

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE
City of New Port Richey
Meeting Minutes
New Port Richey **City Hall**
Monday – November 14, 2022 – 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.

Meeting Agenda

New Port Richey City Hall

Monday – November 14, 2022 – 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; Barrett Doe, City Liaison.

Absent: Julia Grassen, member; Len Gravitz, member.

Guests: Stephanie Jones, Systems Librarian (in charge of the Seed Library), New Port Richey Library; Daniella Bernal, Marketing Specialist for the City of New Port Richey; Don Blake, New Port Richey resident. Sasha from the Sierra Club Pasco Conservation Committee.

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

Approval of Minutes from October 10, 2022 -Unanimously Approved

Approval of Agenda and request for additional items – Unanimously Approved

Liaison Officer Report: Barret Doe, City Liaison

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

CC Agenda Reviewer Report – Barret reported on items on the City Council agenda of relevance to the Environmental Committee. We discussed the Alley initiative. Citizens question the names of the alleys, as they seem inappropriate for our neighborhoods. The Environmental Committee unanimously recommended some years ago that if the alleys are improved, they should not be paved with asphalt. At minimum, whatever material is used, it should be pervious.

Update on Committee Membership and City Policies – Barret provided information on expectations of Committee members.

Green City initiative: Update and Note of submission status (Barret) – No update.

- * Committee is asked for comment on continuing committee support of pursuit of Green City certification.

Update on inclusion of City Property in Community Garden Ordinance – No update.

- * Committee is asked for comment on continuing committee support of inclusion of City property in CG program

Urban Agriculture Program – Barret said that the City wants to update the forms for this program. Dell asked that he help with the update.

- * Decision on where to have registrations sent
- * Review of registrations and where to have available
- * Sample registration form

Library Seed Lending Program – Amber invited Stephanie Jones, the Systems Librarian from the New Port Richey Library. She is the Librarian in charge of the Seed Library. She said that the program began in 2013 and gave us brochures that explain the Seed Exchange and How to Save and Share Seeds. Stephanie explained that one of the motivations for developing the program was that it would benefit our low income community. She said that the average household income in our City is \$30,000/year. It has been a challenge to keep up with the Seed Library recently because she has been short staffed (a common problem in our nation's current economy). The Seed Library does continue, however.

Over the years, seed companies have donated seeds, local gardeners have donated seeds, and the Library has used its own money to purchase seeds. Currently, they spend \$750 – \$1,000 annually on seed. Dell explained how important it is to have local gardeners donate locally produced seeds. Stephanie added that the seeds must be organic.

Stephanie said that they would like to use paper seed packets rather than the plastic packets that are currently in use, but the plastic packets are significantly less expensive. Amber suggested that Hudson High School FFA students might volunteer to make seed packets. The packets have to be a specific size that will work with the system the Library has set up. About 3,000 packets a year are needed. Linda asked about the cost of paper packets and will follow up on getting that information. The Committee, with Amber's leadership, will follow up on this topic.

Daniella Bernal, our City's new Marketing Specialist, said she would promote the Seed Library.

Fruit Tree Peninsula (Linda) – No update.

Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council – Dell told us that he spoke about Food Resiliency at the Council meeting earlier in the day. Pasco County imports the vast majority of its food, and the average item travels about 1,500 miles to get here. Anytime there is an interruption (natural disaster, pandemic), there is potential for food shortages. Part of our region's Resiliency efforts should be developing a more locally produced food supply.

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

VP for items in this section – Sasha, the Facilitator of the Sierra Club's Pasco Conservation Committee, was in attendance for part of the Environmental Committee meeting. Daniella asked about that group's work. Linda is a member of the group and at monthly meetings tells them about the work of our Environmental Committee. Sasha and Linda recently completed Outings Leader and First Aid training with the Sierra Club. They will plan outings into some of our natural areas to promote appreciation for nature and promote the work of environmental organizations like the Sierra Club and the Environmental Committee.

Promotion of Sustainability Projects – Linda invited our City's new Marketing Specialist, Daniella Bernal, to our meeting. She shared her vision for the City of New Port Richey. She has researched the demographics of our area and wants to reach out to communities that may not be participating in what the City has to offer. The City is initiating a Fourth Friday event, and Daniella will set up an outdoor "Carnival" with Latin music.

Daniella has already begun to promote our Sweet Potato Roundup and is interested in learning more about the Urban Agriculture movement in our City. Linda will arrange to take her on a tour of several community gardens prior to the next Environmental Committee meeting.

Linda reported that she will continue to promote the Committee and its endeavors on the Facebook page “Outdoor New Port Richey.”

Tia reported that she has contacted the schools within the City to promote our Committee’s events (Gulf High School, Gulf Middle School, Marlowe Elementary, Richey Elementary and Genesis School). First up, our Sweet Potato Roundup.

No update on Amber’s work with Hudson HS Agriculture Program and the Monarch City/Milkweed initiative.

Library Environmental Curriculum – At a PFPC meeting, Dell heard that the Library might be developing an Environmental Curriculum. Stephanie, the Systems Librarian didn’t know anything about this. Dell will look into this further. He has developed Environmental Curriculum and would like to be involved.

Dell also learned of “Hear-say” report about a request circulating for a community garden leadership position in New Port Richey, “posted on Indeed.com for helping low income people with community garden activities” – apparently from Pasco Extension office and Pasco County. No further information was available at this time.

2021-2022 Annual Report - Summary of presentation to City Council, October 18, 2022. Everyone agreed that Tia did an excellent job with the presentation and that the citizens in attendance at the City Council meeting were enthusiastic about the Committee’s work. Linda brought two Suncoast News articles about the Environmental Committee’s presentation at the City Council meeting and the proposal for a polystyrene ban at City sponsored events on City property.

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.

Calendar 2022-2023 *All events are currently moving off Covid hiatus and request organizational leadership and support from community organizations, businesses, and individuals.*

November 19, 2022 – Sweet Potato Round-Up, 7th annual (11:00-1:00) (Host Friendship Farms & KPBB)

January 7, 2023 - Collards Festival at Grand Gardens*, 8th annual (Host Grand Gardens)

January 20, 2023 -Arbor Day, 33rd annual (3rd Friday in January) (Host ENV COM)

March 19-26, 2023 The Florida Loquat Festival, 9th annual (Host Ecology Florida)

August 26, 2023 –Okra Occasion August 2023 – 8th annual (Host New Port Richey ENV COM & Library – and others)

*Monarch City Event – 1st Saturday of May (May 6, 2023)

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

* Earth Day – April 22, 2023 (?)

* World Oceans Day – June 8, 2023 (?)

Meeting Schedule for 2022 "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 - 2nd Monday, at 6:00 p.m.

Next Meeting: December 12 2022, 6:00 p.m. – City Council auditorium