

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.

In Lieu of Minutes Summary of Actions and Discussions of Meeting

New Port Richey Public Library

Thursday – December 5, 2024 – 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; member; Tom O’Neill, member; Margaret Carswell, member

Excused Absence: Amber Blais, Secretary

- Summary of actions and discussions recorded by J.S. Bartunek (with thanks from all)

City Staff Liaison, Colin Eichenmuller

Library Community Engagement Director (Tori Ladd – does not attend)

City Marketing Specialist (Jesse Brock – does not attend)

Volunteer Coordinators, Sasha Bartenuk

Monarch Festival Chair: (Deb Morris – does not attend)

Guests: Amanda Zborek

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

Approval of Minutes October 3, 2024

Liaison Officer (A) Advice on EC agenda, and (B) CC items

- General comments from liaison officer

Business of Committee I – On-going Projects and Events

Urban Agriculture Program (Rose Mohr) – no new applications received

Chair notes that City Council members and City Manager are aware of committee’s request to have public land (City property) made available for community and market gardens.

Update on inclusion of City Property in Urban Agriculture Ordinance (All)

- Follow up from CC meetings
- No reports from members on meetings with City Council Members on this topic.
- Chair reports that he reminded the City Manager of this proposal in his recent meeting with her.

Wildflower Installation Initiative (“Native Wildflower Ordinance”) (All)

- Follow up from CC meetings
- No reports from members on meetings with City Council Members on this topic.
- Chair requests that committee members follow up with their assigned contacts on City Council with *sincere* and *serious* request to have the Wildflower Ordinance listed on an upcoming CC agenda.

*Members affirm their commitment to fulfill their assignment to contact City Council members with the request – and to report back on the commitment of their assigned Councilmembers to the request.

Library Seed Lending Program (Amber)

- Amber is absent (excused)
- Committee will look for update on Hudson HS Ag Teacher and engagement with the committee's projects.

Fruit Tree Peninsula (Colin)

- No action taken on replacement of trees

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

Review of City's urban reforestation program (Dell, Sasha, Colin)

- * Arbor Day planning: location, tree, PR, engagement with other groups (Genesis and Pasco Co)
- * Tree walk in January is cancelled based on consensus that community's interest in the project will be relatively low due to continuing recovery from hurricane damage and concern with tree locations
- Discussion of new date for tree walk. No consensus. Interest expressed in a walk in the late spring or fall
 - * **Topic to be taken up at next meeting**
- Report and recommendation from Tom on tree list for general public, businesses, and developers.
 - * List includes recommended (and not recommended) trees.
 - * List reviewed briefly, but no decision reached.
 - * **Final decision on list to be made at next meeting**

Discussion of City's Acquisition of old Schwettman/Gulf High School Property and Building

- * Update (if any) from Colin or committee members.
 - * No update

Annual Report and Recommendations (All)

- Planning for next step(s) in engagement with CC on proposed projects.
- Next Steps toward action on the proposals will require Council member(s) to have proposals listed on the Council agenda for action.
 - * Review of Council members assigned to committee members
- * Note. Contacted members of the City Council indicated broad support of all proposals, with strongest support for the (1) Wildflower Ordinance, (2) expansion of reforestation efforts, and (3) Styrofoam/plastic mitigation at City-approved events. Also, note (4) the use of public property for food-producing gardens.
- These four items are likely the most important for Council members to have listed on agenda.
 - * **Decision to focus on the Wildflower Ordinance and to contact assigned Councilmembers with request to bring the Wildflower Ordinance to a City Council agenda for action – and to receive either a yes or no commitment.**

Update on Impact of Hurricane Helene & Milton

- * Reminder of discussion to recommend no new building west of US 19.
 - * Decision to recommend to City Council to *Not consider any increase in density West of US Hwy 19.*
 - * **Committee will draft formal language on proposal at next meeting**
 - *Note: Language included here is not the formal language drafted at meeting.

Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council (Margaret)

- Report from Margaret on her being a liaison for the Environmental Committee to TBRPC
- No report.
- This item will not appear on future agendas – unless requested by the committee.

Fluoride Report (Margaret)

- * Colin presents a detailed report on fluoridation of public water systems, including professional academic assessments by researchers and public health officials.

- * Discussion among committee members based on Colin's report and expression of appreciation for Colin's high-quality research and professional presentation.
- * No action taken
- * Colin will update his research at the next meeting.

Proposal Allowing Non-residents on Committee (Dell)

- * Review of proposals (attached)
- * Unanimous agreement to submit proposal to City Council.

Seasonal Events –

Seasonal events reviewed

Events noted here are supported and endorsed by Environmental Committee.

- * Request for volunteer to plan, develop/promote, manage events.

Calendar 2025

January 4, 2025 - Collards Festival at Grand Gardens*, 10th annual (Presented by NPR FarmNet, Host: Grand Gardens) (Grand Gardens)

January 17, 2025 - Arbor Day, 36th annual (3rd Friday in January) (Host: ENV COM)

April 12, 2025 (based on Chasco Fiesta, Easter, Passover), 2025 – Florida Loquat Festival 12th annual (TB) (Host Ecology Florida, City of New Port Richey – and others) (Sim's Park/Historical Society). Volunteers needed.

- * CC Proclamation at CC meeting March TBD – attend if possible

Earth Day (April 22, 2025) – 35th annual (1st 1992) - (City event, April 19, 2025, 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. – Library (Dell, Colin, Tori) (Host: Host New Port Richey ENV COM & Library)

Monarch City Day (May 3, 2025) (Host: Host New Port Richey ENV COM & Library) (Deb, Sasha, Dell)

September 6, 2025 -The West Pasco Okra Occasion, 10th annual

- * Location New Port Richey Public Library

November 22, 2025 - New Port Richey Sweet Potato Round-Up 10th annual

- * Location First United Methodist Church, New Port Richey

Meeting Schedule for 2025 "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, January 2, 2025, 6:00 p.m. – Library