

**CITY GREEN TASK FORCE
MEETING February 18, 2010
Approved Minutes**

Members Present:

Harvey Hathaway
Patti Lodge
Michelle Parenti
Ira Raab
Louise Reed
Arnold Rimm
Janet Schreiber
Carol Shein
Al Vazquez, Chair

Staff and Commissioners Present:

Penni Redford
Suzanne Schluter

Call to Order/Sign In/Changes to Agenda

- Meeting was called to order at 4:11 PM.

Minutes

- ***Patti Lodge made a motion to approve January 14 and 21, minutes as submitted and revised. Louise Reed seconded the motion. All were in favor.***

Unfinished Business

- **Landscape, Plant and Water Conservation Issues Discussion**
 - Erin Deady started by mentioning that the Green Building Subcommittee has begun looking at the City's water conservation program as outlined in the consumptive use permit and one issue they were not sure about was the Florida Friendly Landscaping versus targeting native plant landscaping.
 - Robert Kussner stated they are looking at having a minimum percentage of native plant material. The code revisions that they are considering need to be looked at further within the department before putting them out to the public for comment. Looking at native plant material as it is usually hardier and acclimated to our climate. The City has a xeriscape guide from South Florida Water Management District which they give out and includes both native and non-native (Florida Friendly) plants, but explains the right plant, right place principle and gives information on proper placement of many types of plants.
 - Penni Redford mentioned that there is a program called Florid Yards and Neighborhoods run by the County extension service that is very good and speaks to conservation and planting appropriate plants. It is a very good program. Florida friendly plants are plants that, although not necessarily native, are the right type of plants for this climate and therefore will need less water, etc.
 - Erin mentioned they wanted to understand the process regarding tree permitting and tree removal.

- Robert Kussner mentioned that the City already has in the code now for xeriscape requirements: right plant, right place. A permit is required to remove any tree other than invasive trees.
 - Many trees and understory plants around Clear Lake were brought to the site from a 45th street South Florida Water Management District site due to mitigation that they were doing. This project didn't cost the City anything.
 - The City has a strong tree ordinance and we are taking advantage of that to make sure that the tree canopy is not reduced due to development.
 - As far as our proposed code changes, most of the changes will give people more flexibility in picking up more landscaping area without losing anything. For example in parking lots, the two feet of overhang after the car stop could be green space, and having larger green spaces less often in a parking lot allows for larger trees to be planted, but doesn't lose any parking spaces. We want to avoid having a code that is too rigid and trees are planted in too little space and will not be able to develop their full canopy.
 - If a tree is severely cut back and framework is destroyed, we hope to have code reflect that they would then need to remove the tree and replace it. If a 12" diameter trunk oak tree is removed, for example, it would have to be replaced by four 3 inch caliber trees. The reason is that we have to be realistic; people would not be able to replace such a large tree. Currently we turn down permits to remove trees if we don't feel it is necessary, we offer them other solutions sometimes, such as root system pruning and thinning of the canopy. We are trying to save our trees and increase the canopy.
 - Al Vazquez asked what types of recommendations Robert would like the Task Force to make. For example, an inventory of trees in the easements or specimen trees in the neighborhoods.
 - Robert mentioned that there is a partial inventory done after the hurricanes around 2005 with grant money that the Parks department has control of. There is a program in the code now for certain trees to be designated as historic or of value.
 - Penni mentioned that some cities have tree planting as a very large part of their sustainability plan to mitigate carbon. And as grants come available, perhaps a tree inventory is something that we could consider including.
 - Robert mentioned that we just applied for a forestry grant to complete work on Australian Avenue. These trees are helping to mitigate carbon and increase our tree canopy as well as protect the water source by impeding vehicles from entering the water. I hope that we will be able to continue eventually with planting the understory in this area and create a real urban forest. Maintenance of the trees is very important to remember also.
 - Penni will keep her eye out for any grants for to complete the tree inventory as there are two issues, we need to count any new trees put in, but we also need to know our baseline.

