

Environmental Science Forum (ESF)
Weedon Island Preserve Cultural & Natural History Center
St. Petersburg, FL
Thursday, 6 August 2009
4:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

MEETING MINUTES

Approved by Forum at October 1, 2009 Meeting

Attendees:

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| 1. | Andy Squires | Pinellas County Environmental Management |
| 2. | Kelli Hammer Levy | Pinellas County Watershed Management Division |
| 3. | Dr. Steve Harper | Pinellas County Environmental Lands Division |
| 4. | Cathy Harrelson | Forum Member, Co-Chair |
| 5. | Irin Kety | City of Largo |
| 6. | Tom Muntz | Forum Member |
| 7. | Joseph Maier | Forum Member |
| 8. | Jason Ester | Pinellas County Attorney |
| 9. | Barbara Hoffman | Forum Member |
| 10. | Elizabeth Carnahan | Alternate for Dr. Randy Runnels |
| 11. | Mark Mueller | Forum Member |
| 12. | Lindsay Cross | Forum Member |
| 13. | Howard Rutherford | Forum Member |
| 14. | Phil Compton | Citizen |
| 15. | Jeanne Murphy | Forum Member |

Handouts: Pinellas County Environmental Science Forum (ESF) Agenda; ESF Meeting Minutes from Thursday, 7 May 2009; Updated List of Members and Alternates For ESF; Landscape Maintenance and Fertilizer Ordinance PowerPoint Notes; Draft Landscape/Fertilizer Ordinance (7-20-08 version); Parks and Recreation Budget History FY06-FY10.

I. Welcome and Introduction

- Co-Chair Ms. Cathy Harrelson called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m. with a general welcome. Mr. Andy Squires introduced staff from Pinellas County.

II. Additional Agenda Items

- Mr. Tom Muntz asked if his Alternate could be switched with Mr. Howard Rutherford's Alternate. Co-chair Ms. Cathy Harrelson remarked that Mr. Muntz and Mr. Rutherford should work out how best to assign their Alternates and then bring a recommendation to the ESF.
- Ms. Jeanne Murphy mentioned that she will be bringing a recommended Alternate before the Forum soon.
- No additional agenda items were requested.

III. Announcements

- Mr. Andy Squires made the following announcements;
 - Mr. Jake Stowers and Ms. Darden Rice resigned from the ESF due to other commitments.
 - Ms. Barbara Howard was approved by the County Administrator as the Alternate for ESF member Mr. Mark Mueller.
 - Ms. Joanne Shrewsbury was approved by the County Administrator as the Alternate for ESF member Mr. Joseph Maier.

IV. Approval of May 7, 2009 Meeting Minutes

- Ms. Harrelson asked for any additions or changes to the May minutes.
- Ms. Barbara Hoffman made a motion to approve the May 7, 2009 minutes. Mr. Howard Rutherford seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion carried unanimously (9-0).

V. Draft County Landscape and Fertilizer Ordinance

- Ms. Kelli Levy distributed and summarized the working draft of the ordinance and a hard copy of PowerPoint slides illustrating the points she covered. Her summary included: the timing of application, fertilizer content, fertilizer free zones, management of grass clippings/vegetative material, exemptions, certification/training, the provision that there be no nitrogen or phosphorus fertilizer sales or applications during the “restricted period,” and enforcement. Ms. Levy explained that one of the big differences with the proposed County ordinance compared to other ordinances is the exemption allowing Nitrogen (N) and Phosphorus (P) fertilizer applications during the “restricted period” (June – September). The draft ordinance states that N or P may be applied if a tissue deficiency for N and/or P or a soil test for P has been conducted by UF/IFAS, and a N or P deficiency is confirmed.
- Co-Chair Ms. Cathy Harrelson, referencing Section 14(a) of the draft document, remarked that she thought the St. Petersburg ordinance called for a 10-foot low-maintenance “no mow” zone instead of the 6-foot zone specified in the County draft. Ms. Levy said she would consider a revision after checking other local government ordinances.
- Co-Chair Ms. Cathy Harrelson asked for public comment. Mr. Phil Compton remarked on the excellent job the County has done drafting the ordinance. He made two points relating to exemptions in Section 10: 1) the ordinance should consider including a setback for vegetable gardens near waterways, and 2) that no other Florida local governments included a tissue test variance and that he does not agree with this exemption. He emphasized that Pinellas County would be doing something unprecedented if the exemption is allowed, and it would be sending the wrong message to the public that it is okay to apply N during the rainy season if needed. Mr. Compton also noted that, due to the large number of impaired waterways, there is a real need for the proposed ordinance, and that education will be a key component of any successful effort. Mr. Irvin Kety, Public Works Director for the City of Largo, said he has brought the fertilizer ordinance to his commission as an informational item and that he appreciates this ordinance review effort by the ESF.
- Co-Chair Ms. Cathy Harrelson suggested an ESF subcommittee review the draft ordinance and bring their recommendations to the full ESF at the next meeting. All the members present agreed. Mr. Howard Rutherford, Ms. Lindsay Cross, and Ms. Cathy Harrelson volunteered for the subcommittee. Ms. Libby Carnahan said she would seek permission from her supervisor to serve on the subcommittee. The subcommittee meeting was scheduled for August 17, 2009 in the Weedon Island Cultural and Natural History Center conference room. Mr. Squires agreed to public notice the meeting and send out a meeting confirmation to the ESF early next week.

VI. Parks and Environmental Management Budget Updates

- Mr. Paul Cozzie distributed a summary of the proposed Parks budget including the expected impacts of the staff reductions. The summary included the total annual operating and capital budget reductions as well as the staff reductions that have occurred since 2007. Mr. Cozzie also discussed the expected impacts by work area that included Landscape Services, Facility Management, Resource Management, Safety and Security, Visitor Services, and Administration.
- Mr. Squires provided an overview of Environmental Management’s proposed budget focusing on staff reductions and some of the expected impacts. He briefly mentioned each

work unit that included Environmental Lands (15 positions lost, 17 remain), Watershed Management (2 positions lost, 2 transferred out, 15 remain), Air Quality (3 positions lost, 22 remain), Coastal Management (1 lost, 0 remain, work to be contracted out), Water and Navigation (2 positions lost, 6 remain), Code Enforcement (6 positions lost, 18 remain), and Administration (2 positions lost, 7 remain). Overall the department will lose 33 positions and full-time staff will drop from 118 to 85 with the biggest expected impacts to the Environmental Lands and Code Enforcement divisions.

- Dr. Steve Harper detailed the impacts to the Environmental Lands Division covering more specifics on position reductions, proposed Capital Improvement Program cuts, and the impacts to the hours of operations for the preserves and education centers. He noted that the division staff will be reduced from 32 to 17, a 47% loss. He also stated that the preserves and education centers (at Brooker Creek and Weedon Island) likely will be open for 4 and 3 days each week, respectively, after September 30, 2009. Dr. Harper concluded by emphasizing the division's priority to properly maintain and protect the ecological integrity of the nearly 16,000 acres of environmental lands managed by the County.

VII. Next Meeting

- Co-Chair Ms. Cathy Harrelson suggested that the September meeting include agenda items for a follow-up to the draft Landscape/Fertilizer ordinance to vote on a set of ESF comments to County Administration and an update on recommendations developed by the Feral Cats Committee.

VIII. Public Comment – no additional public comment was requested.

IX. Adjourn

- Co-Chair Mr. Tom Muntz dismissed forum members at 6:04 p.m.