

**CITY GREEN TASK FORCE
MEETING September 17, 2009
Approved Minutes**

Members Present:

Harvey Hathaway
Patricia Lodge
Louise Reed
Janet Schreiber
Al Vazquez, Chair

Staff and Commissioners Present:

Commissioner Muoio
Pat Painter
Penni Redford
Suzanne Schluter

Call to Order/Sign In/Changes to Agenda

- Meeting was called to order at 4:14 pm.

Minutes

- ***Harvey Hathaway made a motion to approve the 9/3/09 minutes as submitted, Patti Lodge seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.***

Unfinished Business

- **Update on Community Gardens**
 - A developer in Miami wants to have the City of Miami use (lease) their vacant property for a park/green open space for a certain period of time. When the market conditions improve the developer would continue with the building project.
 - Neil Melick stated that Miami is still looking into this. There are issues such as, who will pay for which parts of park project, zoning issues, what about canceling the lease? There is no money to make the park.
 - Commissioner Muoio stated that, currently, for the City of West Palm Beach, the developer holds a bond, if they are not going to build right away they must sod and maintain the landscape, if they do not, they will lose the bond.
 - Harvey Hathaway stated that he would be attending the Nourishing our Communities event at Mounts Botanical this weekend and hopes to learn about sorting out some of these types of issues.

- **Review and Finalization of Water Conservation Recommendations**
 - Water conservation recommendations were made on July 2 and were sent to Mayor Frankel, but the Task Force had since discussed making changes to them. The original recommendations were:
 - *To provide subsidy and/or rebate program, possibly supported by grants, which would retrofit interested West Palm Beach property owners with low flush toilet replacements, low water use washing machines, hot water recirculation devices, drip irrigation, rain sensors and rain barrels.*
 - *To amend the City's code to encourage rainwater harvesting and allow irrigation cisterns for applicable homes and commercial properties.*

- *To require rain sensors with automatic shut-off for new irrigation systems and to phase into existing irrigation systems.*
- *To amend the City's landscape requirements (as part of our building code) to require the use of native and xeric plants and reduce the required area of planting water-thirsty grass lawns while at the same time ensuring adequate pervious surface for rain/storm water infiltration.*
- *To aggressively pursue a policy of removal of invasive non-native vegetation and have a program to replace them with appropriate native xeric vegetation. This should be coupled with an education program so citizens understand their role in saving water and preserving our environment.*
- After discussion, a consensus was reached to add some wording: that the goal is to achieve a 35% overall reduction in water use over the next 5 years, with the targets of 50% outdoor water use (irrigation) and 40% indoor water reduction.
- The Task Force requested that they be given reports showing progress in reaching water conservation and performance goals every 6 months.
- Utilities Director David Hanks should be invited back to discuss with us metrics and what this kind of reduction might mean for revenues and rates. From previous meetings we know that the Public Utilities Department is on board with conservation.
- State statutes supersede homeowners' association rules regarding energy and water conservation devices. The City needs to formulate ordinances and should investigate rapidly changing state and federal rulemaking.
- State statute 720.3075 and Senate bills 494 and 2080 which deal with native and xeric landscaping and rain sensors, cisterns, etc. need to be investigated.
- Penni Redford mentioned that these things would be taken into consideration when making the sustainability plan to the City Commission. We plan to have it ready by about April 17, 2010.
- Enforceability was also discussed. Neil Melick stated that grants cannot be used to enforce ordinances and that Code Enforcement does not bring in enough money to support itself. It is a budgeted item of the City.
- Commissioner Muoio stated that she would like some money to be set aside for water conservation as we look at a new water plant.
- Promoting things in a positive way will be key. People will be on board if there are cost savings.
- Education will be key. Educating local contractors will be important.
- Al Vazquez stated that there is already some language in the City's Comprehensive plan. Denise Malone, City Planner, gave us that information before. Please reread.
- Ideas for disseminating information:
 - Editorial in Palm Beach Post
 - Convene Neighborhood Presidents to have them disseminate
 - Newsletter in water bill
- Public Utilities will be putting in a cistern to study how to use, permitting, etc.

