



ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
New Port Richey Public Library – Magnolia Room
Thursday – April 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)

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.

Welcome

Roll Call: Dell deChant, Committee Chair; Rose Mohr, Vice-Chair; Linda Blake, Secretary; Len Gravitz, member;

Andrea Figart, first meeting as City Liaison.

Absent: Amber Blais, member; Tia Rowe, member; Daniella Bernal, City Marketing Specialist

Guests: Tom O’Neill, possible future member of our Committee.

Late arrival of two guests: Sasha Bartunek from the Pasco Conservation Committee of the Sierra Club and friend, Rachel Watson

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

Approval of Minutes March 2, 2023 -unanimous approval

Approval of Agenda and request for additional items -unanimous approval

Liaison Officer Report: Andrea Figart, Director of the New Port Richey Public Library

Introductions:

*Welcome Andrea Figart. She told a bit about herself. She values sustainability and encourages that philosophy at the Library. Several examples of this are the local organic market, Tasty Tuesdays, which takes place every Tuesday morning in the Library Courtyard; the solar panels on the Library rooftop; and the Seed Library. For years the Library has been connected and supportive of the Environmental Committee’s endeavors. Andrea is also on the Pasco Food Policy Board and is a Bald Eagle watcher and ocean lover.

*Linda Blake, Secretary of the Environmental Committee for several years, is a retired school teacher, gardener (providing food for humans and wildlife), and a long time environmentalist (organized a school-wide newspaper recycling event when she was in Junior High). She is the liaison between the Pasco Conservation Committee of the Sierra Club and the Environmental Committee.

*Rose Mohr, has been a member of the Environmental Committee for as long as it has existed and is Vice-Chair of the Committee. She is owner of the Rose's Bistro on Grand Blvd. in downtown New Port Richey. The restaurant supports a number of environmental issues, including those of our Committee.

*Len Gravitz has been a long time environmentalist, which is part of his family tradition. He's interested in gardening for the benefit of humans and wildlife and has been exploring the possibility of putting vacant properties in the City to good use.

*Tom O'Neill was the City of New Port Richey's Public Works Director. As a long time employee of the City, he is expert on numerous environmental operations within the City and is possibly a future member of our Committee.

*Dell DeChant, Committee Chair, talked about the history of the Environmental Committee and how more than thirty years ago it began with the commitment to New Port Richey being a Tree City and holding an Arbor Day celebration every year. Dell is a Professor at the University of South Florida, a long time resident of the City, a former City Councilman and a devoted and respected proponent of Food Sovereignty in the City, County and Tampa Bay Region. He has been an activist for environmental issues for decades.

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 –Items on City Council agenda of relevance to Environmental Committee- no report

Update on Committee Membership, and City Policies – new City Liaison and attendance by possible new Committee member.

Green City initiative: Update and Note of submission status (Dell) – no update

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

* Committee is asked for support of message to City Council, suggesting either (1) no further efforts on GC certification, or (2) renewal of pursuit of GC.

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

* Efforts in this area will recommence after the Loquat Festival. (contact Terri Moore)

Urban Agriculture Program (committee member need for leadership) -no update

Library Seed Lending Program (Amber) – Our Library has the oldest Public Library Seed Lending Library in the State of Florida. Stephanie oversees the program. No update.

Fruit Tree Peninsula (Linda) – Linda will weed and update the plantings in the Butterfly Garden at the Fruit Tree Peninsula. Linda and Dell will provide the plants. Len and our guest, Rachel, expressed an interest in helping with the task.

Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council –Dell told how our Committee prompted the Council to include Food Systems in its Resiliency Plan.

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

VP for items in this section

City-owned vacant parcels – Len researched and provided a list of city-owned parcels suitable for food-production/gardens or other uses that would benefit the community. Our guest, Tom, said that he knows about every one of the parcels and can provide some insight into each of them. We were short on time, so we will continue the discussion at our next meeting. *See attached list.*

Promotion of Sustainability Projects (Daniella, Linda, Tia, and Amber) – No update.

*Linda's report on "Outdoor New Port Richey."

* Tia's update on contact with schools within the City.

* Amber's update on integration of committee projects with Hudson HS Agriculture Program

* Daniella's report on Marketing activities through her office

Review of Previous Proposal on Alleyway Management Plan (from 2019) (Tia/Dell)-No update

* Tia is asked to send the committee the revised version of the proposal (with light edits) approved at our last meeting. The original proposal is attached to the email with today's agenda.

* 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.

- Committee has approved the reviewed proposal and will re-submit it to the City Council.

Earth Day – Saturday, April 22, 2023, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. – Library. Need program. (Tia & Dell)
(Host: Host New Port Richey Host New Port Richey ENV COM & Library - & others)

We hope Mayor Rob Marlowe and the Mayor-elect will attend.

* Planning and assign tasks

* We need Milkweed seedlings – or other native flowering plant for distribution

Linda will do an hour long "River Walk & Talk" at Crews Lake at the Pasco Earth Day event at 9:30 a.m. She will then do a brief talk at the City's Earth Day event.

***Possible Item for discussion and evaluation (Food Desert Policy)** (Dell) – No update.

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.*

April 22, 2023- EARTH DAY, 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. – Library, Need program. (Tia & Dell)

(Host: Host New Port Richey ENV COM & Library - & others)

May or June- Monarch City Event [TBD] <https://www.nationaldaystoday.com/national-start-seeing-monarchs-day/>

June- World Oceans Day (June 8, 2023) [TBD]

August 26, 2023 –8th Annual Okra Occasion (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)
March 2024 – Florida Loquat Festival

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 May 4, 6 p.m. – New Port Richey Public Library

* Please note: Late arrivals (after 7 pm) may enter the facility by following the directions posted at the staff entrance door located on the north side of the building.