

PINELLAS COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL WORKGROUP
THURSDAY, JULY 22, 2004
MEETING SUMMARY

ATTENDEES:

Environmental Work Group: Dianne Wheatley Giliotti, Ellen Pfau, Joyce King, James Richter, Bill Showalter, Joanne Shrewsbury, Jason Mickel, Michael Miller

Pinellas County Staff: Liz Freeman, Samantha Shorr-Zigante, Mike Maroney, Bob Soptei, Michael Maroney, Andy Squires, David Talhouk

Welcome and Introductions

- Liz Freeman, Pinellas County Planning Department Principal Planner, welcomed everyone and began introductions.
- Mike Maroney, Senior Engineer in the Pinellas County Public Works Department - Engineering Division, Andy Squires Environmental Resources Management Division Administrator in the Pinellas County Department of Environmental Management and David Talhouk Grants Program Administrator in the Pinellas County Public Works Department - Engineering Division were introduced.

Review June Meeting Summary

- The workgroup reviewed the June meeting summary and Andy Squires requested one correction be made under the section titled *Discussion of Surface Water Management Element*. He said that the Pinellas County Department of Environmental Management's main concerns are water quality and watershed management.

Review Goals, Objectives and Policies and Make Recommendations

- The workgroup agreed to take home and review the handout titled *Specific Ideas from the workgroup for new and/or modified objectives and policies from discussion at June 8th workgroup meeting on Water Supply and Sanitary Sewer* to make sure there no more edits.
- Liz reminded the workgroup that if they have any comments regarding any of the handouts, they could email or call staff at anytime.

Finish Surface Water Management Element Discussion

- The workgroup reviewed the handout titled *Status of Surface Water Management and Floodplains Section of the Natural, Historic and Cultural Resources Goals, Objectives, and Policies in the Pinellas County Comprehensive Plan as of June 2004*.
- Liz mentioned that the calendar dates throughout the goals, objectives and policies would be updated.
- James Richter suggested defining the terms that are used in the handout and Liz said that staff would address that during the update of the Comprehensive Plan.

Watershed Management Plans

- The workgroup had questions about watershed management plans so Andy Squires, of Pinellas County Department of Environmental Management, discussed watershed management plans (Plans). He said that currently there are three new watershed management plans: Cross Bayou, Roosevelt, and Brooker Creek. Separate Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) money goes towards development of these Plans.
- A comprehensive plan is developed for each watershed to help identify trouble spots with respect to flooding, water quality, and habitat. Over 100 sites are monitored monthly for water quality

countywide and the monitoring results are used as one factor to prioritize where watershed-planning efforts are needed. A second monitoring effort samples freshwater creeks and streams to determine annual pollutant loading from over 20 of the 52 drainage basins within Pinellas County. A third monitoring element determines the efficiency of select Best Management Practices (BMPs), such as stormwater ponds.

- Watershed plans typically encompass three phases. First is the diagnostic phase where detailed information about the watershed is gathered and mapped. This may include topography, hydrology, land use, vegetative habitats, water quality, etc. The second phase focuses on the development of a set of structural and non-structural management alternatives applicable to the watershed. The third phase typically involves a modeling element to predict how well certain management alternatives will improve existing conditions and meet the goals and objectives of the watershed plan.
- The last element also includes a cost analyses and a final set of recommendations for subsequent projects to be implemented. This planning process can take from two to five years. The cost range for a consultant to complete a watershed plan has ranged from \$300,000-\$500,000. It should be noted that many of the goals and objectives of our watershed plans are consistent and coordinated with those of the Tampa Bay Estuary Program (TBEP).

Review of the Goals, Objectives and Policies of the Surface Water Management and Floodplains Section of the Natural, Historic and Cultural Resources Elements

- The workgroup agreed that the Goal 1 of the Surface Water Management Element was good.
- Policy 1.1.4. – Dianne Wheatley Giliotti asked for specific examples of when surface water management project scheduling and priorities have been flexible. David Talhouk, of Pinellas County Public Works Department, gave an example of the Brooker Creek Watershed Management Plan explaining that funds were allocated to this project allowing the County to move up the enhancements.
- Objective 1.3. – Joyce King commented that she had once read an article regarding people paving their backyards in order to better enjoy outdoor living. The workgroup discussed how altering patios could affect neighborhood drainage systems overall. Liz Freeman, of the Pinellas County Planning Department, said that maybe we should have an educational objective in our Comprehensive Plan regarding this.
- Policy 1.3.2. – The workgroup asked if the phrase “applicable federal standards” should be added to this policy. Pinellas County Environmental Management and Public Works staff said that Lake Seminole and Lake Tarpon are Outstanding Florida Waters (OFWs), however, federal requirements are not applicable in this policy. Dianne Wheatley Giliotti inquired about including the terms Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) and the Clean Water Act in the policies. Andy Squires said that that language will be included in the watershed plans as well as the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit so the County will already be addressing those requirements.
- James Richter said that eventually Pinellas County staff might end up wanting to challenge the TMDLs so maybe we shouldn’t list them in the Comprehensive Plan.
- Policy 1.3.3. – Regarding nitrogen reduction loading, Pinellas County has always met or exceeded the standards set forth in the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP) for Tampa Bay.
- Policy 1.7.2. – The workgroup suggested the County have an aquatic preserve management plan as well as a policy to encourage the Florida Department of Environmental Protection to develop plans for spoil islands.
- Policy 1.7.7. – The workgroup suggested more educational policies.
- Policy 1.7.12. – Joyce King asked if there is a list of lands that Pinellas County would like to acquire. Andy Squires said each time an opportunity to buy land come up, there’s a field evaluation of properties that County staff sees as a fit for environmental purposes.

Stormwater Utility Discussion

- Joyce King asked about the progress of Pinellas County implementing a stormwater utility.
- David Talhouk said that no decision had been made, however, a study is in process. A stormwater utility would provide revenue for operation and maintenance.

Assignments for Next Meeting

- The workgroup 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 workgroup's request, there will be a short presentation on Low Impact Development techniques at the next meeting.
- Due to time constraints, staff will continue the discussion of floodplains at the next meeting. However, per the request of the workgroup, staff will discuss recreation, culture, education and leisure at the following meeting.

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