

**PINELLAS COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL WORKGROUP**  
**TUESDAY, MAY 11, 2004**  
**MEETING SUMMARY**

**ATTENDEES:**

**Environmental Work Group:** Dave Baras, Jake Zimmerman, Dianne Wheatley Giliotti, Ellen Pfau, Joyce King, Holly Greening, James Richter, Jason Mickel, Kathy Durham

**Pinellas County Staff:** Gordon Beardslee, Liz Freeman, Samantha Shorr-Zigante, Andy Squires, Chris Staubus, Todd Tanberg

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**Welcome and Introductions**

- The Work Group reviewed the April meeting summary and made two corrections.
- Then Gordon Beardslee, Pinellas County Planning Department Administrator, welcomed everyone and began introductions.
- Chris Staubus, Assistant Director of Pinellas County Utilities, and Todd Tanberg, Director of Alternate Water Sources – Pinellas County Utilities, were introduced.

**Finish Water Supply Discussion**

- Due to time constraints at last month's meeting, County staff was unable to finish discussing this agenda item. So Chris Staubus, Assistant Director of Pinellas County Utilities, finished providing a perspective of where Pinellas County fits in regard to water use.
  - Pinellas County is a member government of Tampa Bay Water (TBW). Pinellas County has an agreement to receive all of its water from TBW; therefore the County is not allowed to produce any of its own water. Currently, Pinellas County is 40% of TBW's demand.
  - The current water rate is \$2.87 per thousand gallons. However, based on TBW's five-year phased projections, the rate is anticipated to rise to \$5.00 per thousand gallons. Utilities staff noted that Pinellas County does not have any control over TBW rates.
  - Pinellas County receives "blended" water, which means it consists of groundwater, surface water and desalinized water. Utilities staff said that the water supply pipe system is seeing different attributes than it has in the past fifty years. For example, the water is softer which has resulted in pipe replacement projects. The potable water supply pipe replacement project is estimated to be complete by August 2004, and it should help eliminate customer complaints regarding rusty-colored water.
  - As stated above, TBW is committed to providing all the water Pinellas County needs, but there are obvious physical limitations. Utilities staff said that Pinellas County is aggressively pursuing water conservation efforts/alternative water supply sources such as reclaimed water, Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR), etc.
  - The workgroup asked if the County is using reclaimed water as potable water. Utilities staff said that the Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners rejected that proposal and that TBW removed that idea off its active projects list. However, the State of Florida does allow for indirect potable reuse so it is being permitted elsewhere.
  - The workgroup also asked if the avenue of bottled water is ignored. Utilities staff said that the County does not account for it in its numbers, however, it is accounted for from a resource point of view.

## Discussion of Sanitary Sewer Element

- Water Reclamation Facilities
  - Pinellas County Utilities just took McKay Creek Plant out of service. It used to treat six million gallons per day (mgd). The Plant has been changed to a reclaimed water facility for the north beach communities.
  - Currently, Pinellas County has two water reclamation facilities: the North Pinellas County Treatment Plant (William Dunn) and the South Cross Bayou Treatment Plant.
  - The South Cross Bayou Treatment Plant is the oldest facility having been acquired in 1965. It used to service 5 mgd and is now capable of treating 33 mgd. Although the state doesn't require South Cross Bayou to be an Advanced Wastewater Treatment (AWT) plant, it is. To be an AWT plant means that pollutants, particularly nitrogen and phosphorus, which were not adequately removed by secondary treatment, are removed by other means.
  - The capacity of the County's water reclamation systems is sufficient through planning period of 2020.
- Sanitary Sewer Collection System
  - The sanitary sewer service area boundaries were formed in the mid to late 1970s. Agreements between the County and municipalities to not service one another's areas.
  - The course of wastewater is as follows: it travels from a single family home for example, through eight inch pipes, to a lifting station, to a water reclamation facility to be recycled into reclaimed water.
  - Unlike other communities, Pinellas County does not have a combined stormwater/wastewater sewer system.
  - Pinellas County Utilities has an industrial pretreatment program that monitors potentially toxic industries. It has been ongoing since the 1980s.
- Septic Tanks
  - The workgroup asked how Pinellas County is phasing out septic tanks. Andy Squires, Pinellas County Department of Environmental Management, said that the County has a draft report specifically addressing Lake Tarpon and its nitrogen loading.
- Additional Workgroup Discussion Points
  - The workgroup asked if anything is discharged to Tampa Bay. Utilities staff said that 11-17 mgd are discharged to Tampa Bay from the South Cross Bayou Plant. However, the Pinellas County Utilities lab does testing against quality standards set by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the County can be fined if not in compliance with these measures.
  - Holly Greening, from Tampa Bay Estuary Program (TBEP) and a workgroup member, said that a reduced nitrogen amount in reclaimed water is as good as it was in 1950. It is a constant effort to keep it that way and now the nutrients entering the water supply are from groundwater.
  - Holly Greening, from TBEP, asked about the maintenance element for pipes and whether the workgroup could put in a recommendation to support EPA's Capacity Management Operations and Maintenance (CMOM) Program. The cities of Clearwater, St. Petersburg and Dunedin have been asked to participate in the CMOM Program.

### Review Goals, Objectives and Policies and Make Recommendations

- Gordon Beardslee, Pinellas County Planning Department Administrator, reviewed a handout titled *Status of Water, Sewer and Groundwater Goals, Objectives and Policies in the Pinellas County Comprehensive Plan* with the group.
- The group then presented their recommendations as follows:
  1. James Richter of the workgroup suggested that we commit, by policy, to identifying recharge areas outside of the current wellhead protection area (and that we include policies to protect those areas).
  2. In response to James Richter's suggestion, Gordon Beardslee said maybe we should have policies regarding coordinating with other governments on identifying recharge areas outside of the current wellhead protection area.
  3. Related to Objective 1.8 of the Sanitary Sewer Element, Holly Greening of the workgroup recommended that we include language that strengthens the commitment to long-term maintenance of the sewer system (perhaps by implementing the EPA CMOM recommendations), and suggested committing, by policy, to providing adequate funding for implementing the recommendations.
  4. Chris Staubus, Assistant Director of Pinellas County Utilities, suggested, rather than a specific reference to CMOMs, a new policy to recognize the life cycle needs of the [our] system and the need to set aside funds for maintenance and upgrade.
  5. Joyce King of the workgroup proposed we have additional policies supporting more education and encouraging reduction in size of lawns, etc.
  6. Holly Greening also suggested that in addition to public education, how about having the County be the role model by setting a goal for having a percentage of big County facilities (schools, playgrounds, ballparks, hospitals) have native and drought-tolerant landscaping.

### Additional Items

- Gordon said the County is looking at an additional 60,000 people as ultimate growth. That's the equivalent of another Palm Harbor.
- The workgroup requested selecting an alternative date for the June meeting.

### Assignments for Next Meeting

- The Work Group will continue to review the goals, objectives and policies and then let staff know what recommendations they have for the Board of County Commissioners.
- Per the request of the workgroup, staff will discuss surface water at the next meeting.

At this point, with no further questions, the meeting concluded.