



ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes

New Port Richey – Public Library
Thursday – June 1, 2023 – 6:00 p.m.

The Environmental Committee of the City of New Port Richey develops and endorses environmental events in the City, renders annual and special reports as members may deem advisable, and explores new environmental initiatives for the City. The ECCNPR was established in 1989 and recreated in 2011.

ANY PERSON DESIRING TO APPEAL ANY DECISION, WITH RESPECT TO ANY MATTER CONSIDERED AT ANY MEETING OR HEARING, WILL NEED A RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS AND MAY NEED TO ENSURE THAT A VERBATIM RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS IS MADE, WHICH INCLUDES THE TESTIMONY AND EVIDENCE UPON WHICH THE APPEAL IS TO BE BASED. THE LAW DOES NOT REQUIRE TRANSCRIBED VERBATIM MINUTES; THEREFORE, THE APPLICANT MUST MAKE THE NECESSARY ARRANGEMENTS WITH A PRIVATE REPORTER (OR PRIVATE REPORTING FIRM) AND BEAR THE RESULTING EXPENSE. (F.S.286.0105)

Welcome

Roll Call: Dell deChant, Committee Chair; Linda Blake, Secretary; Amber Blais, member; Len Gravitz, member; Tom O'Neil, member (He was approved at City Council); Andrea Figart, City Liaison; Daniella Bernal, City Marketing Specialist.

Rob Marlowe, Potential Alternate Member. This evening is his second official meeting.

Absent: Rose Mohr, Vice-Chair; Tia Rowe, member.

Guests: Don Blake, City Resident; D'Anne Dougherty, City Resident; Terri Maluk, City Resident.

Vox Pop (3 minutes for members of the audience – on items not on the agenda) Terri lives on Montana Avenue. D'Anne lives on Delaware. Sable Palm Alley runs behind properties on Montana and Delaware but dead ends behind D'Anne and Terri's properties. The City wants to reopen the alley, at least in part. Grand old trees could be cut down, and it appears that Gopher Turtles would be impacted. The City has asked Terri to move a shed that was constructed in her backyard, even though the City permitted and inspected the structure only seven years ago. Terri said she was working on a petition for her neighbors to sign.

By unanimous vote, the Environmental Committee recommends that no further action be taken on the City's direction given to the property owner of 5538 Montana Avenue until further investigation is completed.

Approval of Minutes from May 4, 2023 – unanimously approved.

Approval of Agenda and request for additional items – unanimously approved.

Liaison Officer Report: Andrea Figart, City Liaison - Rob Marlowe will be considered by the City Council at their next meeting for appointment as an alternate on our Committee.

Note: Advice from City Liaison is requested on all items before the committee

Business of Committee I – On-going Projects and Events

Vox Pop (VP) for items in this section

Establish meeting day - Confirming action: Meetings at Library 6:00 p.m., first Thursday of each month.

CC Agenda Reviewer Report –Items on City Council agenda of relevance to Environmental Committee (Andrea)

Update on Committee Membership, and City Policies – for all of us, especially new members (Andrea)

- * Welcome Tom O’Neil. We are so happy to have him join us.

- * Recommend Rob Marlowe (1st Alternate) – unanimously approved.

- * Presentation on committee policy on review and recommendation of applicants (draft proposal from Tia).

We’ll look at this at the next meeting.

- ** Committee action on proposed policy postponed.

Green City initiative: Update and Note of submission status (Daniella)

- * Comment on continuing support of pursuit of Green City certification

- * Report on current status and possibility of re-commencing work on GC application (report from Daniella)

- ** Committee asked for support of message to City Council, suggesting either (1) no further efforts on GC certification, or (2) renewal of pursuit of GC.

Daniella reported that she has arranged to meet with the Dean of Global Sustainability at USF about getting a student intern to help complete the application.

Update on inclusion of City Property in Urban Agriculture Ordinance

- * Report on select city-owned properties for proposed community gardens (report from Tom)

- * See attached list. Committee asked to have the file available on computer or phones.

