



City of Pensacola

Environmental Advisory Board

Minutes

Thursday, June 1, 2023, 2:00 PM

Hagler/Mason Conference Room,
2nd Floor

Members Present: Kristin Bennett, Chair, Kate Dineen, Vice Chair, Neil Richards, Kyle Kopytchak, Kelly Hagen, Jay Massey

Members Absent: Katie Fox, Blase Butts and one position vacant

Others Present: Mark Jackson, Sustainability Coordinator, Kris Stultz, Arborist, Sonja Gaines, Council Assistant, Betty Wilson, Christian Wagley, Barbara Albrecht, Carrie Stevenson,

CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME:

The meeting was called to order by Chair Bennett.

ROLL CALL AND DETERMINATION OF QUORUM:

A quorum was established.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

1. [23-00039](#) APPROVAL OF ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
MINUTES OF MAY 4, 2023

Recommendation: That the Environmental Advisory Board approve the meeting minutes from the May 4, 2023, Board meeting.

Sponsors: Kristin Bennett

Attachments: [EAB Minutes 05.04.2023](#)

Chair Bennett indicated there was a minor typo in the minutes. Member Kopytchak inquired about the status of the Board's recommendation on the referral item. Sustainability Coordinator indicated that the Board's recommendation was forwarded to the City Council by the Council Executive; however, no Council Member sponsored an item to bring it forward to the City Council. Further discussion occurred on the process. The Environmental Advisory Board has fulfilled its responsibility on this referral item.

Member Kopytchak also wanted to get clarification from the city arborist about the comment he made with regard to shearing one side of a tree does not predispose the tree to failure as it relates to arborist's standards to cutting 30% or 40% of the tree. Sustainability Coordinator indicated that the arborist would be available later and could answer his question.

Member Kopytchak moved for approval of the May 4, 2023 minutes, seconded by Member Massey. The motion carried 6 – 0 with two members absent and one position vacant.

PRESENTATIONS

2. [23-00437](#) PRESENTATION FROM AN ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENTIST WITH THE PENSACOLA PERDIDO BAY ESTUARY PROGRAM (PPBEP) ON THE STATE OF THE BAYS REPORT FOR 2023.

Recommendation: That the EAB receive a presentation on the State of the Bays from the PPBEP.

Sponsors: Kristin Bennett

Dr. Haley Gancel, Environmental Scientist with the Pensacola Perdido Bay Estuary Program provided an update on the Pensacola Perdido Bay Estuary Program and the current state of the bays. They take a watershed approach to engage stakeholders to move forward on environmental issues to improve water quality not only across the watershed but also in the bays. They have finalized their Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan. It is the blueprint the program will follow. It has their actions, their goals and objectives on how to take action to try and help preserve the environment in the local area. The plan is available on their website.

She also reviewed the State of the Bays report and the data that is available. It will be updated every two years. She reviewed some of the ways citizens can help improve water quality, such as fertilizing grass at the right time, planting native grass and not sod, don't pour oil and grease down the sink. She reviewed their "take the pledge" education plan, the oyster management plan for the bays, the outreach and programs underway in Baldwin County and Orange Beach and other available data that is included on their website.

They are scheduled to become a 501 (c) 3 not for profit organization in September. They are funded primarily through state appropriations and grants from various agencies.

With regard to living shorelines, if they are placed properly, evidence says yes, they help. It depends on the design, the hydro dynamics of the area, the water flow, what kind of shoreline it was put in against. It stabilizes the shoreline and buffers energy to reduce erosion.

STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

3. [23-00446](#) STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

Member Kopytchak asked the City Arborist to clarify his comment about predisposing a tree to failure and wanted to learn a little more about the language of exposing a tree to failure and the percentages that are used by arborists.

City Arborist indicated that research has shown that when a tree is halved, it doesn't lose any stability. That is from the University of Florida. The percentages are something the industry came up with 30 – 40 years ago. That percentage factor has changed with modern science. Right now, it is all about structural integrity. There are certain trees with growth patterns that are predisposed to failure and when they are pruned, arborists try to target those defects and mitigate the defects. When you are dealing with FPL and their sub-contractors, it is not about structural integrity, it is about keeping the lines clear.

Sustainability Coordinator pointed out the information contained in the renewable energy goal and the carbon offset natural gas. He also reviewed the grants the City is applying for to help with urban forestry programs and EV charging locations.

He demonstrated the Urban Forest Canopy Assessment data and maps that are on the City's website as well as the tree inventory data available on city rights of way and city property only, answering questions from board members.

He announced that June 9th would be his last day with the city. He has accepted a job with the Department of Energy.

ACTION ITEMS:

There were no action items.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

4. [23-00110](#) DISCUSSION: 2023 GOALS, 2022 ACCOMPLISHMENTS, SPECIFIC PRESENTATIONS DESIRED FOR THE COMING YEAR

Sponsors: Kristin Bennett

Attachments: [EAB GOALS DISCUSSION 04.06.2023](#)
[EAB Goals.Chair Bennett](#)

Chair Bennett opened discussion on this item, pointing out the discussion of the goals by the board at their April 6 meeting. She mentioned the recent Council workshop on boards, what they do, how they can be more valuable to the City, how are things assigned to the EAB, what are the parameters. Researching grant opportunities, if board members know of grants, they can research and present opportunities is one viable goal the EAB could have. Another common thing mentioned was community education and outreach. Are there any particular topics of interest the board would like to have presentations on?

Sustainability Coordinator suggested that the board might identify a topic that they have a concern about and bring in someone and identify staff members that may also be interested and ask that they be in attendance. Staff needs to stay abreast on a number of things. It would present an opportunity for staff to be educated as well.

The board also discussed frequency of meetings, if there are no action items, whether to meet monthly, quarterly, etc.

Member Massey suggested bringing in somebody to discuss locating bat houses in city parks. Board members all have their individual interests and the type of topics that they want to know more about. From reducing pest control, mosquitos, swarming termites, bats and chimney swifts were going crazy.

Carrie Stevenson volunteered to make a presentation on bats and bat houses at the next meeting.

Member Hagan expressed interest in having a presentation on dark sky lighting and asked what the process would be to get on the agenda. Does a list of topics of interest need to be created and work from that list or could the list be fluid, depending on what is current and relevant?

Sustainability Coordinator indicated that he thought the list could be fluid and the board member would need to assume the responsibility of lining up the speaker and getting that information to whoever is staffing the EAB so that an item can be prepared for the agenda.

Other discussion occurred on the process and how the board moves forward, receives recommendations and how the board could be more effective, productive, and valuable.

Sustainability Coordinator stated that if there is no action item before the board, the highest and most valuable use as a board is education. Need to continue to work and bring forward educational components, to educate staff and the community wherever possible. When you want to be valuable to administration and the Council it's just being reactionary. When there is an action item, come into the meeting well prepared and have good conversation, good notes and come out with some type of solution in the end, within a reasonable amount of time. Staff is doing the work, they don't always have time to do the study and research to keep up to date.

Chair Bennett indicated that if members have a topic of interest and name of speaker, to email Mark/Don with the information.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS:

Chair Bennett encouraged board members to review the video of the Council Workshop.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Barbara Albrecht is interested in finding out what ECUA is doing with their recycling, how much they are collecting and what they are doing with it.

Member Massey would like to visit the facility.

Carrie Stevenson with the County Extension Office indicated she would be available on July 6 to do a presentation on bats, how to attract them, how to build houses and where to put them on city property or homeowner property.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to come before the board, the meeting was adjourned at 4:06 p.m.