

PINELLAS COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL WORKGROUP
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2004
MEETING SUMMARY

ATTENDEES:

Environmental Work Group: James Richter, Bill Showalter, Joanne Shrewsbury, Holly Greening

Pinellas County Staff: Gordon Beardslee, Liz Freeman, Samantha Shorr-Zigante, Al Navaroli, Kelli Levy, David Talhouk

Welcome and Introductions

- Gordon Beardslee, Pinellas County Planning Department Administrator, welcomed everyone and began introductions.
- Kelli Levy, Program Manager in the Pinellas County Department of Environmental Management -Water Resources Division, Al Navaroli, Manager in the Pinellas County Development Review Services Department and David Talhouk Grants Program Administrator in the Pinellas County Public Works Department - Engineering Division were introduced.

Review July Meeting Summary

- The workgroup reviewed the July meeting summary and no corrections were made.

Review Goals, Objectives and Policies and Make Recommendations

- The workgroup reviewed and discussed the handout titled *Specific ideas from the workgroup for new and/or modified objectives and policies - Surface Water Management Element*.
- Bill Showalter asked if there were any specific policies regarding hurricanes.
 - Al Navaroli answered that the Pinellas County codes weren't written to cover any extreme upset (i.e., hurricanes or droughts). He said that it's very difficult to have the rules and regulations cover all possible circumstances.
- James Richter suggested discussing Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) regulations in the Surface Water Management Element.
 - Holly Greening suggested limiting the number of times buildings could be rebuilt after flooding.
 - Al said that FEMA regulates this with their "repetitive claims loss." This term applies to homes or businesses that were damaged by flooding twice in the past 10 years, where the cost of repairing the flood damage, on average, equaled or exceeded 25% of the property market value at the time of each flood. Also, there must have been flood insurance claim payments for each of the two flood losses and the community's floodplain management ordinance must have a repetitive loss provision (source: <http://www.fema.gov/>).
- Holly asked, relating to Policy 1.3.1, which requires the County to enforce County stormwater regulations on all development except individual single-family areas, to allow stormwater treatment banks/mitigation banks as an option for the individual single family areas or redevelopment areas where standards could not be met.
- Holly asked how the County addresses private stormwater treatment areas as well as how the County maintains existing stormwater treatment systems.
 - Kelli Levy said that the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) permits the private stormwater treatment areas in the County. However, if the private stormwater treatment area is on a public road, then the

County usually has an easement over to the area. Overall, it's the private community's responsibility to maintain the treatment area.

- One resource the communities have is Adopt-a-Pond. This is a program that provides community groups with information resources to conserve, restore and create wetland habitats. This program can work in some cases.
- Kelli added that it's possible to require new development to maintain SWFWMD requirements (i.e., not coming in and spraying with pesticides, insecticides, etc.). However, Al replied that if the County were to pursue that, it would be a violation of site plans and it would be going against public interests.
- Liz said it's appropriate to have policy with continuing support for the Adopt-a-Pond program because of its educational value.

Finish Surface Water Management Element Discussion – Floodplains 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*.
- Chapter 158, Floodplain Management, better explains floodplain concepts. There are statistical risks associated with floodplains. For example, there is a 4% chance of flooding in the 25-year floodplain.
- Gordon said that 25-year floodplains identified back in the 1970s are now identified as preservation.
- Holly suggested we have a policy to support trees within the floodplains.
- James asked about the conservation easements.
 - Al said that they are being done and enforced even in annexations. Overall, they are very successful.
- Al added that DRS staff implements numerous erosion control requirements. This means that all permits must have erosion control methods. DRS staff performs weekly inspections on sites one acre and larger. Overall, the County has continually increased its enforcement over the years with these requirements.
- Al also explained that all Pinellas County zoning codes have requirements regarding the provision of open space areas within future developed areas. For example, commercial, office and industrial development has an impervious surface ratio requirement. This means that only a certain percentage of a site can be impervious surface while the remainder has to be open space. Other examples include: a percentage of residential development must remain open space, multi-family developments must leave 20% of the land for common recreation area use and for development sites 10 acres or larger, there must be a 3% upland buffer.

Low Impact Development (LID) Presentation

- Holly distributed a handout regarding the basic principles of LID. She then proceeded with a short presentation on how LID got started, how it might work in the Tampa Bay area and how LID techniques could help overall.
- Holly said that rain gardens and pervious surfaces might be the most effective methods.
- The Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council (TBRPC) is currently developing an action plan to identify different groups that would be interested in doing further research on LID in the Bay area and then will do a Request for Proposal (RFP) for funding.
- James asked if LID has been discussed with the municipalities that charge stormwater fees, because some municipalities will offer discounts on those fees when LID techniques are being used.
- The workgroup also asked if the County has considered providing incentives to developers if they practice LID.

- Kelli also provided the workgroup with some County-specific LID projects. These examples include: new swale systems at Walsingham Road from 119th – 125th, no curb system in the Wall Springs Park Phase I development as well as different approaches to flood control.

Additional Items

- Bill asked what the status of the Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR) was?
- Gordon said that staff was to have a draft completed in January 2005. so the workgroup is on schedule.
- Gordon said he anticipated the workgroup would need another two to three meetings to complete the tasks at hand because we need to discuss the Recreation Open Space / Culture, Education and Leisure and the Natural, Historic and Cultural Resources Elements of the Pinellas County Comprehensive Plan. The workgroup requested that we finish those Elements in two meetings instead of three. Gordon agreed.
- Liz said that overall, staff has ideas regarding enhancing education policies. Gordon added that the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) has held strong on not amending preservation-designated areas.

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 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.