Moss and County Manager Leo Ochs agreed that Feb. 9 would appear to work best for a joint meeting.

There are four items on today's agenda: Discussions about increased funding for parks and recreation programs, beach renourishment, the city's request to convert a portion of Goodlette-Frank Road into U.S. 41 as a bypass to downtown

and use of the boat ramp at Naples Landing are expected to dominate the conversation.

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