- Robert mentioned that public education would really be helpful. People like to plant palms, but they do not give as much shade as a shade tree. People need to be educated on the benefits of trees: shade, purifies the air, reduces noise, provides drainage, etc. If people are more appreciative they will be more careful of trees and plant more trees. During hurricanes, trees buffered houses, even though some came down and damaged houses, many protected houses from flying debris. Perhaps education with the Cooperative Extension could be arranged.
- Commissioner Muoio mentioned that the City perhaps needs to be more selective in the options it gives to the citizens regarding trees also.
- Erin mentioned that the subcommittee talked about lists of permitted and prohibited species as well as a preferred species list, better educational materials on saving water and planting natives, signage on projects where natives were used especially along the roadways because so many people see that. One question that we had was regarding what types of pesticides products are allowed or preferred, is there something in the code or should there be?
- Robert – I don't think it should be in the code. Some municipalities are creating a maintenance manual that is referred to in the code. Perhaps we could look at that once the code is complete.
- Penni mentioned that incentives might be good to plant canopy trees as opposed to palms. Also wondering about reducing lawn.
- Robert – We are looking at no more than 70% of single family homes being grass and encouraging shrubs and other ground cover.
- Question: Do we have minimum lawn coverage required? Answer: We do today and we need to have a paradigm shift, we need to educate the residents and look at examples of native landscapes and enter into discussions.
- Question: Do codes have mandatory requirements for dealing with storm water runoff in the swales, such as bioswales and pervious materials? Answer: We welcome discussions and information on that.
- Erin mentioned that the subcommittee found that some of SFWMD rules run contrary to that and one of the recommendations will be to coordinate with SFWMD on that issue.
- Question: Are we addressing irrigation systems? Answer: There are probes that you can put at the appropriate level for trees or lawn to check the moisture at the appropriate level to give you a true measure of when you really need to water. However, if we are on water restrictions, this may then kick in your system on a day that you are not allowed to water and this can cause a problem with SFWMD.
- Robert Kussner mentioned that grey water is also an important issue. Al Vazquez assured him that there would be recommendations on that.
- Question: We are a tree city, the metrics of trees planted each year, etc. will be important to keep track of. Answer: I believe that Greg Mihalko, in the Parks Department, takes care of that.

- **Education**
 - **Lee Zwicker**
 - Gave a presentation on educating the general population about energy conservation and solar energy. Presentation notes and informational handouts attached.
 - 1 - Questions to ask if you want to do solar
 - 2 - Putting film on windows
 - 3 - ABC's of solar, terms etc.
 - 4 - Things to look for if buying used solar panels
 - 5 - Solar info for junior high level students
 - 6 - Kilowatt meter - standards
 - 7 - Solar House Panels in Portland, Maine, 3.5k
 - 8 - Everything Federal Government
 - 9 - DIY energy audit
 - 10 - Construction details solar water heater
 - Lee mentioned that he will probably teach a basic course and maybe one advanced module on building a panel or solar water heater in March or April.
- **Urban Agriculture and Community Gardens Subcommittee Report Discussion**
 - **Michelle Parenti**
 - Due to time constraints this presentation was postponed.

New Business

- **Benefit of Backyard Egg-laying Hens**
 - **Julie Guerrieri, Palm Beach County Poultry Fanciers Association**
 - Do not need a lot of room for chickens
 - Interested people should check with the American Poultry Association or American Bantam Association
 - Some reasons to keep chickens: natural pest control, aerates soil, teach responsibility, food source, educational therapy, hormone and pesticide free eggs, store bought eggs may have lost up to 90% of their nutritional value (average of 70%) by the time you buy them and are 10-14 days old.
 - The standard hens need: 3-4 square feet, grass, dirt for dust bathing, fencing or coop that can be moved around – this allows you to fertilize different areas of yard or garden.
 - Roosters are not necessary for backyard laying hens except for fertilization.
 - Many cities allow egg laying hens only.
 - Michelle Parenti mentioned the importance of having this great source of protein available in our City's food dessert, especially in low income areas. She also stressed the nutritional difference between factory farm chicken eggs and organic eggs.

- ***Michelle Parenti made a motion to allow a small number of backyard egg laying hens to promote better nutrition and food security, excluding homeowner's associations. Patti Lodge seconded. All were in favor.***

Public Comments

- Andrew Pereira and Todd Ritornato with Lumiron gave a short demonstration of some of the LED lighting options that are available now. LED modules are now available for high voltage sign lighting, as well as dimmable modules, indoor soffit or cove lighting, and changing color options. Retrofits are available for most applications including halogens. Many LED's are made in China; however, CREE LED's which are very high quality are made in the USA. Components could be purchased and assembled. For more information check: www.lumiron.com

Future Meetings

- Next meeting: April 1, 2010, 4-6 PM, Flagler Gallery

Adjourn

- ***Ira Raab made a motion to adjourn.*** Hearing no objections, the meeting was adjourned at 6:06 PM.