

ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE FORUM
Thursday, September 7, 2006
MEETING MINUTES
Approved by Forum at October 5, 2006 Meeting

Attendees:

1. Jake Stowers	Forum Member
2. Tom Muntz	Forum Member
3. Gabriel Vargo	Forum Member
4. Holly Greening	Forum Member
5. Jerry Smith	Forum Member
6. Mark Mueller (for Melissa Grigione)	Forum Member
7. Barbara Hoffman	Forum Member
8. Jan Allyn	Forum Member
9. Bill Stokes	Forum Member
10. Joe Maier	Forum Member
11. Walt Hoskins	Forum Member
12. Bruce Hasbrouck	Forum Member
13. Howard Rutherford	Forum Member
14. Will Davis	Pinellas County Environmental Mgmt
15. Andy Squires	Pinellas County Environmental Mgmt.
16. Sidney Crawford	Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve, Inc
17. Lorraine Margeson	Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve, Inc.
18. Cathie Foster	Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve, Inc.
19. Elizabeth Warren	Assistant County Administrator
20. Bob Newcomb	Gulfport Water Watch
21. Mike Engelmann	Pinellas County Utilities
22. Dave Slonena	Pinellas County Utilities
23. Pick Talley	Pinellas County Utilities
24. Janice Toernius	Citizen
25. Gordon Beardslee	Planning Department
26. Elizabeth Freeman	Planning Department
27. Roger Krieg	Citizen
28. Maggie Hall	Pinellas County Communications
29. Nanette Wiser	Pinellas County Communications
30. Maya Burke	SWFWMD
31. Daniel Cutler	Citizen
32. Christine Foley	Citizen
33. Tony Smith	Pinellas County Channel 18
34. H. Bruce Rinker	Pinellas County ELD
35. Lisa Baltus	Pinellas County ELD
36. Steve Harper	Pinellas County ELD
37. Cathy Flegel	Pinellas County ELD
38. Lynn Smith	Pinellas County ELD
39. Keith Thompson	Pinellas County ELD
40. Cathy Quindiagan	Citizen
41. John Miolla	Citizen
42. Bob Loos	Citizen
43. Dave Kantz	Forum Member

Handouts: September 7, 2006 Meeting Agenda; Meeting Minutes of August 10, 2006; Environmental Science Forum Members List; Resolution 99-196 Brooker Creek Preserve; Goals and Mission of Brooker Creek Preserve; Draft ORDINANCE for protection of Parks and Environmental Lands: Proposed ESF methodology for discussing Topics/Issues.

I. **Welcome and Introduction:**

- Co-Chairs Holly Greening and Ray Wunderlich welcomed Forum members and the public to the meeting.
- Holly Greening acknowledged that Friends of Weedon Island, Inc., had supplied snacks and requested the patience of all for this is a process in development.
- Holly pointed out public comments are very important and appreciated. Cards are provided on the back table, fill out which agenda item you would like to address during the meeting as we have reserved three time periods for public comments.
- Liz Warren commented that Steve Spratt is attending a Board meeting concerning County budget for FY07 and therefore could not attend.

II. **Minutes** of the last meeting, August 10, 2006 were approved as submitted.

III. **Forum Business:**

A. Forum & Citizen Interaction via ESF Website

Nanette Wiser briefly reviewed the ESF website interactive functions using the Forum message board, posting citizen comments on the "It's Your Times" website and the Contact Us function to contact County staff.

B. Update on ESF Member Alternates

Holly Greening asked that any member of the Forum wanting to designate an alternate must fill out a form. She requested that when the form is completed, immediately forward it to Andy Squires.

C. Replacement of ESF Member

Holly requested Forum members give thought for a replacement for Dr. Alison Ormsby, who can no longer serve on our Forum due to time constraints and to please keep in mind that this position was occupied by an educator. Holly also requested that members submit names of suggested replacements to Andy Squires.

IV. **Brooker Creek Preserve Overview:**

Dr. H. Bruce Rinker gave an overview presentation, "Brooker Creek Preserve: The Challenges of Ecological Management in an Urban Environment." This encompassed Environmental Lands Division (ELD) mission, vision, partnerships, natural history, ecology, issues and conflicts at Brooker Creek Preserve.

V. **"A Plan to Preserve Brooker Creek Preserve":**

- Barbara Hoffman, Vice-Chairman for Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve, Inc., presented the history of the Friends and reasons why they are suggesting the rezoning and land use proposal. She stated the Friends were established as a 501(c)(3) in 1994 and has a twelve year working history with ELD. Barbara read the mission and goals of the 1993 Brooker Creek Management Plan. She also spoke concerning Resolution 99-196 which reestablished the Board's commitment to the protection and management of Brooker Creek Preserve and the well field areas within.
- Matt Poling, Sr. Executive of the Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve, Inc., presented the Friends proposal to change the zoning and land use designations for Brooker Creek Preserve. Jake Stowers gave a historical perspective, described the zoning/land use process and addressed some points of the Friends proposal.

