

Environmental Science Forum (ESF)
Weedon Island Preserve Cultural & Natural History Center
St. Petersburg, FL
Thursday, September 4, 2008
4:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

MEETING MINUTES

Approved by Forum at December 4, 2008 Meeting

Attendees:

- | | | |
|-----|-------------------|--|
| 1. | Cathy Harrelson | Forum Member, Co-Chair |
| 2. | Tom Muntz | Forum Member |
| 3. | Doug Robison | Forum Member, Co-Chair |
| 4. | Lindsay Cross | Forum Member |
| 5. | Mark Mueller | Forum Member |
| 6. | Bruce Hasbrouck | Forum Member |
| 7. | Joseph Maier | Forum Member |
| 8. | Dr. Randy Runnels | Forum Member |
| 9. | Jewel Cole | Pinellas County Attorney |
| 10. | Andy Squires | Pinellas County Environmental Management |
| 11. | Will Davis | Pinellas County Environmental Management |
| 12. | Dave Slonena | Pinellas County Utilities |
| 13. | Thomas Menke | Pinellas County Public Works |
| 14. | Marty Clasen | PBSJ |
| 15. | Tom Farkas | PBSJ |
| 16. | Ken Caraccia | PBSJ |
| 17. | Pete Lopez | Citizen |
| 18. | Chris Claus | Citizen |
| 19. | Sidney Crawford | Citizen |

Handouts: Pinellas County Environmental Science Forum Agenda; ESF Meeting Minutes from July 10, 2008; List of (ESF) Voting Members and Alternates.

I. Welcome and Introduction:

- Co-Chair Mr. Doug Robison called the meeting to order generally welcoming members and citizens.

II. Additional Agenda Items:

- Mr. Tom Muntz requested the status of potential new ESF members. Discussion followed about the balance between members with “Policy” and “Science” perspectives, how an additional member means one more would be needed (9) to attain a quorum, the need to get academia representation, and that the current transition to a new County Administrator may not be good timing. Mr. Andy Squires noted the handout of voting members and their

self-assigned Science and/or Policy perspectives indicate a nearly even balance of Science and Policy perspectives.

- Mr. Tom Muntz also noted that some members have not designated an Alternate. He suggested that if more Alternates were assigned, it should be easier to attain a quorum. Mr. Robison said the intention was for all members to designate an Alternate. County staff agreed to send out an e-mail encouraging each member who has not designated an Alternate, to assign one as soon as possible, subject to County Administrator approval. Ms. Harrelson stressed that it is each member's responsibility to make sure their Alternate attends meetings in their absence.
- Ms. Cathy Harrelson recommended, with agreement from the other members, to delay further discussion about new ESF members and Alternates to the next meeting.

III. Announcements:

- Ms. Lindsay Cross announced the Tampa Bay Estuary Program (TBEP) Bay Mini Grant program is accepting new applications with an October 1, 2008 deadline. The TBEP contact person is Ms. Misty Cladas.
- Ms. Harrelson said the Sierra Club, Gulf Restoration Network, and Defenders of Wildlife is sponsoring a Red Tide Village Forum, Sept. 9, 7 p.m., at the St. Petersburg Times Auditorium. The meeting will include a film followed by a panel discussion.
- Ms. Harrelson also said Dr. Randy Runnels will be speaking about his trip to China at the September 18th Sierra Club meeting being held at Moccasin Lake Nature Park.
- Mr. Tom Muntz announced the Friends of Weedon Is. Board meeting October 6, 5:50 p.m. They will discuss seeking funds for the restoration and eventual display of the recently discovered dug-out canoe.
- Mr. Will Davis said the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) recently approved the Brooker Creek Preserve (BCP) Management Plan. The process to approve the land use and rezoning changes consistent with the BCP Plan are ongoing. The Charter Amendment for the sale, disposition, and lease of county Environmental Lands is moving forward and will be on the November ballot. Finally, the purchase of the 871-acre Wilde Trust property is moving forward. One hundred of the 871 acres will be purchased with Parks money to set aside for recreational fields adjacent to the existing ball fields north of Keystone Road.

