

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE
City of New Port Richey
Minutes
New Port Richey **City Hall**
Thursday – February 2, 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.

Meeting Minutes
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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; Len Gravitz, member. Barrett Doe, City Liaison. Daniella Bernal, City Marketing Specialist
Guests: Deb Morris and Sasha Bartunek (Pasco Conservation Committee, Sierra Club)

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

- Sasha brought some information about the proposed Orange Belt Trail, a bike/pedestrian trail that will extend from Trinity to Trilby. Pasco County is welcoming citizen input.
- Deb mentioned that she bought a loquat tree in a dixie cup three or four years ago at the Loquat Festival and that it's already bearing fruit.

Approval of Minutes November 14, 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

- Barret announced that he has accepted a position with Pasco County Public Works. Members of the Committee expressed congratulations, gratitude and some sadness.
- Barret shared some updates on actions within the City:
 - A new NPR Police Chief will be sworn in within a few days.
 - The City Council will begin a process of selecting individuals to serve on an advisory board for revising the City Charter. A meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 7 at 7:00 p.m. as part of that process. Tia mentioned that she had been involved with such a process when she lived in Michigan.

Business of Committee I – On-going Projects and Events

Vox Pop (VP) for items in this section

- Linda suggested the establishment of a Task Force for cleaning and protecting the Pithlachascotee River. No action taken on this at this time.

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

-Linda brought a few articles from the Suncoast News and briefly reviewed issues of ongoing concern to the Committee:

- Invasive Giant African Land Snails are still a matter of concern, and the Florida Department of Agriculture will continue to quarantine and monitor particular areas of Pasco County and New Port Richey.
- City Councilman Peter Altman represents the City at the Tampa Bay Regional Resiliency Coalition and attended the Southeast Florida Regional Climate Change Compact's Leadership Summit in Fort Lauderdale.
- The Suncoast News covered the Collard Festival that was held on January 7 at Grand Gardens.
- The City donated \$10,000 to "Dinos & Dragons" to help pay for their electric bill and for fourth grade students from Marlowe and Richey Elementary Schools to attend.
- The City Council gave preliminary approval for a 388-unit affordable housing complex for senior citizens on Sea Forest Drive. Tia told us that current residents in the area are concerned that it is unwise to house senior citizens in Flood Zone A.

Update on Committee Membership, and City Policies – Barret told all Committee members the dates that they must renew their membership on the Committee. Dell and Rose are currently up for renewal. There is currently one opening on the Committee, and there are two spaces for Alternates.

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

- * Committee is asked for comment on continuing committee support of pursuit of Green City certification.
- The application was partially completed but has not moved forward for quite some time. If the City gets the certification, it will be eligible for certain grants. Daniella expressed an interest in this project and may possibly be able to get involved in completing the application.

Update on inclusion of City Property in Community Garden Ordinance

- * Committee is asked for comment on continuing committee support of inclusion of City property in CG program
- There has been no forward movement on writing the necessary ordinance. Dell spoke with the City's new Parks and Recreation Director who expressed interest in this project.

Urban Agriculture Program

- * Review of new registration form
- Three types of Urban Gardens: Residential, Community, Market
- Len said he would call Tammy at City's Development Department and find out if there are any partial parcels that the city owns that might be available for community gardens.

Library Seed Lending Program – Amber spoke with the Agriculture teacher at Hudson High. Students can get volunteer hours by making paper envelopes for the seed at the Library. There are several loquat trees on the school grounds. There is potential for students to harvest loquats and sell them at the Loquat Festival.

Fruit Tree Peninsula

- The Butterfly Garden at the Fruit Tree Peninsula needs weeding and re-planting. Linda will pick a date and invite people to a work party, possibly as part of the Loquat Festival. Linda and Dell said they might have a few plants that they can donate.
- Barrett said the City considered installing a sign and bench at the Peninsula but decided it wasn't safe. No parking, no crosswalks.

Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council -No update.

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

VP for items in this section

Arbor Day Event -Daniella and Barrett were there, and it went well. Dell told the Committee that this event has been taking place in the City of NPR for almost forty years and is required for our City to maintain its status as a Tree City.

- * Report on event and filing/submission of documentation to National Arbor Day Foundation

Promotion of Sustainability Projects

-Linda said that she continues to post events and information on the Facebook page "Outdoor New Port Richey." She also posts on related sites (New Port Richey Garden Club, Cotee River Kayak Club, Tasty Tuesdays, etc.).

-Tia has contacted schools within the City (Gulf High School, Gulf Middle School, Marlowe Elementary and Richey Elementary) to promote our Committee's events, but she isn't sure that school leaders are following through. Linda suggested that Tia contact Gulf High School's Science Department Head. If that individual takes an interest, there may be some follow through.

-Amber isn't sure if Hudson HS Agriculture students have planted any of the Milkweed seeds that were given to them (Monarch City/Milkweed initiative).

-Daniella spoke about Marketing activities being done through her office.

-We had a brief discussion about the negative environmental impact of the beads thrown out at the Chasco and Winter parades. Sasha suggested a parade float with the theme "Seeds, not Beads" that could give out seeds and promote the Seed Library. Tia said that Tampa has a bead recycling program after the Gasparilla parades.

Alleys

Review of Previous Proposal on Alleyway Management Plan (from 2019) (Dell and Barret)

* This is under New Projects since it relates to City actions on some of the alleys in the residential areas near the downtown business district. A copy of the original proposal is given here.

- Tia proposed that the Committee revisit the proposal at our next meeting, possibly update and re-submit it to the City Council. All agreed.

- Barrett said the City has begun surveying the Alleys. It's moving slowly because it's expensive. The plan is to clear and reclaim the Alleys. We don't know what the plan is for possible re-surfacing. The Alleys are now named and have blue street signs and Stop signs at each crossroad.

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 2023-2024 *All events are currently moving off Covid hiatus and request organizational leadership and support from community organizations, businesses, and individuals.*

Next Up: March 12-19, 2023 The Florida Loquat Festival, 9th annual (Host Ecology Florida)

The official date for the Festival is March 18.

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

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)

*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 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 March 2, 6:00 p.m. - City Council auditorium