

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE

**City of New Port Richey
Meeting Minutes for meeting**

Thursday – July 6, 2023 – 6:00 p.m.





ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE
City of New Port Richey

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.

Minutes of Committee Meeting
New Port Richey Public Library
Thursday – July 6, 2023 – 6:00 p.m.

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; Rose Mohr, Vice-Chair; Linda Blake, Secretary; Amber Blais, member; Tia Rowe, member; Tom O’Neil, member; Rob Marlowe, member; Andrea Figart, City Liaison. Member Len Gravitz has left the committee, as he and his wife have moved to Colorado. Guests: John Kane; Deb Morris; Paula Athens; Don Blake; Sasha Bartunek, Facilitator of the Pasco Conservation Committee of the Sierra Club.

Vox Pop (3 minutes for members of the audience – on items not on the agenda)

-John Kane spoke about the City ordinance for properties within the City, regarding approved materials for accessory parking. He thought the ordinance was enacted, but it was never actually approved. The City Council requested a summary of our Committee’s recommendation.

Dell will email the Committee’s recommendation to all Members for review. We will vote on it at the next meeting. Tom expressed concern about some of the materials mentioned, so we may need to make a few minor changes.

-John Kane spoke about the City’s Alleys. He reminded the Committee that we previously made recommendations about avoiding impervious materials, because flooding is a concern. Tom said that if anyone wants to pave the Alleys, they need to hire an engineer.

-Amber is interested in arranging a tour of how rainwater flows within the City and how waste water is treated in the City. She will contact Mr. Rivera.

Approval of Minutes June 1, 2023 - Unanimously approved.

Approval of Agenda and request for additional items - Unanimously approved.

Liaison Officer Report: Andrea Figart, City Liaison

* **CC Agenda Reviewer Report** –Andrea reported on items on City Council agenda of relevance to Environmental Committee:

-City Manager received our recommendation to pause on the issue regarding the alley and movement of a shed in the backyard of 5538 Montana Avenue. Clerk reported it was delayed in being sent to the City Council.

-The City Manager forwarded our Alley recommendation to the City Council quite some time ago.

-The Okra Occasion has been approved for August 26, 11a.m.- 1 p.m. at the Library.

-City Council is in Budget Season right now.

-Daniella, City Marketing Specialist, has left her position.

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

Update on Committee Membership, and City Policies – (Andrea)

-Rob Marlowe is officially a Member of the Environmental Committee.

* No presentation on committee policy on review and recommendation of applicants (Tia)

Green City initiative: Update and Note of submission status

– Daniella was working on getting an intern from USF to work on the GC application. She has left the City, so this is currently on hold.

Update on inclusion of City Property in Urban Agriculture Ordinance

-New Port Richey already has a Community Garden ordinance and an Urban Agriculture ordinance, but an ordinance addressing the use of public property for a Community Garden is needed. Tom found a model ordinance from Cumberland County. He has volunteered to arrange a meeting with the City Manager regarding this issue. The Environmental Committee has unanimously approved Tom representing the Committee. The goal is to present this idea to the City Council.

Urban Agriculture Program – With the Committee’s sincerest gratitude, Andrea is working on getting the program’s application posted on the City’s website.

Library Seed Lending Program (Amber and Andrea) – The paper envelopes that were put together by students at Hudson High are now in use in the Seed Lending Library. It’s summer break now, but Amber said she will continue to communicate with and work with the school’s Agriculture teacher with the hope that the students will continue to make seed envelopes and help with Milkweed plant and seed production.

Fruit Tree Peninsula- It appears that someone used herbicide on the Butterfly Garden. The Firebush is fine, but all other plants are dead. Linda will communicate with Steve at Public Works about having the maintenance crew continue to take care of the Fruit Tree Peninsula but allowing Linda and Don to care for the Butterfly Garden. Perhaps an “Herbicide Free Zone” sign can be placed.

Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council – no update (Andrea and/or Rob)

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

VP for items in this section

Update on 5538 Montana Ave Report. (Andrea, Dell)

Tom and Andrea will re-write our Committee’s recommendation to include a recommendation that the City cede a portion of the alley to the two property owners on each side of the alley. Any maintenance crew that needs to work within the alley will still have access.