Tom has been researching assorted City properties for the possible building of more Community Gardens. He recommends Frances Avenue Park. He found other cities around the nation that have ordinance and permit language that can be given to our City to possibly move the process forward. Dell and Tom will work on this.

Urban Agriculture Program (committee member needed for leadership) * Daniella said she would try to get the applications on the City Website. Andi said she can oversee the Library’s part in the process.

Library Seed Lending Program (Amber and Andrea) – Amber delivered dozens of paper seed envelopes for the Seed Library. These were constructed by Agriculture students at Hudson High School.

Fruit Tree Peninsula (Linda) - Linda and Don weeded the Butterfly Garden at the Fruit Tree Peninsula, applied a generous amount of mulch/soil (from the City’s Yard Debris to Mulch program), uncovered five thriving butterfly plants (Firebush, Tropical Milkweed, Blue Porterweed, Pellitory and Scarlet Salvia) and planted a Beauty Berry Bush.

Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council - No update (Andrea and/or Rob).

No Mow May (Dell)

- * See attached “tip of the week” in the *The Week* magazine.

- * Committee is reminded that this action was included as a recommendation in our 2022 Annual Report.

- * Here is the language from our 2022 Annual Report: **A companion proposal establishes a program to allow native vegetation to flower in the spring to nourish insect and bird populations to thrive during breeding season. Dubbed “No Mow May” in other areas, the program encourages property owners not to mow during the month of May to allow native plants a change to flower. Here, we’d probably have to go with No Mow April and May.**

Business of Committee II - New Projects and Topics (and projects of limited duration, including annual events)

VP for items in this section – Len spoke about the importance of our Committee influencing policy.

We discussed the possibility of developing a volunteer base.

Promotion of Sustainability Projects (Amber, Linda, Daniella)

* Linda's report on "Outdoor New Port Richey." She has been promoting programs and events on Facebook and has connected with Cotee River Kayak Club, Tasty Tuesday and the New Port Richey Garden Club.

* Daniella told us about connecting our Marketing activities with the Chamber of Commerce. The contact person is Billie.

Monarch City Event (Andrea and Dell) (committee member needed for leadership) *

* Set date for event. * Tomás Monzón (Library Programming Specialist) suggests Saturday, June 17 from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. in the Magnolia Room.

* Date looks fine, but very short notice to make it work. We may want to push into July.

* Volunteer needed to plan, develop/promote, manage.

<https://www.nationaldaystoday.com/national-start-seeing-monarchs-day/>

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Okra Occasion (Andi and Dell) (committee member needed for leadership) *

* Set date for event.

* Tomás Monzón (Library Programming Specialist) suggests Thursday, August 17, from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m.

* Volunteers needed to plan, develop/promote, manage.

City Work Sessions on Projects of Relevance to Committee (--) (see also CC Agenda reviewer)

Events

Seasonal Events - Note: Events noted here are supported and endorsed by Environmental Committee.

* Volunteer needed to plan, develop/promote, manage events.

Calendar 2023-2024

? June 17 (11 AM to 1 PM) – Monarch (City) Event – Library, Magnolia Room. TENTATIVE

? August 17, 2023 –Okra Occasion August 2023 – 8th annual (Host New Port Richey ENV COM & Library – and others) TENTATIVE

November 2023 – Sweet Potato Round-Up (TBD)

January 2024 - Collards Festival at Grand Gardens*, 9th annual (Host Grand Gardens) (TBD)

January --, 2024 -Arbor Day, 34th annual (3rd Friday in January) (Host ENV COM) (TBD)

March – 2024 – Florida Loquat Festival 9th annual (TBD) (Host Ecology, City of New Port Richey – and others)

Earth Day – 33rd annual (1st 1992) - (April 22, 2024, 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. – Library (Tia & Dell) (Host: Host New Port Richey ENV COM & Library

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* World Oceans Day – June 8, 2023 (?)

* We will miss this.

Meeting Schedule for 2023 "The environmental committee shall meet once every ninety (90) days unless it determines to meet more frequently." * Committee has determined it is best to meet monthly.

Next Meeting: Thursday July 6, 6:00 p.m. – Library