

**CITY GREEN TASK FORCE
MEETING October 15, 2009
Draft Minutes**

Members Present:

Robert Cannellos
Harvey Hathaway
Patricia Lodge
Michelle Parenti
Kevin Petrovsky
Louise Reed
Arnold Rimm
Ira Raab, Vice Chair
Al Vazquez, Chair

Staff and Commissioners Present:

Commissioner Muoio
Commissioner Douglas
David Hanks
Pat Painter
Penni Redford
Suzanne Schluter

Call to Order/Sign In/Changes to Agenda

- Meeting was called to order at 4:07 pm.
- Agenda changed to allow Mr. Tichenor of Palm Beach County Reef Rescue to present first.

Minutes

- *Ira Raab made a motion to approve September 17 and October 1 minutes as submitted. Harvey Hathaway seconded the motion. All were in favor.*

New Business

- **Staghorn Coral Protection - Ed Tichenor, Palm Beach County Reef Rescue**
 - Ed Tichenor gave a presentation (attached) on the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration / National Marine Fisheries Service proposed critical habitat designation for Elkhorn and Staghorn coral. Despite the initial proposal that reefs be protected north to the Palm Beach/Martin County line, NOAA/NMFS designated the area only north to the Boynton Beach Inlet. Reef Rescue sent a formal petition requesting that the designated area include the area north to the Lake Worth Inlet with scientific evidence of coral on reefs and necessary habitat in that area. NMFS is expected to make a decision in January 2010.
 - Discussion:
 - How can Task Force help? Reef Rescue is requesting that the City send a letter to NMFS supporting a northern boundary of Lake Worth Inlet. There is no scientific evidence of Acropora coral or critical habitat north of that area.
 - Though there are problems with beach re-nourishment, however, it should not affect this particular issue. This designation should not deter the Town of Palm Beach from re-nourishing its beaches.
 - This designation could aid in other matters, for example, had the reef been in the protected area, the recent accident on the reef

- would have been a federal issue with more aid in rebuilding the reef.
 - A resolution from the City Commission might also be helpful. A presentation at a Commission work session might be in order.
 - ***Ira Raab made a motion that the City Green Task Force recommend to Mayor Frankel that a letter and/or resolution from the City Commission be sent to NOAA/National Marine Fisheries Service and any other agencies determined by the Mayor or City Commission to move the Critical Habitat Designation boundary for Acropora coral North to the Lake Worth Inlet in support of the petition filed by Palm Beach Reef Rescue.***

Unfinished Business

• Urban Farms Discussion

- Dina Clingman-Bell – There are many opportunities here in West Palm Beach for community gardens and urban agriculture: Urban vacant lands; entrepreneurial agricultural people ready; institutional climate amenable up to a point, though the tax issue is a barrier. These types of gardens and urban farms are working in many cities across the country and lifting up cities and neighborhood by getting citizens involved.
- Taxation zoning will need to be changed during the time that the land is used for gardening or farming, as opposed to being used by a business or residence.
- Commissioner Douglas stated that she has been trying to get this type of thing done for three years. The climate is receptive now due to economy and the green awareness. The Mayor just came back from a conference regarding this issue and is interested in getting things going.
- Setting up gardens or farms may fall within the Neighborhood Stabilization Program 2 grant. If this is the case, this may be the ideal entry point.
- Are water resources an issue? It depends on how it is done. Crops can be grown hydroponically and the water can be recycled, using very little additional water. It can and needs to be done sustainably.
- There are two somewhat separate things: community gardens and urban farms.
- Dina Clingman-Bell hopes to start a pilot project urban farm on a fairly large piece of land along the lines of what Will Allen of Growing Power, Inc. is doing in his programs. He is training people in starting their own allotment garden. These people will then go out and start their own allotments. Part of the project is also to bring in chefs to give classes, and educate students to learn where their food comes from.
- The U.S. Department of Agriculture has grant money available. One grant available to non-profit organizations allows \$25,000 to study a project and \$300,000 over three years to put it in place. Even if the market comes back and the plots are no longer available, these urban farms can be portable so they could be moved. The willingness of the community that owns vacant land needs to be there. There is a distinction between

community gardens and urban agriculture. This particular grant seems to be for people who will also teach others how to create their own gardens.

