

PINELLAS COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL WORKGROUP
TUESDAY, JUNE 8, 2004
MEETING SUMMARY

ATTENDEES:

Environmental Work Group: Jake Zimmerman, Dianne Wheatley Giliotti, Ellen Pfau, Joyce King, Holly Greening, James Richter, Bill Showalter

Pinellas County Staff: Gordon Beardslee, Liz Freeman, Samantha Shorr-Zigante, Chris Staubus, Eric Fehrmann, Al Navaroli, Mike Maroney

Welcome and Introductions

- Gordon Beardslee, Pinellas County Planning Department Administrator, welcomed everyone and began introductions.
- Chris Staubus, Assistant Director of Pinellas County Utilities, Mike Maroney, Senior Engineer in the Pinellas County Public Works Department - Engineering Division, Al Navaroli, Manager of Pinellas County Development Review Services Department, and Eric Fehrmann, Environmental Program Manager in the Pinellas County Environmental Management Department - Environmental Support Services Division, were introduced.

Review Goals, Objectives and Policies and Make Recommendations

- Gordon Beardslee, Pinellas County Planning Department Administrator, reviewed a handout titled *Specific ideas from the workgroup for new and/or modified objectives and policies from discussion at May 11 workgroup meeting on Water Supply and Sanitary Sewer* with the group.
- The group then presented their recommendations as follows:
 1. Regarding Water Supply Policy 1.4.3 promoting the “use of native and drought tolerant plants through continued public education and enforcement of development regulations,” Holly Greening had previously 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 - something like:

“By [some date], Pinellas County facilities [above a certain size?] shall have 80% of their irrigated landscaped area in native or drought-tolerant landscaping”.

 - Dianne Wheatley Giliotti agreed that the County should be a role model.
 - Gordon Beardslee noted that as a result of safety concerns, the Pinellas County school board couldn’t be included in having “80% of irrigated landscaped area.”
 - Jake Zimmerman commented that from landscaping businesses’ point of view, it’s confusing not having the same landscaping requirements throughout the county.
 - Overall, the group agreed that, after staff modified the language with the workgroup’s recommendations, this policy would move forward as a proposal to the Board of County Commissioners.
 2. Elaborating on Policy 2.1.12 of the Natural, Historic, and Cultural Resources Element (where the County is supporting Southwest Florida Water Management District [SWFWMD] in identifying recharge areas), James Richter said it would be more advantageous to make a definitive statement about augmenting recharge areas, not just locating recharge areas.
 - At this point in the meeting, Gordon Beardslee distributed two maps regarding recharge to the Floridan Aquifer. He then reviewed these maps and said it’s

important to even recharge surficial aquifer systems, as it's good for irrigation, so this will be important as the County redevelops.

- Gordon also said that staff would incorporate an intergovernmental agency coordination policy regarding identifying recharge areas into the Comprehensive Plan.
3. Related to Objective 1.8 of the Sanitary Sewer Element, Holly Greening had previously suggested including language that strengthens the commitment to long-term maintenance of the sewer system (perhaps by implementing the EPA's Capacity Management Operations and Maintenance [CMOM] Program).
 - Chris Staubus, Assistant Director of Pinellas County Utilities, said that the most recent self-audit, which was actually completed by a consultant, did not point to any maintenance issues. However, Chris said that the County is committed to self-audits. Holly suggested instead of including CMOM recommendations, incorporating language relating to conducting periodic audits and addressing results of audits.
 - Gordon Beardslee said that the revised Pinellas County Comprehensive Plan will have a greater emphasis overall on maintenance.
 4. Joyce King had previously suggested additional policies encouraging reduction in lawn sizes.
 - For example, Pasco County's ordinance was amended in 2003 so that homeowners can only spray irrigate 50% of their lawns.
 - Jake Zimmerman said that there should be some equity regarding allowing the same amount of watering whether residents are on a well or reclaimed water, otherwise some properties end up with dry looking landscapes and others with lush looking landscapes.
 - Joyce said that we should support more education rather than regulation (e.g., like *Utilitalk* which is distributed in the utility bills of unincorporated Pinellas County residents).
 - Overall, the group agreed that the specific language of the policies would be worked out later, but that the concepts would move forward as a proposal to the Board of County Commissioners.

Discussion of Surface Water Management Element

Pinellas County Public Works Department - Engineering Division

- Mike Maroney, Senior Engineer in the Pinellas County Public Works Department - Engineering Division, discussed the Public Works approach to stormwater management.
- He said that flooding is the number one department concern, with water quality and water quantity management following.
- Stormwater management within the Public Works Department receives approximately \$3-4 million yearly in funding.
- The Public Works Department has a task team that prioritizes projects. One of the team's projects is to target specific creeks over the next five to ten years and help prevent erosion. Another significant work effort is maintaining the 940 County retention/detention ponds.

Pinellas County Environmental Management Department - Environmental Support Services Division

- Eric Fehrmann, Environmental Program Manager in the Pinellas County Environmental Management Department - Environmental Support Services Division discussed the Environmental Management approach to stormwater management.
- He said that health and safety are the department's main concerns, followed by water quality.
- Currently, staff is looking at retrofitting systems and specifically installing an alum system at Lake Seminole.

Pinellas County Development Review Services Department

- Al Navaroli, Manager of Pinellas County Development Review Services Department, discussed the Development Review Services approach to stormwater management.
- Development Review Services deals with the private sector.
- The department adopted SWFWMD's codes into theirs but made the codes more stringent. These codes deal with aquifer recharge, flood control in the unincorporated areas, etc.
- Redevelopment is judged on a site-by-site basis. It is often difficult for small sites to meet current regulations, but any improvement is better than no improvement.

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.
- Based on the group discussion, staff will revise the handout titled *Specific ideas from the workgroup for new and/or modified objectives and policies from discussion at May 11 workgroup meeting on Water Supply and Sanitary Sewer* and distribute for the next meeting.
- Staff will provide data regarding age group change over time for the next meeting.
- Due to time constraints, staff will continue the discussion of surface water management at the next meeting. However, per the request of the workgroup, staff will consider discussing recreation, culture, education and leisure at the following meeting.

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