

CITY OF PALM BAY, FLORIDA
SUSTAINABILITY ADVISORY BOARD
REGULAR MEETING 2024-11

Held on Wednesday, the 13th day of November 2024, in the City Hall Council Chambers, 120 Malabar Road, SE, Palm Bay, Florida.

This meeting was properly noticed pursuant to law; the minutes are on file in the Public Works Department located at 1050 Malabar Road, SW, Palm Bay, Florida. The minutes are not a verbatim transcript, but a brief summary of the discussions and actions taken at the meeting.

CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order by Vice-Chairperson Rebecca Zeigler at 6:10 PM.

ROLL CALL:

CHAIRPERSON:	Logan Luse	Present (Late)
VICE CHAIRPERSON:	Rebecca Ziegler	Present
MEMBER:	Jane Higgins	Present
MEMBER:	Susan B. Connolly	Present
MEMBER:	Susan Phillips-Hardison	Absent
MEMBER:	Jessica Lovell	Present
MEMBER:	Vacant	

CITY STAFF:

Dennis Bunt, Public Works Customer Service Manager; Derek Bunt, NPDES Stormwater Outreach Coordinator; Jose Sanabria, Operations Division Manager; Eric Blount, Operations Superintendent; Jesinie Fieffe, Administrative Assistant

PUBLIC COMMENTS: (Non-agenda items only)

There were no Public Comments.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Sunshine Laws

Deputy City Attorney Erich Messenger presented a comprehensive overview of Florida's Sunshine Laws and the Public Records Act. He highlighted the critical importance of

preserving all communications related to the City's business and underscored the right of the public to access government meetings, emphasizing the need for transparency and accessibility.

Ms. Higgins inquired about the appropriateness of discussing City business with employees from Palm Bay to which Deputy City Attorney Messenger confirmed that such discussions were permissible.

Ms. Connolly raised a concern regarding participation in other board meetings to discuss City business. Mr. Messenger advised against this practice. Ms. Connolly also posed questions regarding potential violations and prosecutions concerning Sunshine Law infractions. Mr. Messenger clarified that, to date, there had been no prosecutions related to such violations.

Mr. Messenger offered to provide additional information on best practices for Board communication, reiterating the importance of retaining all relevant records and refraining from two-way communications regarding City matters.

2. Sustainability Action Plan

Ms. Connolly addressed the importance of revisiting the Sustainability Action Plan and identifying priority areas for focus. She presented a list of items that she believed warranted emphasis. Among her recommendations was the establishment of permanent conservation easements for City parks and recreational areas. She also suggested a comprehensive review of the City's low-impact development practices, with consideration for making these practices mandatory. To enhance transparency and communication, Ms. Connolly proposed the preparation of annual and quarterly reports for the City Council, in alignment with the mission statement of the Sustainability Action Plan.

3. Sustainability Board Budget

Ms. Higgins and Ms. Connolly submitted their list of priorities for consideration. Ms. Higgins also underscored the necessity for additional volunteers and the recruitment of sustainability personnel to support the Board's initiatives. Mr. Dennis Bunt clarified the Board's role in planning, noting that the City provided the necessary support. Mr. Luse proposed extending the budget list for future discussions.

OTHER BUSINESS:

1. Sustainability Fair 2025

Ms. Connolly raised important concerns regarding the Sustainability Fair, specifically related to the time commitment involved. She recommended that the Board prioritize smaller projects to facilitate more timely completion, emphasizing that the educational benefits of the fair may be less tangible and measurable, particularly in light of the absence of a current budget for the event.

Ms. Zeigler suggested considering the possibility of scheduling the Sustainability Fair in the fall rather than the spring. Mr. Luse inquired about the status of a proposed budget for the fair. Mr. Deniss Bunt responded that City Manager Suzanne Sherman was actively working to secure funding.

Additionally, Mr. Luse sought clarity on the proposed date for the fair. Mr. Blount explained that the Board would need to provide the Public Works Department staff with a tentative date, after which they would consult with the Recreation Department to determine availability. The Board and staff would remain committed to taking the necessary steps to ensure the success of the event.

2. Upcoming Meetings/Events of Interest (INFORMATIONAL).

Mr. Luse proposed that the Board discuss flood plains and water systems during the upcoming meeting scheduled for December. Additionally, the Board had agreed to invite a guest speaker in December to provide insights on floods and water systems, which would help address the natural environment section of the Sustainability Action Plan. In January 2025, the focus would shift to the budget and the fair.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:38 P.M.

Logan Luse, Chairperson

ATTEST:

Jesinie Fieffe, Recorder