

ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE FORUM

Thursday, August 10, 2006

MEETING SUMMARY

Approval by Forum at September 7, 2006 Meeting

Attendees:

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| 1. | Dr. Gabriel Vargo | Forum Member |
| 2. | Tom Muntz | Forum Member |
| 3. | Ray Wunderlich | Forum Member |
| 4. | Joe Maier | Forum Member |
| 5. | Cathy Harrelson (for Bill Stokes) | Forum Member |
| 6. | David Kandz | Forum Member |
| 7. | Jake Stowers | Forum Member |
| 8. | Holly Greening | Forum Member |
| 9. | Jan Allyn (for Bruce Turley) | Forum Member |
| 10. | Bruce Hasbrouck | Forum Member |
| 11. | Darden Rice | Forum Member |
| 12. | Barbara Hoffman | Forum Member |
| 13. | Doug Robison | Forum Member |
| 14. | Ann Hodgson (for Ann Paul) | Forum Member |
| 15. | Elizabeth Warren | Pinellas County Administration |
| 16. | Paul Cozzie | Pinellas County CEL |
| 17. | Nanette Wiser | Pinellas County Communications |
| 18. | Jewel White Cole | Pinellas County Attorney's Office |
| 19. | Dave Slonena | Pinellas County Utilites |
| 20. | Walter Hoskins | Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve |
| 21. | Rich McLean | Pinellas County Utilites |
| 22. | Will Davis | Pinellas County Env Mgmt |
| 23. | Steve Spratt | Pinellas County Administration |
| 24. | Andy Squires | Pinellas County Env Mgmt |
| 25. | Marcia Crawley | Pinellas County Communications |
| 26. | Ralph Kerr | SWFWMD |
| 27. | Cathy Quindiagan | Pinellas Chapter FL Native Plant Society |
| 28. | Andy McGregor, Jamie Hunter, | Progress Energy |
| 29. | Akos Arany; Melissa Seixus | Progress Energy |
| 30. | Amy Maguk | Citizen |
| 31. | Al Taylor | Gulfstream National Gas Systems |

Handouts: August 10, 2006 Meeting Agenda; June 26, 2006 Meeting Minutes; Summary of Florida's Government in the Sunshine Law; Progress Energy: Bartow Repowering Project; Gulfstream Natural Gas System: Phase IV Expansion.

1. Welcome and Introduction:

- The two Co-Chairs Darden Rice and Holly Greening welcomed Forum members and attendees to the meeting.
- Darden Rice stated the goal of meeting was to determine processes for effective consensus; an organizational meeting. Other than a presentation on Progress Energy's re-energizing of the Bartow Power Plant, no projects are on the agenda.
- County Administrator Steve Spratt offered thanks to Forum participants. He stated: the Forum is an experiment – never done before; it is a cross section of Forum participants whose names were recommended by Pinellas County Department of Environmental Management (DEM); and he offered to answer any questions.

1a. Minutes of the last meeting, June 26, 2006 were approved as submitted.

2. County ESF Website:

- Nanette Wiser, Pinellas County Communications: Highlighted the website and noted it is a work in progress; www.pinellascounty.org/scienceforum. The elements highlighted were:
 - Key links,
 - An email link to the Pinellas County staff
 - "Post Your Comments" – Allows citizens to leave comments on "Its Your Time" blog site of the St Pete Times
 - The possibility of an interactive message board for Forum members and a read only message board for citizens.

3. Forum Operations:

- A. Sunshine Law (Holly Greening): The law was summarized by Jewel Cole, County Attorney's Office. The following points were made: It is most important to define the Forum organization type, either a body offering recommendations, allowing for yes/no voting or fact-finding – limited in scope. Central question: How will the Forum deliver conclusions to the County?
- The public records and procedures of the Forum should be based on how the organization is defined. If it is a body operating under the Sunshine provisions, then it should be open to the public with notes, minutes, and all documents available. Forum members cannot talk among themselves outside the meeting regarding upcoming issues unless those discussions are properly noticed and open to the public. "Open" discussion includes conference calls. Criminal violations can be incurred; therefore it is strongly advised to not attempt to get "around" the law. If operating in the "Sunshine," members cannot talk to each other on the proposed message board even though its open to the public to read.
- Strengths of operating in the "Sunshine" groups are able to make recommendations and take positions, while allowing for complete transparency of interactions and discussions. Weaknesses: may stifle flexibility and creativity.

If not operating in the “Sunshine,” then members cannot make recommendations, but instead can list pros and cons of projects and list project alternatives that will minimize negative environmental impacts.

- Conclusion of discussion: Most members felt the need to operate outside of “Sunshine” provisions to allow for exchange of ideas and crossover discussions. They felt that even though officially operating outside the “Sunshine” provisions, they could still be effective, transparent, and keep the public well informed.
- A motion was moved and seconded not to adopt Sunshine Law protocol and procedures but to still operate with strong public outreach and transparency. Vote: Yea – 10, Nay – 4.
- Possible adoption of the Sunshine Law may be needed by the Forum in the future. The first draft project assessment report by the Forum will be evaluated with counsel from Jewel Cole to insure lawful compliance.

