



City of Pensacola

Environmental Advisory Board

Minutes

Thursday, September 7, 2023, 2:00 PM

Hagler/Mason Conference Room,
2nd floor

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

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

Others Present: Don Kraher, Council Executive, Sonja Gaines, Council Assistant, David Forte, Deputy City Administrator, Kris Stoltz, Arborist, Barbara Albrecht, Chelsea Mahan, Tom Patton, Betty Wilson, Duane Tant

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 JULY 6, 2023

Recommendation: That the Environmental Advisory Board approve the meeting minutes from the July 6, 2023, Board meeting.

Sponsors: Kristin Bennett

Attachments: [EAB Minutes 07.06.2023 \(002\)](#)

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

Council Executive indicated that there is an add-on item for consideration and explained the process.

Chair Bennett read the title of the item: **Council of Neighborhood Associations Presidents of Pensacola (CNAPP) Tree Planting Trust Fund Grant Application – Project Title, Citizens’ Canopy Restoration Project.**

Member Kopytchak moved for approval to add the item to the agenda, seconded by Member Dineen. The motion carried 6 – 0, with two members absent and one position vacant.

PRESENTATIONS

2. [23-00668](#) PRESENTATION: BARBARA ALBRECHT: “EXPLORING THE INFLUENCES OF LANDSCAPE CHANGES ON SEDIMENTATION IN UPPER NORTHWEST FLORIDA WATERSHEDS”

Recommendation: That the Environmental Advisory Board (EAB) receive a presentation from Barbara Albrecht entitled: Exploring the influences of landscape changes on sedimentation in upper Northwest Florida watersheds.

Sponsors: Kristin Bennett

Chair Bennett welcomed Barbara Albrecht.

Barbara Albrecht, President of the Bream Fishermen Association gave an in-depth presentation on the water quality in the four large water sheds, connecting the rivers, bays and estuaries in our area. Her presentation pointed out the harmful effects to the sediment, fauna and flora caused on the ecosystems of Northwest Florida by the development over the last 40 years. Her presentation can be seen by viewing the video of the September 7th EAB meeting, posted online.

ACTION ITEM

ADD-ON ACTION ITEM

SPONSOR: Kelly Hagen, Board Member

SUBJECT:

COUNCIL OF NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS PRESIDENTS OF PENSACOLA (CNAPP) TREE PLANTING TRUST FUND GRANT APPLICATION – PROJECT TITLE, CITIZENS’ CANOPY RESTORATION PROJECT.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Environmental Advisory Board (EAB) consider a Tree Planting Trust Fund Grant request from CNAPP for the Citizens' Canopy Restoration Project. Further, that the EAB consider a recommendation to City Council.

Council Executive indicated that a motion and second needs to be made to put the item on the floor. Chair Bennett called for a motion and second to discuss the add-on item.

Member Dineen moved to approve discussion of the add-on item, seconded by Member Richards. The motion carried 6 – 0, with two members absent and one position vacant.

Member Hagen submitted a summary sheet to the Board, on the proposed project.

Chelsea Mahan presented the Citizens' Canopy Restoration Project. The goals of the project are to help the City achieve its tree canopy restoration through constructive and efficient use of the tree trust fund, build partnerships between the city and civic groups, and engage and educate the public on tree canopy maintenance and restoration. This project is similar to the one previously approved for the EPH tree grant. It will partner with neighborhood associations to plant native tree canopy trees, the right tree in the right place, have community buy in to care for trees to minimize rate of failure. One citizen submitted a proposal for 16 trees to be planted in Toledo Square Park, and committed to taking care of them. This could lead to future park stewardship proposals from citizens willing to participate. She reviewed their proposed budget. The grant they are applying for from the tree planting trust fund is \$5,500.

Mr. Tom Patton indicated that this program would present an opportunity for citizens to take responsibility and hopes the program can be expanded to help benefit the city to grow the tree canopy in areas where needed. It would be in partnership with the city, providing people to assist in the planting process.

Member Hagen explained her involvement in working with a group of citizens, the canopy committee, to develop this pilot project, working through CNAPP, with the hopes of expanding the project for other organizations, churches, and civic groups to become involved. They hope to work with the City and not have the \$5,500 limit. However, for the pilot program they are working within the same parameters that the EPH grant was approved. The city has not committed one way or the other. It will be the city's decision in the future. The proposed pilot program also includes an in-kind contribution for the volunteer hours.

Arborist Kris Stultz indicated that he currently can only plant trees on city property or right-of-way. He cannot put trees on private property. This proposed program could be a real boom to put trees where they are needed.

Chair Bennett inquired about the process that will be used moving forward.

Member Hagen explained that the application submitted is one that the Sustainability Coordinator developed and that there were some changes that need to be made. The EAB will not be submitting this project directly to the City Council. It will need to be sponsored by a City Council member to be placed on the agenda.

Member Kopytchak had several questions concerning how the \$20 volunteer hour fee was established, the idea of the potential savings to the city and if consideration had been given to education of the proper pruning of trees during their initial planting.

Arborist Kris Stultz indicated that the \$20 fee is standard, unless a consultant is used, that there is financial benefit to the city to have volunteer assistance and that he would be reviewing the proper pruning practices with each individual participating in the program.

Member Richards inquired about whether any consideration had been given to running soil test samples.

Member Hagen stated that for this pilot project, that was not included.

Chair Bennett had several questions about the number of participants, number of trees included in the budget to be planted, and what happens to funds if there are any left over.

Member Hagen stated that there were 75 trees proposed in the budget, that they would be keeping a line budget. There are several applications for participation that have not been turned in. Currently they have 40 participants and that each planting location will be checked out to ensure that it is the right location for the tree to be planted.

Member Kopytchak moved to approve the program, seconded by Member Dineen. The motion carried 6 – 0 with two members absent and one position vacant.

Member Dineen moved that the EAB recommend the pilot program application with CNAPP be forwarded to the City Council, seconded by Member Richards. The motion carried 6 – 0, with two members absent and one position vacant.

Council Executive reminded the Board that this is a pilot program, with a larger area than the EPH project. The program will be able to ensure that the city is getting the return on their investment. It is the residents/participants responsibility to care for the trees planted.

STAFF COMMUNICATIONS:

Council Executive informed the Board that the tree ordinance will be part of the review process for the Land Development Code and that a majority of the City Council members ask that the EAB take no further action on the tree ordinance at this time.

Council Executive also reminded the Board that they should wait to be recognized by the Chair, prior to interrupting recognized speaker.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

There were no further discussion items.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS:

Member Richards mentioned the Climate Small Floridian zoom meetings in October. There is a \$40 registration fee, for six different presentations. Also, the Sea Grant completed its survey and they could not find any scallops.

Member Dineen mentioned the Pensacola Beach Songwriters Festival and handed out a card with further details.

Chair Bennett reference the various programs and events that the Pensacola Perdido Bays Estuary program will be conducting and encouraged Board members to check their website.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

There were no public comments.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 4:15 p.m.