IV. Approval of June 5, 2008 Meeting Minutes:

- Dr. Randy Runnels moved to approve the minutes from July 10, 2008. Mr. Mark Mueller seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

V. Election of Co-Chairs

- Mr. Doug Robison noted that Mr. Bruce Hasbrouck was nominated and agreed to serve as the “Science” co-chair if elected. Ms. Cathy Harrelson agreed to serve a second one-year “Policy” co-chair term if elected. No other nominations were received. Ms. Lindsay Cross made a motion to approve Mr. Hasbrouck and Ms. Harrelson as co-chairs; seconded by Mr. Mark Mueller. The motion carried unanimously. The new co-chairs will begin serving at the next ESF meeting.
- Mr. Will Davis presented a letter and a gift from the Assistant County Administrator, Ms. Elizabeth Warren, thanking each of the co-chairs, Mr. Robison and Ms. Harrelson, for their exceptional service to the county over the last year.

VI. Lake Tarpon Supplementary Supply Feasibility Study and ASR Project

- Prior to the presentation by PBSJ staff, Mr. Robison recused himself from any Forum votes, recommendations, or decisions on this agenda item due to a conflict of interest. *At this point in the meeting, the remaining seven ESF members present and able to vote was one short of the needed eight members for a quorum.*
- Mr. Dave Slonena of Pinellas County Utilities briefly introduced the project. Mr. Slonena said there were two projects slated: 1) a direct withdrawal year round from Lake Tarpon to supplement the reclaimed water system; and 2) an Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) project to seasonally withdraw lake water during the wet season, treat and store it underground (Aquifer Storage), and then pump stored water from the aquifer (Recovery) to supplement the reclaimed water supply during the dry season. The major objective of the ASR project is to reduce potable water demand by providing additional reclaimed water to preclude additional use of potable water for irrigation during the dry season.
- Mr. Slonena said that the year round direct withdrawal project (#1) will not be moving forward. He explained how important it was to meet reclaimed water demands during the dry season, and that project data results caused concern regarding the availability of lake water to be withdrawn during the dry season. Consequently, proceeding with the ASR project with wet season lake withdrawals was the preferred option. Mr. Slonena also said the year round withdrawal project could be perceived by the general public to negatively impact the lake levels.
- Mr. Slonena introduced PBSJ project manager, Mr. Tom Farkas, who in turn introduced the remaining team members Mr. Ken Caraccia and Mr. Marty Clasen. The PBSJ project team presented the details of the year round direct withdrawal project, then the ASR project, followed by a question and answer session between the project team and the Forum members.
- After considerable discussion by members with regard to a recommendation, a consensus position was reached. No vote was taken since

a quorum was not present. The remaining Forum members present supported the ASR project and its purpose to reduce potable water demand. Members recognized that other measures, such as the use of Florida-Friendly landscaping practices, would also help reduce potable water demand. The Forum agreed, based on the PBSJ presentation, that no significant adverse environmental impacts are expected to occur especially given the state regulatory environmental safeguards already built into, and required for, the ASR project. There was some discussion of preparing a letter in support for the project, but no action on this could be taken given the lack of a quorum.

VII. Fred Howard Park Causeway Reconstruction

- Mr. Thomas Menke, of Pinellas County Public Works presented project details for the Fred Howard Park Causeway Reconstruction. The one-year project began September 2, 2008 and will result in closure of the causeway for the entire one-year period. The original bridge was built in 1968; it is in poor condition and will cost \$4.8 million to reconstruct. It will be reconstructed on the same footprint as the original bridge and will incorporate a stormwater treatment system for runoff. No action was asked of the Forum on this item.

VIII. Public Comment

- Mr. Sidney Crawford, as a representative of Clearwater Audubon and the Suncoast Shorebird Partnership, expressed concerns about the causeway reconstruction project. Mr. Crawford reminded the Forum that, at the previous Forum meeting, he requested the Causeway Reconstruction project be presented with information on mitigation measures to protect wintering piping plovers, a listed federally threatened species under the Endangered Species Act. He commented that no mention of such mitigation was in Mr. Menke's project description. Mr. Crawford also mentioned concern over several other state and federally listed bird species that may forage and/or nest within or near the work site or on the Fred Howard Park beachfront. He expressed that consideration was needed for identifying piping plover presence and any construction activity that might affect piping plover presence and potentially disturb the nearby eagles' nest. Furthermore, Mr. Crawford would like permission, on behalf of the organizations he represents, to obtain limited controlled access to Fred Howard Park beach to observe and count birds during the one-year construction period.
- Mr. Menke said the required construction permits were approved by the state and federal agencies and no environmental mitigation or protection measures were required. Mr. Menke also suggested to Mr. Crawford that it would be best to express his concerns to Mr. Paul Cozzie, Director of the county's Culture, Education, and Leisure department. Mr. Crawford said he would write a letter to Mr. Cozzie on his concerns and requests.

Mr. Doug Robison adjourned the meeting at 6:37 p.m.