- Al Vazquez recommends that grey water usage be required for all new construction and that the City should modify existing code to allow homeowners to modify plumbing in existing buildings to enact grey water use practices (on a case by case basis).
 - Patti Lodge will look at existing code regarding this type of grey water use.
 - Comprehensive Plan Policy 1.3.1 paragraph C asks to aggressively pursue alternate water supplies in rights of ways, parks, ...
 - Grey water usage may become a health issue.
 - Abacoa is using irrigation quality water, redistributed from the water plant, for irrigation. Signs are posted to let people know it is not potable. This type of system is very costly
 - Should these water recommendations also be incorporated into the Green Building rubric as well as Water Recommendations?
 - St. Petersburg was retrofitted with a reclaimed waste water system
 - Social equity needs to be considered.
 - Penni Redford mentioned that there are some stimulus programs that are targeted for low income. City will be applying for competitive grants and a sliding scale might be used to distribute monies. Revolving loans might also be used.
- **Green Building Discussion - Giving Direction to the Subcommittee**
 - Robert Cannellos unable to be the chair of the Green Building Subcommittee.
 - The Ecoplex tour has been the only meeting. Their main focus was on water conservation. One of the other main areas of LEED points was building with concrete (as a local material).
 - Recommendations should not be specific to or require LEED or any other certification. However, the LEED scorecard is a good place to start looking because it's easy to see where conservational and sustainable practices can be brought in.
 - Charles Bantel, Green Building subcommittee, gave two handouts for those who want them: Green Building Fundamentals and Contractors Exam School information.
 - Carol Shein, Green Building subcommittee, stated that specifying numerous indoor air quality guidelines are as important as those for water and energy, and must be included. It is essential to use materials with no or low VOC's (Volatile Organic Compounds), inside and outside the building to insure good IAQ. An excellent HVAC system, including filtration, is imperative also, to achieve a quality result.
 - Erin Deady, Green Building subcommittee: Performance based is the smartest thing. She would look at Florida Model 3 building code and examples of other municipalities that are built out, like the City of Sarasota and Gainesville.
 - Shirley Simpson-Wray, Green Building subcommittee: Interested in review of literature on sustainability, runoff and storm water, retrofitting homes in urban areas and codes.

- Charles Bantel: Has started working on finding or looking into how to create training and certification of people for retrofitting and inspection of retrofitted buildings and code changes necessary to the retrofitting process.
- Alex Hansen, City Planner: The City's Comprehensive plan is looking at water conservation, transportation practices, runoff, goals, and not on building practices specifically. The planning world has more of a focus on neighborhood level: green building development, location, and transportation.
- E4 Summit Green Building breakout session notes state these items are important to look at:
 - Energy efficiency
 - Lighting
 - Recycled building materials
 - Water efficiency
 - Waste management during demolition and construction
 - Adaptive reuse – taking existing buildings and renovating for another type of use
 - Waste stream diversion
 - Building standards
 - Green Lodging Florida
 - Site selection
- Pat Painter mentioned that there is a booming environmental business in Washington, DC that involves auditing houses, weatherizing, and optimizing what they can do at lowest to highest levels of financing. The government is pursuing this and it will probably be filtering down.
- Penni Redford mentioned that the Indiantown Non-profit, Inc. that is distributing the monies from the weatherization grant in our area, uses an energy audit to see where weatherization and retrofit can reduce the energy use. City would like to have a training program to create a green job corps that could do energy audits and help with some of the non-permit required things that could be done. Part of the EECBG includes retrofit kits that we can give out to residents along with education about how to use them.
- Alex Hansen mentioned that some cities are giving a sort of energy or water use report card to homeowners. Boulder is one of the cities doing this.
- Green Building Subcommittee will be meeting on second and fourth Thursdays at 4PM. Office of Sustainability will find a room and notice the meetings. City staff will serve committee in an advisory capacity.

New Business

- **October 15 Meeting - Environmental Organizations**
 - Environmental groups will be invited to the Task Force meeting to tell us what their most important areas of concern are regarding the City's move towards sustainability. Commissioner Muoio will facilitate the discussion

- This will help build the foundation or give us an outline of the City's Sustainability Plan. Task Force members and environmental groups can give their ideas of where the City should focus.
- Let us know of any groups you'd like us to invite.
- **Slash Pines on Golf Course**
 - Commissioner Muoio invites all to the meeting on Monday, September 21, 3-4 PM. This meeting is to review plans and look at the issue of the variety of slash pines that were planted on the golf course as it is being renovated. One thousand three hundred of the slash pines are of the variety that does not grow well in this area of Florida.
 - Another issue brought up is that they might be more susceptible to disease when compared to the indigenous slash (Dade County) pine trees in our area.

Public Comments

- Janet Schreiber, CGTF Member: Palm Beach County Green Task Force will be giving their recommendations to the County Commission on Tuesday, September 22 at 9:30 am.
- Pat Painter, City staff: The movie, "The Age of Stupid", will have a one day only showing in the U.S. on September 21, 2009.
- Steve Kairis, Evergreen BioConcepts, Inc.: Would like to give an overview presentation of education and how it might help the City in moving towards its goals of sustainability.

Future Meetings

- Next meeting: October 1, 2009, **4-5 PM**, Flagler Gallery

Adjourn

Harvey Hathaway made a motion to adjourn. Louise Reed seconded the motion.
Hearing no objections, the meeting was adjourned at 6:26 PM.