

City of Clearwater

*Main Library - Council Chambers
100 N. Osceola Avenue
Clearwater, FL 33755*



Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, October 21, 2020

Virtual Meeting

4:00 PM

Main Library - Council Chambers

Environmental Advisory Board

Pursuant to Executive Order No. 20-69, issued by the Office of Governor Ron DeSantis on March 20, 2020, municipalities may conduct meetings of their governing boards without having a quorum of its members present physically or at any specific location, and utilizing communications media technology such as telephonic or video conferencing, as provided by Section 120.54(5)(b)2, Florida Statutes.

Roll Call

Present 4 - Chair Jared Leone, Board Member Mark Wright, Vice Chair John Thomas, and Board Member Marita Lynch

Also Present - Sarah Kessler – Environmental Specialist III, Patricia O. Sullivan – Board Reporter

DRAFT

1. Call To Order- Chair Jared Leone

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. Chair Jared Leone, Vice Chair John Thomas, and Board Members Mark Wright and Marita Lynch attended the meeting using communications media technology. Also participating in the meeting were Environmental Specialist III Sarah Kessler and Board Reporter Patricia Sullivan. Live participation occurred in Council Chambers at the Main Library.

To provide continuity for research, items are in agenda order although not necessarily discussed in that order.

2. Approval of Minutes

2.1 Approve the minutes of the January 15, 2020 Environmental Advisory Board meeting.

Member Wright moved to approve minutes of the January 15, 2020 Environmental Advisory Board meeting as submitted in written summation. The motion was duly seconded and carried unanimously.

3. Citizens to be Heard Regarding Items Not on the Agenda:

Lisa Lanza requested the EAB (Environmental Advisory Board) adopt a Resolution supporting the County and City of Dunedin purchase of the 44-acre Hackworth property or request the City Council to ask Clearwater's State Representatives to obtain funding for the purchase. She recommended the board review the ordinance creating the EAB, its mission statement, and relation to the City Comp plan.

4. New Business Items

4.1 Presentation about the Landings Referendum by Denise Sanderson, Economic Development and Housing Director

Economic Development and Housing Director Denise Sanderson reviewed the proposed Harrod Properties, Inc. development at the Landings Golf

Course site. The project's term sheet required 1,789 parking spaces.

Concerns were expressed: 1) EAB was not provided information crucial for board discussion including site assessments, environmental reports, hours of operation, or a soil management plan; 2) the project eliminated open green space in a built-out county; 3) the City Council's decision process was difficult to follow; 4) EAB had no opportunity to provide input during the City's long-term contemplation of this use while unmet recreation needs for multipurpose fields had been identified; and 5) golf course management's daily use of gas powered mowers, irrigation pumped from the aquifer, and lack of LED lighting negatively impacted the environment and the golf course did not have an environmental or wildlife habitat plan or reach out to SWFWMD (Southwest Florida Water Management District).

Discussion ensued re City recreation/open space with comments that some parkland was inaccessible, an accurate accounting of parkland was needed and questions if the project adhered to GreenPrint and sustainability goals, how airborne contaminated dust during construction would be controlled, noise and lighting buffered to limit neighborhood impacts, and pollutants removed from ponds. It was stated the City should require the development on open green space to commit to LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification, the developer had made some environmentally friendly efforts, golf had become less popular, and light industrial development would provide more tax revenue than housing. It was recommended the City set aside tax revenues from the development to fund environmental projects.

Three residents spoke in opposition to the referendum item and one person said residents could not view the meeting online.

4.2 Discuss letter to City Council about Environmental Advisory Board's stance on the Landing's Referendum, discussion by EAB members

Discussion ensued re a draft letter to the City Council re the Landing's Referendum with comments that the paragraph re economics should be deleted, the 3rd paragraph from the end should be less specific and instead reference a community outdoor use, an alternative use for the land was not specified, the letter was unnecessary as voters would make the decision, and the EAB should have had an opportunity to provide feedback earlier in the process. It was stated the EAB had few mechanisms other than a letter to communicate board input on environmental issues with the City Council and City management. A future discussion re use of reclaimed water at City facilities was suggested.

A resident said it would be appropriate for the letter to reference the golf course's negative environmental impacts from pumping water from the aquifer for irrigation.

Member Thomas moved to recommend sending the proposed letter to the City Council re the board's stance on the Landing's Referendum with changes: 1) delete paragraph re economics and 2) modify 3rd to the last paragraph to read "Instead of operating as a golf course, the City could increase its stock of green space and convert it to open space recreation or a community outdoor use." The motion was duly seconded and upon roll call, the vote was:

Ayes: 3 - Chair Leone, Vice Chair Thomas, and Board Member Lynch

Nays: 1 - Board Member Wright

Motion carried.

4.3 Discuss draft resolution about a formal process for the City Council to give and receive input from the Advisory Boards, Discussion by EAB members

Discussion ensued re a draft Resolution formalizing the EAB process to review the specifics of environmentally significant projects. Concerns were expressed that 30% plans were difficult to read, key decisions were made early in the design process, the board could schedule work sessions to review large projects, and site layouts were finalized before 60% plans which was too late to address many environment issues.

Environmental Specialist III Sarah Kessler recommended the board consider review at the 60% stage when plans were detailed but changes could be made. It was important the board's meeting schedule not slow projects.

A resident supported the board engaging staff re environmental topics that impacted residents, adopting a citizen project review process for environmental input, establishing a partnership with the Sustainability Coordinator, and adopting Resolution language that required incorporation of Greenprint goals.

Member Thomas moved to adopt a Resolution recommending the City Council adopt a formal process for the EAB to review all project plans for environmental issues at the 30% phase. The motion was duly seconded and upon roll call, the vote was:

Ayes: 4 - Chair Leone, Vice Chair Thomas, Board Member Wright and Board Member Lynch

Motion carried unanimously. .

4.4 Discuss annual December Environmental Advisory Board presentation to City Council, Discussion by EAB members

Suggestions were made for the presentation to reference: 1) today's Resolution; 2) board intent to evaluate and reinvigorate GreenPrint; 3) board objective to organize trash cleanup outside schools; 4) a request for

quarterly reports from the Sustainability Coordinator; and 5) the board's alignment with the community.

Chair Leone will write up and distribute board objectives and goals through Ms. Kessler and accept edits and changes from board members.

Ms. Kessler will advise the board of the presentation date when members are introduced to the City Council.

5. Old Business Items

In response to questions, Ms. Kessler said the new parking manager had expressed interest in working with the Sustainability Coordinator on a pilot solar canopy project for a beach parking lot. Staff met with FDOT (Florida Department of Transportation) re Coopers Point and will submit water quality and circulation permit applications to the Army Corps of Engineers, SWFWMD, and FDOT before Thanksgiving; the permitting process was anticipated to take 6 months. Phased construction will begin after completion of a year-long final design process. She anticipated the Kayak Trail would be completed in approximately 18 months followed by the boardwalk, observation deck, and fishing pier. She arranged access to Coopers Point upon request and suggested scheduling an annual board visit.

6. Director's Report

Ms. Kessler said the City Council will appoint a 5th member to the board on December 17, 2020. She will forward to the board a video of the Imagine Clearwater redesign and request a presentation by the Imagine Clearwater project manager at the January 20, 2021 EAB meeting.

7. Board Members to be Heard: None.

8. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

Chair, Environmental Advisory Board

Attest:

Board Reporter