VI. **Comments/Questions on Items IV and V**

A. County Comments

Will Davis stated he definitely embraces the goal to preserve the preserves. He acknowledged there are technical issues with the zoning and land use proposal. He further stated that Utilities bought property in Brooker Creek Preserve with bonds purchased by Utilities customers and therefore there is a problem pre-empting Utilities use of the properties. He indicated this issue was undergoing legal review by the County. He passed out a draft ordinance for the protection of park and environmental lands as a work in process that was requested by Commissioner Latvala. This draft ordinance will be posted on the ESF website. He clarified there has never been a proposal by County Commission to remove the Preserve land north of Keystone Road. Also, he clarified that it was always known that when Utilities property was added into the Preserve that the property may be needed for Utilities purposes. He pointed out that he didn't understand why Craig Hegel had forgotten about that as it had been discussed several times. In response to a question about a legal requirement for Utilities to conform to the Management Plan, he said there is no legal requirement but rather direction from the County Commission to conform to the Plan.

B & C. ESF Questions and Public comments

A number of questions and statements ensued from Forum members and the public. It was decided that a sub-committee of the following members and staff would meet to discuss the Friend's proposal and the draft County ordinance. The sub-committee includes: Will Davis, Jake Stowers, Pick Talley, Howard Rutherford, Barbara Hoffman, Gabe Vargo, Gordon Beardslee, Liz Freeman, Dave Kandz, Bruce Rinker and Liz Warren. Barbara Hoffman volunteered to take the lead.

VII. Brooker Creek Preserve Project UpDates

A. Project List

i. Maintenance Building at BCP

Keith Thompson gave a presentation on a proposed maintenance shop at Brooker Creek Preserve.” Keith provided information on why ELD needs the shop, where the shop will be located and what the impact might be on the environment. Questions were asked by several members. A suggestion was made to consider sustainable building practices. Barbara Hoffman stated that it is obvious that this building is needed. Holly Greening asked for public comments: there were none. Holly stated she will be working on language for a draft that will include pros and cons. Members offered the following “Pro & Con” findings:

PRO:

The ESF finds that the construction of the Maintenance Building at Brooker Creek Preserve as proposed by the County is critical to support the maintenance of the Preserve, and that the location proposed is appropriate.

The ESF also finds that the incorporation of sustainable building practices, such as the use of appropriate recycled building materials, green roof design if appropriate, and the use of water-wise and native planting material at the site would enhance the proposed design and provide an example of such building practices to the public.

CON:

The ESF finds that there may be impacts to existing environmental conditions at the site during construction, but that these impacts will likely be minor and of short duration.

When the statement is complete it will go to Andy Squires and the County Attorney's Office for review. Holly pointed out that Mr. Walt Hoskins has submitted a proposed methodology for discussing topics and issues for the Forum to consider.

ii. Brooker Creek Therapeutic Horseback Riding Facility

Will Davis addressed the Forum and stated the County has refocused the plans for the Brooker Creek Preserve Therapeutic Horseback Riding Facility from Brooker Creek Preserve to the Kiwanis facility near Walsingham Park. He indicated the therapeutic community is very receptive to this change.

iii. Brooker Creek Preserve Golf Course Irrigation

Pick Talley gave an update and told ESF that if time constraints for the Forum's review were a factor he could ask for another extension beyond November 6th. He indicated a full report would be given at the October meeting. He also stated, at this time, it was still his intent to complete the application for the permit.

iv. Irrigation Well at Blending Plant at Brooker Creek Preserve

Pick Talley reported the 4" landscape irrigation well was installed. A suggestion was made to use native plants which would reduce irrigation needs.

v. Blending Facility at Brooker Creek Preserve

Pick Talley gave an update on the Blending Facility at Brooker Creek Preserve.

vi. Recreation Fields at Brooker Creek Preserve

Liz Warren gave a short report on the project history and indicated East Lake Youth Sports Association was moving forward with their site plan and SWFWMD stormwater permitting. She indicated they may also be required to obtain a "special exception" from the County's Board of Adjustment.

B & C. ESF Discussion and Public Comment:

Questions were asked by the public concerning the process the County used to receive approval for the blending plant and the conflict between the County definition of "passive recreation" and the recreation field.

VIII. Upcoming Issues for Discussion

A. List of Issues

Holly quickly mentioned the issues listed in the agenda for future review.

B. Additional Requests from ESF Members

Jake Stowers asked that the Forum review the Counties proposed projects for the Penny for Pinellas extension.

IX. **Public Comment**

One suggestion was made to hold the meetings at Brooker Creek if Brooker Creek Preserve was the agenda.

X. **Meeting Adjourned**

Holly Greening once again thanked everyone for the cooperation in the meeting today. She welcomed any suggestions and comments on the meeting. She reminded everyone to watch the Forum Internet link for updates and announced the next meeting at Brooker Creek Environmental Education Center on October 5, 2006.

Meeting adjourned at 6:06 p.m.