

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE
City of New Port Richey
Meeting Minutes
New Port Richey Public Library
Thursday –May 4, 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.

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; Tia Rowe, member; Andrea Figart, City Liaison.

Guests: Daniella Bernal, Marketing Specialist; Tom O'Neill, possible future member (second meeting); Rob Marlowe, possible future member (first meeting); Tina Tatum, citizen; Don Blake, citizen

Absent: Excused Absence: Rose Mohr, Vice-Chair; Len Gravitz, member

Vox Pop (3 minutes for members of the audience – on items not on the agenda) Tina explained that she came to the meeting as an observer, and she was wondering about the Clean Water petition that was circulating. Andrea said she would connect Tina to the people who produced the petition.

Approval of Minutes April 6, 2023 – Unanimous approval

Approval of Agenda and request for additional items – Unanimous approval, plus an additional item: Our Committee will unanimously recommend Tom to the City Council for membership on our Environmental Committee. Committee members are encouraged to attend the City Council meeting on May 16 at 7:00 pm.

Liaison Officer Report: Andrea Figart, City Liaison, listed items on the agenda for the next City Council meeting. There was nothing of direct concern to our Committee.

Business of Committee I – On-going Projects and Events

Vox Pop (VP) for items in this section

Establish meeting day, time, location (All) – Next month we will meet at the Library.

CC Agenda Reviewer Report –No items on City Council agenda of particular relevance to our Committee.

Update on Committee Membership and City Policies – New members should review policies for membership on our Committee.

Green City Initiative: Update and Note of submission status – Daniella wants to take the lead on this. Andrea and Dell will lend support. Rob said that Councilman Peter Altman might lend assistance.

Update on inclusion of City Property in Community Garden Ordinance –We’re waiting for a new Director of Parks and Recreation before any action can be taken. Tom mentioned that something to consider is that some of the public parks properties might be irrigated with reclaimed water – not good for gardens.

* See action below (Tom volunteers to review the list and develop short list of best choices)

Urban Agriculture Program – A committee member is need for leadership for this program. Andrea will look into the process on how a property can be registered in the program and the role the Library will play. The Committee approved three applications.

Library Seed Lending Program – Amber told us that the Agriculture Teacher at Hudson High School agreed to make paper seed packets for the Seed Library. Amber brought a sample.

Fruit Tree Peninsula – Linda and Don will be at the Fruit Tree Peninsula on Sunday early in the morning to weed the Butterfly Garden. A few people have expressed an interest in helping out. Dell has a few plants that can go into the Garden.

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

City-owned parcels *New item – Review of city-owned parcels suitable for food-production/gardens. See list. Tom has volunteered to look at these properties with the goal of eliminating those that are undesirable and reporting back to our Committee with a short list of those that are most promising.

Promotion of Sustainability Projects (Daniella, Linda, Tia, and Amber)

*Linda’s report on “Outdoor New Port Richey.” She will continue to post upcoming events on the Facebook Page.

* Tia had no update on contact with schools within the City to promote our Committee’s events and asked for someone else to take charge of this.

* Amber is working with the Hudson HS Agriculture Program and integration of committee projects with the program. The new Agriculture teacher seems enthusiastic about participating. No update on the Monarch City/Milkweed initiative.

* Daniella's report on Marketing activities through her office. Daniella attended the Tampa Bay Water meeting and is interested in this topic. Cities and Counties are currently testing for Pfas. Rob mentioned that the Federal standards have become stricter. Some corporations are being sued for contributing to this problem.

Earth Day – April 22, 2023, 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. – The Environmental Committee, in partnership with the Library, held a gathering for Earth Day. About 25 people attended. Tia & Dell presented. The reach of the Internet recording of the event was vast and international.

Linda was involved with Pasco County's Earth Day event at Crews Lake. In partnership with the local Sierra Club, she presented the first of a Five Part Series of "Walks and Talks" about the Pithlachascotee River. Crews Lake is the Headwaters of the Cotee River. The presentation was recorded and is now available on YouTube Sierra Club.

Linda has created a Power Point presentation that parallels her "Walks and Talks." Dell would like to call it "A River Runs Through It" and have it presented at a future Environmental Committee event. This Educational Program hopefully will lead to an Action Program on improving the health of the Pithlachascotee River.

Here is a link to a web site from the Springs Coast Watershed on the Pithlachascotee
<https://www.swfwmd.state.fl.us/watersheds/springscoast/pithlachascotee-river>

Dell mentioned that the Federal government has ramped up investing in planting trees in Urban areas with the goal of lowering temperatures in urban areas.

New Port Richey has an ordinance about restricting fertilizer application during the rainy season. Our Florida State Legislature and our Governor are about to pass a law that doesn't allow local governments to have such ordinances.

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

Next Up: August 26, 2023 –8th annual Okra Occasion– 11 a.m. -1:00 p.m. (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 9th annual (TBD) (Host Ecology, City of New Port Richey – and others)

Earth Day – 33rd annual (1st 1992) - (April 22, 2024, 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. – Library (Tia & Dell) (Host: Host New Port Richey ENV COM & Library

Monarch City Event – Need to schedule. Note, we missed the National Start Seeing Monarchs Day: the 1st Saturday of May (May 6, 2023)

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

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* 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 June 1, 6:00 p.m. at the NPR Library