

4. 23-00110 DISCUSSION: 2023 GOALS, 2022 ACCOMPLISHMENTS, SPECIFIC PRESENTATION DESIRED FOR THE COMING YEAR

*Sponsors:* Kristin Bennett

Chair Bennett opened the discussion, noting the accomplishments of eliminating the use of Styrofoam containers in city buildings and supporting the no smoking ban in city parks.

Member Butts stated that he really didn't care about the prior accomplishments, he would rather focus the discussion on establishing the goals and then at the end of the year, assess what was achieved.

Member Hagen indicated her goal would be to redefine what the EAB is doing and what direction it is going. She is a proponent of education and community outreach.

Member Richards suggested considering the city budget cycle. Ask that they increase the stormwater management fee and that increase be put in the tree planting trust fund to increase the tree canopy. He also wanted to include recycling.

Member Butts suggested wording to support activities that would increase the tree canopy instead. We are looking for broad goals. Activities under that goal could include the tree planting trust fund, planting trees, changes to ordinance for increases, how departments regulate parking lots. These topics would fall under increasing the tree canopy.

Member Fox suggested finding alternative funding mechanisms for the tree trust fund. With regard to recycling, is the intent to see a program expanded, to understand how the City handles recycling.

Further discussion occurred, with regard to recycling the right way, having a presentation from the new recycling coordinator at ECUA, and increase education about recycling, which would fall under public outreach.

Member Dineen would like to have more community involvement at the Board meetings and to have presentations from community organizations that are doing things. She would like the EAB to support the development of the Gonzalez Street Shareway as part of the overall city bike plan to make Pensacola more pedestrian and bike friendly. She would also like to see native gardens in public parks or property which could be areas of beautification and education and to have a place for wildlife, insects, butterflies to share the earth. It would be good to have a presentation about native plants and gardens.

Member Hagen stated that could be a good pilot project, to have a neighborhood to select the park, seek funding to plant and then take care of it and provide a benefit.

Sustainability Coordinator provided clarification that per state regulations, the stormwater fee could not be used for increasing the tree canopy.

Member Fox's priorities include implementation of and accountability for the city's integrated pest management plan for both indoor and outdoor use. Supporting the city's sustainability, resiliency, and adaptation efforts. Support relevant environmental components in the city's strategic plan development. Provide technical insight and support on various environmental topics and concerns. For the EAB to be seen as a resource rather than a roadblock. Her topics of interest are water quality, stormwater, environmental stewardship, sustainability and adaptation, livability, and a balanced coastal development.

Member Massey also supports the Gonzalez Street Shareway and would like the EAB to be a strong advocate for that and it would help reduce pollution. As a Board, could become a proponent of bike incentive programs. He also mentioned his interest in providing some sort of habitat, possibly in park, for chimney swifts. The birds eat mosquitos and that could help reduce the need for mosquito spraying.

Chair Bennett suggested a broader goal such as encourage the City of Pensacola to be a more bike and pedestrian friendly and suggested having a presentation during Bike Month on the Gonzalez Street project. With regard to the chimney swifts, a broader topic could be an alternative to mosquito control. Alternative transportation could be used to include any bike/pedestrian programs to include micro mobility.

Member Butts suggested an even broader goal of improving livability, which would encompass the bike and pedestrian friendly component. He would like to see the Board be relevant. He would also like to add improve the quality of the water in the bay. That would include stormwater management, encouraging ECUA to apply for all the grants that come out of EPA to replace septic tank systems. There are approximately 1200 septic tank systems that are close to Carpenters Creek. The EPA programs only do the street, they don't do from the street to the house. Incentives could be offered to encourage hooking up to the sewer system.

Chair Bennett would like to see the Board be more relevant, how to be an asset and help. She would like to finalize the work and recommendations on the tree/landscape ordinance, taking a broader outlook on it. Clarify and make the process easier for groups and organizations to utilize the tree planting trust fund.

Further discussion occurred on the process, how it would be funded, public awareness. The existing grant process is very bulky and hard to get through. It has to come to the EAB and then go to the City Council. Sustainability Coordinator suggested looking at other cities and what their processes are and give better direction on the utilization of the funds. While the Board is considering the enabling ordinance, look at possibly changing the ordinance that allows for the grant program to be more effective.

Member Dineen suggested inviting the East Pensacola Heights Neighborhood Association to come to the June meeting to provide an update on the progress of the trees and any suggestions they may have on the process, since it was a pilot project.