



ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE

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

New Port Richey Public Library

Thursday – August 3, 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; Linda Blake, Secretary; Amber Blais, member; Tom O’Neil, member; Rob Marlowe, member; 1st Alternate, open; 2nd Alternate, open; Andrea Figart, City Liaison (excused absence); Stephanie Jones, Substitute City Liaison; Sasha Bartunek, Volunteer Coordinator/Sierra Club representative.

Absent: Rose Mohr, Vice-Chair; Tia Rowe, member; Andrea Figart, City Liaison (substituted by Stephanie Jones from the Library staff)

Guests: Deb Morris, citizen; Rob Snyder, citizen; Terri Maluk and her daughter Tayla, citizens; Don Blake, citizen; D’Anne Dougherty, citizen.

Late arrival: Angela Napolitano, citizen.

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

Deb Morris attended the City Council meeting on Tuesday evening and mentioned that Angela Napolitano spoke at the Vox Pop. The City has been asking Angela to make changes in her yard. She has been coded. Del explained that there is an agrarian ordinance, permitting food production and that it’s available on the Library web site. However, Angela’s situation is not an urban agriculture situation. Angela came to the meeting a bit late and told us that her yard has been called a public nuisance by the City. She has been in conflict with the City for several years and would like to meet with the City Manager.

Dell explained that our Environmental Committee will continue to recommend that the City create an ordinance that allows for wildlife gardens. They should, however, not become unsightly or a nuisance.

Rob Marlowe made a motion that we make a proposal to the City Council to create a wildflower garden ordinance.

Tom will look for some sample ordinances to accompany the presentation. Amber expressed concern that some people might take advantage of such an ordinance to allow their yard to become a mess. Tom will look for language that will have guidelines to avoid such problems.

Approval of Minutes from July 6, 2023 – Unanimously approved.

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

Liaison Officer Report: Stephanie Jones, City Liaison substitute, mentioned that the Electric Vehicle Charging Station will be replaced at the Swanson Parking Lot.

There will be an Electric Vehicle event during Drive Electric Week. Rob Marlowe said he would get involved in it. Dell suggested that our Committee officially endorse the event. Sasha will be involved with all events.

CC Agenda Review: Items on City Council agenda relevant to Environmental Committee (Stephanie)

* **Note from Chair:** *From Samantha Hamilton:* Re: “the Tree Forestry budget, the Public Works Department’s Streets & Right of Way Division has **one specific line item for Trees**” and “Public Works budget will be going to City Council through a Budget Work Session August 8th at 5:00 pm.” See item later on agenda regarding tree planting.

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 – Tia is not in attendance, so no update.

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

Green City initiative: Update and Note of submission status – Daniella, former City Marketing Specialist was working on this, so it is on hold.

- * Report on status of re-commencing work on GC application
- ** Committee Action: Decision on proposing renewal of application process

Update on inclusion of City Property in Urban Agriculture Ordinance

- * (4) Report on status of project and meeting with City Manager. Tom will report on this at our next meeting.

Urban Agriculture Program (Stephanie)

- * Update on application being posted on City’s (or Library) website.
 - ** Members of committee are asked to check the website(s) before the meeting for comment.
- Linda and Don will look for the application on line and will make an attempt to register their property.

Library Seed Lending Program (Amber and Stephanie)

* (5) Update on Amber’s work with Hudson High School on further development of the Milkweed Seed & Seedling Projects: including continuing to make seed envelopes and adding two new projects: packing milkweed seeds in the envelopes and starting milkweed seedlings.

- * The High School no longer has an Agriculture teacher, so Amber is not sure if this project will continue.

Fruit Tree Peninsula (Linda)

* (3) Linda contacted Steve from Public Works about discontinuing use of herbicides on the Butterfly Garden in the Fruit Tree Peninsula. He said he would tell the maintenance people.

Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council – No update. (Stephanie 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. (Tom)

* (7) Report on Tom's 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.

Tom has contacted the City Clerk and asked for a meeting with the City Manager, but he has not heard back.

Terri, the property owner, contacted Pasco County and found out that she has been paying taxes on the alley for twenty-five years. Rob said that at some point half the alley was probably deeded to her property. Rob expressed that he thinks the City Attorney will draft the appropriate language.

* Proposed addition to the Committee's recommendation for policy on City's Alleyway Management Plan. (See attached)

Dell suggested that we include an additional addendum that grandfathers in alleys that have an ecological benefit. We will re-visit the addendum at the next meeting.

Promotion of Sustainability Projects

* Amber contacted Robert Rivera of Public Works about taking a tour of the water treatment facility. Members of the Environmental Committee are invited to join the Citizens Academy attendees on Wednesday, October 25 from 6-9 pm. Sasha, Linda, Don and Amber will meet the group at 4730 Main Street. Members not in attendance will be notified and invited, as well.

* Linda keeps up with "Outdoor New Port Richey" and maintains a presence on Facebook. She promotes events sponsored by the Environmental Committee.

Accessory Parking Proposal Re-submission (Dell)

* (1) Review of *Accessory Parking Ordinance* with Committee recommendations prior to resubmission. The 2019 "Review" sent to the committee as an attachment.

** Action on resubmission: We will resubmit existing recommendations as previously written, with an addendum proposed by Rob: "*Any property that has never had a paved driveway, the property owner may request permission to install a pervious driveway.*" The Committee will review the language at the next meeting.

Review of City's urban foresting program (Dell)

* (10) Review of City's urban foresting program: budget, number of trees planted, intention to expand the program and increase the number of trees planted. Special meeting for review to be planned.

* See attached documents, and note: *From Samantha Hamilton:* Re: "the Tree Forestry budget, the Public Works Department's Streets & Right of Way Division has **one specific line item for Trees**" and "Public Works budget will be going to City Council through a Budget Work Session August 8th at 5:00 pm."

** Committee may desire to make recommendation for increase in tree planning at this meeting for consideration at CC work session on August 8 at 5:00 p.m.

Hardwood trees will add shade and cool the City. The City is only 4 ½ square miles. Dell suggested that Live Oaks are a priority, because they will improve an entire ecosystem and live for centuries. Linda suggested smaller trees be made available, as well, as not every homeowner wants a Live Oak. We want a more affirmative tree planting program in which the City plants 100 hardwood native trees each year.

Okra Occasion (Dell and Sasha) (committee member needed for leadership)

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

New Port Richey Public Library

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

* See attached flyer and a press release – circulate in your circles, print, cyber, and face-to-face at meetings and with friends

Seasonal Events

* Discussion item – Tentative outline and calendar

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

* Coordination with other events needed – especially considering change in staff in office of City Marketing Specialist.

Drive Electric (September 23, 2023) (Rob)

* (8) Proposal to add Drive Electric as an event officially supported and endorsed by the Environmental Committee.

** Action

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)

(Host: NPR Library)

November 18, 2023 – Sweet Potato Round-Up (TBD)

(6) Request to Methodist Church for use of outdoor facilities for the event. (Rob)

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?)

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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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 September 7 6:00 p.m. – Library