- California is a good model. Greening our community is an important part of this.
 - Resiliency is becoming an issue.
 - Wilderness is also important for people's spirits. They need to have a connection to the natural world. Perhaps some of the areas could be urban wildernesses.
 - Some people would like to have chickens and some other farm animals.
 - A committee could proceed in an organized fashion to bring information back to help make decisions that can be related to planning and zoning on this issue.
 - Penni Redford stated that she would schedule a meeting to start a subcommittee. She stated that there is language in the NSP2 grant about pocket parks and believes that community gardens, not urban farming, may fall under that designation. Clarification is needed.
 - Commission Muoio stated that the Mayor is putting together a huge project to get fresh food into these areas, to increase employment in these areas, get nutrition classes, etc. This will fit in perfectly with what the Mayor wants to do. She recommends that Dina Clingman-Bell make an appointment with the Mayor.
 - Getting fresh and organic food is also a health issue.
 - Harvey Hathaway attended the urban gardens seminar at Mounts Botanical Gardens last month. He stated that it is important to have people with expertise get the gardens going and help teach others, as it is labor intensive.
 - ***Ira Raab made a motion that the Task Force recommend that Mayor Frankel move forward on the creation of urban farms and community gardens with consideration for water and other resources, and to seek out available grant funds to accomplish this project. Patti Lodge seconded the motion. All were in favor.***
 - Robert Cannellos stated that rooftop gardens are being created. Companies or individuals are renting their roofs for gardens.
 - As stated earlier, Penni Redford will schedule a meeting to begin the process of starting a subcommittee, there are many other groups that she knows of that might have expertise to bring to this issue.
 - Kenneth Koleos mentioned that the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences had it's first small farm and alternative enterprise program recently and sustainable agriculture was the whole focus. He is willing to bring resources back regarding this issue. Dina Clingman-Bell is on the board of this organization.
- **Schedule Discussion**
 - Penni Redford mentioned that the meeting with environmental groups would be rescheduled for one of the November meetings, probably the 19th, due to a conflict with the Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge new

Nature Center opening today. For information, the public event will be on Saturday.

- Chairperson Al Vazquez stated that he'd like to discuss transportation at the next meeting. One of the recommendations already given by the Task Force was, in part, to have E85 in use by the City fleet. Kevin Petrovsky stated that E85 is actually not a sustainable product. It takes more energy to make than it provides. He will look into an alternative to E85.
- Having a baseline and using metrics was again discussed to keep track of the progress the City is making. The Carbon Disclosure project done by the City was brought up. Stage I and II were done last year. The Office of Sustainability is starting to gather and calculate data for this year. Robert Cannellos mentioned that Miami 21 is a good reference.
- Progress of the Green Building Subcommittee was asked about. They will be providing an update at the next meeting. They have had two meetings and are still gathering information and looking at what the State of Florida and the Federal government are doing.

Public Comments

- **Frederick Ritter, Natures Own Solutions:** Has been to two or three County Green Task Force meetings and City Green Task Force Meetings a couple of times. The issue of main concern to him is chemical and pesticide overuse. It was asked that he bring concrete information to the Task Force. Robert Cannellos also mentioned that LEED certification includes a list of green pesticides and he can bring that information to the Task Force.

Future Meetings

- Next meeting: November 5, 2009, 4-6 PM, Flagler Gallery

Adjourn

- ***Ira Raab made a motion to adjourn. Patti Lodge seconded the motion.*** Hearing no objections, the meeting was adjourned at 6:15 PM.