

**CITY GREEN TASK FORCE  
MEETING May 7, 2009  
Approved Minutes**

**Members Present:**

Al Vazquez  
Ira J. Raab  
John DeCarion  
Harvey Hathaway  
Patricia Lodge  
Michelle Parenti  
Myles Schack  
Steven Scherer  
Janet Schreiber

**Others Present:**

Commissioner Muoio  
Penni Redford  
Pat Painter  
Teri Jabour  
Neil Melick  
Khalilah W. Hightower

**Call to Order / Sign In / Changes to Agenda**

- Meeting was called to order at 4:00 pm.

**Minutes**

- Minutes were tabled until next meeting – with a spelling correction.

**Unfinished Business**

- *Prioritization of Energy Block Grant Stimulus Package Projects*
  - The City of West Palm Beach will receive \$1.088 million in Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) funding according to a formula from U.S. Department of Energy (DOE). Additional competitive grant money will soon become available from DOE administered through the State of Florida. The City Green Task Force (CGTF) was asked to discuss and prioritize projects. The CGTF prioritized the projects so that formula grant application can be completed and submitted in a timely manner.
  - Prior to the meeting CGTF members were sent information and staff suggestions for EECBG projects for their review and prioritization. They were also asked to add additional projects and suggestions of their own.
  - It is expected that additional discussions will be held for recommendations of best projects for competitive grant monies as this process develops.
  - CGTF Chairperson, Al Vazquez asked each member to identify their top three (3) project priorities from the list provided and to announce them to the CGTF for discussion.
  - Based on the vote the CGTF made the following recommendations in priority order:
    - **Green Model Home:** to additionally include a more comprehensive project including elements of the '*Greening Your Home*' and '*Youth Green Corps*' initiatives and expansion of grant / revolving loan program to include all interested property owners in the City.

- **City Center Solar Project:** as described as an updated project plan from original City Center construction plan with the addition of charging stations for electric vehicles. To include for consideration the energy (solar) services model in addition to direct purchase of solar panels.
  - **Green Pavilion at the Waterfront Commons:** to additionally include water conservation, solar hot water system, and to investigate geo-thermal cooling as an alternative to traditional air conditioning.
  - **Conversion to More Efficient Lighting in City Parking Garages:** To look at best lighting alternatives to maximize energy conservation. Not to be limited to LED, but to investigate best lighting alternatives to maximize energy conservation and return on investment
  - **Solar Litter and Recycling Container Collection Improvements:** To provide for solar powered compaction of litter in receptacles that would reduce the need to empty from once-a-day to once-a-week.
- Chairman, Al Vazquez was asked to attend the Mayor-Commission work session on Monday, May 11<sup>th</sup>, along with Penni Redford to present the Task Force's recommendations and to receive any direction from the Mayor and City Commission.

**“Green Model Home” discussion:**

- The *Neighborhood Stabilization Program* (NSP) – the City (Housing and Community Development HCD) is bidding on several vacant homes in Coleman Park that were foreclosed. It appears the City will be able to purchase homes at prices ranging from \$52k - \$120k.
- The possibility exists through the “Green Your Home” initiative to purchase these homes and “green” renovate them with stimulus monies. If we choose to purchase a foreclosed home, the City for the Green Home initiative, we cannot use the NSP funds. It will need to be paid for out of the stimulus monies.
- The City currently owns three homes could be considered, but two (2) may be in such bad shape that it may not work out and the City cannot use this money to rebuild the homes.
- The third (3<sup>rd</sup>) home has been renovated but to take possession of the property, we would have to pay back the City the \$150K with the stimulus monies.
- The cost of \$125k is included in our Green Home initiative is an estimate - because of the foreclosure market; banks are selling homes very cheap.
- The City can probably reduce the estimate purchase price to an average of closer to \$70k - \$80k instead of \$125 based on Housing and Community Development contracts they have on NSP. There is an issue of pay-back between NSP programs and green initiatives through the EECBG programs.
- The City owns a lot of CRA properties; however, these are vacant residential lots. The proposed *Youth Green Corp* initiative would help residents understand sustainability concepts and train youth for “green collar” jobs by having them go out on “weatherization” surveys. The City envisions that there would be grants or loans available for this initiative.

- What is being proposed with the *Green Model Home* program is to renovate empty (foreclosed) homes for water conservation and other sustainability concepts that can be used as a example for residents and a learning tool from the *Youth Green Corp.*
- The intent is to sell the home over time (one year was mentioned) and take the money returned and re-invest it again. The money is revolving and not a one-time expense.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

- *Water Conservation*

- The Commission requested input from the CGTF on water conservation issues. Penni Redford will invite City of West Palm Beach staff including City Planner, Denise Malone and Public Utilities Director, David Hanks and others as needed to provide basic information and assist the CGTF understand what water conservation efforts are currently being undertaken or planned.
- There was general discussion regarding the current drought and actions needed to be taken by citizens and staff to save water.
- Patrick Painter informed CGTF that lake levels were at 11.21 feet above sea level. At 9.5 feet above sea level the water plant can no longer intake and process water.
- Other points included in the discussion:
  - Water Conservation measures – possible additional water restrictions like requiring automatic rain shut-off for sprinklers.
  - Steve Corson spoke about the Green Key initiatives – all day programs with key speaker and energy-efficient programs and he will contact and invite colleagues at the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) for recommendations.

**The City Green Task Force supports and recommends to Mayor Frankel to take all due and applicable emergency action to endorse a larger comprehensive water conservation action plan, including; Phase 3 water restrictions, if deemed necessary.**

- The Chair asked CGTF members to study the City of Austin Texas's website as a model and a primer for next meeting on water conservation.
- It was mentioned that people are still violating water restriction rules and the Task Force was asked what should be done differently than in 2007 to relieve drought related issues.
- The City is looking into grant programs to encourage less water consumption.
- Grassy Waters Preserve has requested in next year's budget, installation of a rainwater harvesting cistern as a model for irrigation use. It was stated that irrigation of lawns accounts for 30% - 50% of all potable water use in the City.
- The City of West Palm Beach is working within the community by attending neighborhood meetings, changing website, bill-pay, and give-away, including, rain gauges, dye tabs, shower timers, etc.

- The City is currently modifying Grassy Water Preserve's *Aquatic Connection and Watershed Awareness* (ACWA) programs and will set-up an exhibit with staff and volunteers and assist residents by providing Public Service Announcements (PSA) and short programs via City TV 18.

### **Sunshine Law:**

- Several members were concerned that their professional work and their participation with City Green Task Force would present a conflict of interest and asked for direction on how to appropriately handle the issue.
- Penni will invite a representative from the Law Department to attend the next meeting for a question/answer session.

### **Other:**

- Green for Good event sponsored by the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) will be held at the City library on Wednesday, June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5:00 pm – 10:00 pm. The main event is a simulcast discussion led by former Vice-President Al Gore, from 8:00 pm – 10:00 pm. The event will also include displays and information booths by green builders, green vendors, etc. The CGTF is invited to attend and assist with this event.

### **Future Meetings**

- Next meeting will be May 21, 2009, 4-6pm.

### **Adjourn**

- The meeting was adjourned at 6:05 pm.