

City of Clearwater

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



Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, January 20, 2021

4:00 PM

Main Library - Council Chambers

Environmental Advisory Board

Roll Call

Present 4 - Chair Jared Leone, Vice Chair John Thomas, Board Member Mark Wright, and Board Member Glenna Wentworth

Absent 1 - Board Member Marita Lynch

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

Awaiting approval

1. Call To Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. 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 October 21, 2020 Environmental Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

Member Wright moved to approve minutes of the October 21, 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

Bryan Beckman said he had tracked 2020 solar panel installations in Clearwater and attributable kilowatts savings. He recommended the City duplicate other municipalities' efforts by installing solar panels on municipal buildings and partnering with Duke Energy to power city projects with solar energy. He suggested Clearwater encourage homeowners to install solar panels on new construction and existing homes. He said all county residents soon can take advantage of a solar co-op.

Mr. Beckman was thanked for his dedication.

4. New Business Items

4.1 Imagine Clearwater Presentation - Catherine Corcoran, Senior Landscape Architect

Senior Landscape Architect Cat Corcoran provided a PowerPoint presentation update on Imagine Clearwater plans at 60% design plan review. The City's Sustainability Coordinator was active in the design process. Value engineering was underway. The design team, with 2 LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) accredited professionals, incorporated LEED 4.0 framework into the design; the project will meet LEED standards as closely as possible. Green building certification will not be sought due to its high cost.

Ms. Corcoran reviewed Imagine Clearwater design features. Alternative transportation will be encouraged with shuttles transporting visitors from the Joe DiMaggio Sports Complex parking lot to the park and a bicycle path through the park connecting to Pinellas Trail. Restricting vehicle access will minimize contaminants. Tree planting will improve air quality and increase wildlife habitat and biodiversity. Expansion of waterfront public facilities will improve the quality of life.

Ms. Corcoran said open space will encourage social and environmental interaction, physical activity, and lower crime. Storms were less likely to impact 12-foot BFE (Base Flood Elevation) finished floor elevations. Continuous building insulation will lower operational costs. LED lights will reduce power consumption by 90%. Individual lighting controls will encourage indoor reliance on natural light. Low emitting materials will reduce indoor chemical contaminants. Individual controls will provide thermal comfort efficiency. Quality views from inside will improve the human experience.

In response to questions, Ms. Corcoran said the City was working with Forward Pinellas on bicycle access. The City was awaiting new FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) flood maps. Raising the site a few feet will elevate the park out of the V zone, protecting it from waves. AstroTurf was considered for groundcover under the bandshell but Code prohibited its use.

In response to a concern, Ms. Corcoran said the park will be open to all lawful activity; reactivating the site will reduce homeless activity. Landscaping and furniture designs will discourage outdoor sleeping. Restrooms and shower facilities attached to the dockmaster building will be locked at night. The Police Department will patrol.

In response to questions, Ms. Corcoran said the library parking lot location had not been determined. Pathway concrete will support food trucks, maintenance vehicles, and ambulances. Native and naturalized species landscaping was planned. Changes from conceptual plans included relocation of the bandshell and restrooms, elimination of the tidal basin, and a smaller dockmaster building. The City was discussing solar opportunities with Duke Energy; no commitments have been made.

Support was expressed for locating parking and service drives on the park's perimeter. Concerns were expressed that saltwater could harm plants and trees. It was suggested a solar canopy near the splash pad would shade visitors waiting for the shuttle.

4.2 Review Environmental Advisory Board Powers and Duties as defined by code

On November 16, 2020, the City Council requested the EAB review the Code and determine if members followed the code and if changes were needed.

Discussion ensued re adding “Sustainability” and “Resiliency” to the board’s name.

It was commented the board’s mission and goals had changed since it was founded to address stormwater. It was suggested a board liaison from the Parks & Recreation Department might be a better fit.

Staff noted the board’s powers and duties were comprehensive and City-wide.

4.3 Review Environmental Advisory Board meeting frequency

On November 16, 2020, the City Council requested the EAB discuss its meeting frequency to determine if it meets the Board’s needs.

Support was expressed for holding board meetings via Zoom. It was recommended that the City accommodate members who cannot attend in person due to COVID-19 and waive attendance requirements during the pandemic. Bi-monthly meetings were suggested as incidents, such as the Landings, could occur quickly. It was noted the board previously had discussed meeting times and frequency.