B. Role of Co-Chairs: (Darden Rice)

The following items were agreed upon.

- i. Maintain a Science Chair (Holly) and a Policy Chair (Darden)
- ii. Elect alternates to each chair. The Alternate for Science/Technical Chair will be Dr. Gabriel Vargo and Policy Chair Alternate will be Ray Wunderlich.
- iii. Create standing Work Groups for Science and Policy issues
- iv. Run ESF meetings
- v. Facilitate composition of agendas
- vi. Act as media contacts

C. Member Alternates (Holly Greening): Recommendation was made and agreed to allow Forum members the opportunity to formally designate a substitute, with the same rights and responsibilities, should they be unable to attend a meeting. If the ESF member represents an organization, then the organization should use its own protocol in determining an alternate. Staff will send out a reminder to all members to designate an alternate, should they desire. Additionally, the designee may attend meetings with the member. Members are asked to RSVP to meetings to determine if a simple majority will attend. The meeting may be rescheduled due to insufficient attendance. There was discussion whether there should be a quorum requirement? It was concluded that it is not an issue since other than procedural issues on how the Forum operates, votes will not be taken since the Forum will not be operating in the “Sunshine.”

D. Media Relations: (Darden Rice) The following items were agreed upon.

- i. Written press statements and releases representing the ESF get signed-off by both the Chairs and a designated staff person(s). Statement of findings will include both pro and con.

- ii. Work with county staff to fully utilize website and media outlets to promote meetings and publish findings
- iii. Chairs can work with media to assist in finding the best ESF experts/spokespersons on certain topics. The Co-Chairs will speak on behalf of ESF and individual members will prefix replies as “**my** opinion is...” and not speak for the group. Also, applies to blogs.

E. Public Participation at Meetings: (Holly Greening) the following items were agreed upon.

- i. Designate 20 minutes at the end of each meeting for public input on non-agenda items; allowing 2 minutes for each presentation on a first come first serve basis.
- ii. Public also to be permitted to comment at end of each agenda item presentation as follows - (1.) The Forum will discuss agenda item; (2.) Public will comment, with time limit at the discretion of the Chair; (3.) The Forum will discuss and review noting pros and cons;
- iii. Public will also be provided cards to write comments which will be posted on the Forum web-site.

F. ESF Interaction with Citizens: (Darden Rice) The following items were agreed upon.

- i. The ESF recognizes that open two-way communication is the key to our success
- ii. Create a clear way that the public can communicate to the forum
- iii. The ESF will receive public comments thru website
- iv. The ESF will set up times during meetings to hear public comment, both written and oral testimony
- v. We should discuss a system of how to catalogue relevant e-mails to take into account submitted ideas and comments. This item tabled for future discussion.
- vi. Recognize that there is such a heavy volume not all e-mails can be responded to individually, nor all blog posts responded to
- vii. The ESF shall publish agendas, minutes, notices of meetings, and relevant discussion in a timely way.
- viii. ESF shall work with County Communications Dept. to create an interactive web-based survey as one way to measure citizen support. A disclaimer will be added to any web-based surveys used that “This is not a scientific poll.”
- ix. The public may attend any general or subcommittee meeting set by the ESF

G. Member Replacements: (Darden Rice) The following was agreed upon.

ESF members will make recommendations to the County Administrator for replacement of members as needed, keeping in mind the need for balance of science, policy and expertise on the Forum.

H. Meeting Frequency: (Holly Greening). The following items were agreed upon.

- i.* Meetings will be first Thursday of the month with sub-committees to meet as needed;
- ii.* To allow for attendance and input from public, meeting time will be 3:00 to 6:00 PM;
- iii.* Location of meeting will rotate between north (Heritage Village) and south (Weedon Island) County venues, allowing for better access by public and Forum members.

4. Next Meeting Topic, Date, Location:

The next Forum meeting is September 7th, 3:00 to 6:00PM. The topic is Brooker Creek Preserve, Part 1. County staff will provide an overview of Brooker Creek Preserve. The location is Weedon Island Preserve Culture and Natural History Center. A complete list of agenda items will be included with meeting notification.

5. Future Meeting Topics and Issues:

- The location of the October 5th meeting is Brooker Creek Environmental Education Center, including a tour or hike of the preserve before the meeting. The topic is Brooker Creek Preserve, Part 2.
- Topic input: (1.) Send an email to Co-Chairs, and (2.) Identification of issues of concern to members and prioritization of issues to be added to next meeting agenda for further discussion and decision. Topics may include those specific to County parks and County environmental lands, including surface waters that are managed by the County as part of its preserves and/or parks.

6. Florida Progress Energy's Re-energizing of Bartow Power Plant:

- Andy McGregor, Project Manager, presented a handout on the Bartow Plant. Albert Taylor, VP- Gulfstream spoke about the natural gas line construction portion of the Project.
- A question was discussed re: the relevancy of this presentation to the Forum, and how other guest presenters and topics will be determined going forward. One member suggested the Forum would be better off focusing on more relevant projects. Staff indicated that the Progress Energy project will impact a portion of Weedon Island Preserve and felt the Forum should at least be informed of the project.

With no further questions and discussion, the Forum concluded at 5:12 PM.