Promotion of Sustainability Projects (Amber, Linda)

-Linda continues to promote the Committee’s events and other related sustainability initiatives on Facebook through “Outdoor New Port Richey.”

-Amber will continue to integrate the Committee’s projects with Hudson HS Agriculture Program.

Monarch City Event -Sasha and the local Sierra Club will support this event. Sasha will get together with Dell on this. Deb Morris expressed an interest in this project.

* Chair took executive action and canceled the event for July 8)

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

Okra Occasion (Andrea and Dell)

August 26, 2023, 11:00 – 1:00 p.m. **The West Pasco Okra Occasion**, 8th annual
New Port Richey Public Library

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

Sasha volunteered to help.

Seasonal Events

* Discussion item – Tentative outline and calendar

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

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

August 26, 2023 – Okra Occasion August 2023 – 8th annual (Presented by FarmNet & Env Com)
(NPR Library)

November 18, 2023 – Sweet Potato Round-Up (TBD) -Dell asked Rob to speak with his Methodist Church to find out if we can hold the event.

January 6, 2024 - Collards Festival at Grand Gardens*, 9th annual (Presented by NPR FarmNet, Host Grand Gardens)
(Grand Gardens)

January 19, 2024 -Arbor Day, 34th annual (3rd Friday in January) (Host ENV COM) (TBD)

March 4-9, 2024 – Florida Loquat Festival 10th annual (March 9, 2024) (Host Ecology Florida, City of New Port Richey – and others) (TBD – Sims' Park?) Amber will try to involve Hudson High School Agriculture students.

Earth Day (April 22, 2024) – 34th annual (1st 1992) - (City event, April 20, 2024, 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. – Library (Tia & Dell) (Host: Host New Port Richey ENV COM & Library)

Monarch City Day (May 4, 2024) (Host: Host New Port Richey ENV COM & Library)

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

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We're going to do a "Drive Electric" Day! September 23.

Summary of actions and assignments

1) Review of Committee's 2019 "Review of *Accessory Parking Ordinance* With Committee Recommendations." Review of the "Review" requested by the committee prior to resubmission of the Review. The 2019 "Review" will be sent to the committee as an attachment. **Assigned to Dell.**

2) Public Works (Mr. Rivera) to be contacted to plan a tour of the water treatment facility. **Assigned to Amber.**

3) Public Works (Mr. Rivera) to be contacted on use of herbicides at the Fruit Tree Peninsula with request that herbicides not be used. Request includes posting of signs prohibiting herbicides. **Assigned to Linda.**

4) City Manager to be contacted on use of public property for community gardens.

For information, a copy of a proposed revision to the Community Garden ordinance prepared in 2016 by City Planner (the late Lisa Fierce) is attached. This has been shared with the committee and City administration previously. It never came before City Council. **Assigned to Tom.**

- 5) Hudson Middle School to be contacted on further development of the Milkweed Seed project, including continuing to make seed envelopes, and adding two new projects: packing milkweed seeds in the envelopes and starting milkweed seedlings. **Assigned to Amber.**
- 6) United Methodist Church to be contacted on use of church's outdoor facilities for the Sweet Potato Round Up, November 18, 2023. **Assigned to Rob.**
- 7) Proposal for resolution of the 5538 Montana alley issue to be drafted and submitted to the City Council. Draft to be sent to Andrea, authorized by the committee Chair on behalf of the committee, and sent to the City Manager, Mayor, and City Clerk with request to submit to the City Council – with notification of the committee Chair of its submission to City Council. **Assigned to Tom.**
- 8) Addition of Drive Electric celebration (September 23, 2023) as an event officially supported and endorsed by the Environmental Committee. Event to be added to list of S & E events **Assigned to Rob and Dell.**
- 9) Establishment of a volunteer committee to assist with events supported and endorsed by the Environmental Committee. Assigned to **Dell and** (non-member) **Sasha Bartunek.**
- 10) Review of City's urban foresting program with focus on budget and number of trees planted, and intention to expand the program and increase the number of trees planted. Special meeting for review to be planned. Assigned to **Dell.**

Adjourn 8:05 p.m.

Linda Blake, Secretary

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 August 3, 6:00 p.m. – Library