The majority supported quarterly meetings along with Spring and Fall field trips scheduled to better understand City projects, and if possible, to also engage nearby neighborhoods. It was requested that field trips be in late afternoon or on weekends.

A resident reported the City of Dunedin’s Environmental Quality Board met bimonthly and communicated regularly with the City Commission, providing information and receiving feedback.

4.4 Discuss scheduling the EAB Annual Report to City Council

On November 16, 2020, the City Council requested the EAB chose a date for their annual report to Council.

Consensus was to present the Annual Report to the City Council in November or December.

4.5 Election of Officers

Member Wright moved to reappoint Jared Leone as Chair and John Thomas as Vice Chair. The motion was duly seconded and carried unanimously.

5. Old Business Items

Sustainability Coordinator Sheridan Boyle said staff was working with WGI to update the City's GreenPrint; WGI will present the final draft to the City Council in mid-March. Nearby programs had been reviewed. The document continued previous efforts, adopted new strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, added realistic measurable objectives, strategies and timeline goals, and included resiliency and equity.

Ms. Boyle reviewed Greenprint benefits. The document's reading level will be lowered and a green glossary of terms added to increase public understanding and simplify complex issues. City Council approval will be requested for an additional proposal to mirror the Paris Climate Accord and reduce gas emissions 80% by 2050. A cost return on investment and time was being developed.

Ms. Boyle reported the City's online compost education program enrolled 942 people and distributed more than 400 free compost bins. The City was considering incorporating solar panels during construction of Fire Station 46 and 47 and upgrades to the recycling center's roof. A sustainability analysis of the Airpark also was being pursued.

In response to a question, Ms. Boyle said salt and storm effects needed to be investigated before a solar canopy over beach parking could be considered. The City was checking with Duke Energy re interest in a solar partnership for the new beach fire station. In response to a suggestion, Ms. Boyle said staff will investigate coastal and beachfront solar installations.

In response to a question, Ms. Boyle said GreenPrint called for construction standards for all new municipal buildings. The City Council had concerns if LEED certification was worthwhile considering its cost. In response to a comment re importance of incorporating energy efficiency in new municipal buildings, Ms. Boyle said the City's engineering team pursued LEED features whenever feasible.

In response to questions, Ms. Boyle said Greenprint's equity mission supported all community members having access to affordable housing and ensuring the most vulnerable in the community experienced environmental justice with the same air and water quality as the entire community. She said information on the solar co-op, SolarUnitedNeighbors.org/Pinellas, was on the City's website.

Staff was encouraged to add community garden grants to Greenprint. It was noted some free compost bins remained available.

6. Director's Report

Environmental Specialist Sarah Kessler discussed City Council participation in establishing board agendas.

In response to a question, Ms. Kessler said the Landings was connecting to reclaimed water. The Parks & Recreation Board's upcoming meeting agenda included a discussion of the Landings property.

7. Board Members to be Heard

Member Thomas expressed concerns board members had not been provided a copy of the resolution they approved to review City projects at the 30% design plan review stage. He requested a copy of the resolution and suggested improved communications.

Ms. Kessler said City Council had not responded; its review of advisory boards will occur after input from all boards is submitted.

Members Thomas and Wright discussed the need to remove invasive species from mangroves, private property, parks, and trails. Ms. Kessler said the Parks & Recreation Department handled most invasive species removal. Code Enforcement was working with the Clearwater Beach Marriott Suites on Sand Key to remove its Brazilian peppertree that overhung the Clearwater Community Sailing Center property. The City could not touch anything in the CSX right-of-way.

Chair Leone: 1) recommended the board send the City Council a letter in support of retaining the Landings site as open space. Consensus was to send the letter after the Parks & Recreation Board discussed the subject; 2) said more answers were needed for previous board recommendations to upgrade and modernize beach trashcans; 3) announced the City's 2nd Sustainability Conference (Virtual) series will focus on gardening; and 4) reported residents could dispose e-waste on the last Wednesday of the month at the City's Recycling Drop-off Center.

8. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 5:50 p.m.

Chair, Environmental Advisory Board

Attest:

Board Reporter