

Citizens Environmental Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes – July 13, 2009

Members in attendance

Daniel Alberdi, Hallie Calig, Roy Davis, Wayne Echelberger, Ph.D., Harold Falls, Ann Hodgson, Ph.D., Joy Ingram, David Jellerson, Vicki Kenyon, Kim Koleos, Dale Meryman, Ph.D., Cam Oberting

Members absent

Jeremy Burris, Deborah Cope, Melanie Higgins, George Parker, Jr., Sharon Terrill-Elfers,

Guests

PRF project presenters included Peter Stiling, Kamal Alsharif, Lauren Deaner, and Scott Willis.

EPC Staff in attendance

Hooshang Boostani, Waste Management Director; Chris Dunn, Water Management Director; Tom Ash, ERM Division; Fred Nasser, Water Management, Sam Elrabi, Water Management; Andrew Zodrow, Assistant Counsel; Leslie Rogoff, Legal Intern; Ariana Gonzalez, Legal Intern; Elizabeth Hernandez, ERM Intern; Jeannette Figari, CEAC Liaison.

I. Regular Business

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 p.m. Hallie Calig distributed copies of a Tampa Tribune article to each member. The topic of the article was the EPC Budget.

a) Public Comment

No members of the general public were present.

b) Approval of June 1, 2009 Minutes

Lacking a quorum, no vote was called for the approval of the minutes.

c) Review – June 18, 2009 EPC Meeting

Hooshang Boostani, Director of the Waste Management Division, gave the Review and Preview of the EPC Board meetings in Dr. Garrity's absence.

- Dr. Garrity presented the EPC's proposed budget to the Commission. *Mr. Boostani summarized the presentation and noted that the Commission voted to flag EPC's budget for further discussion.*
- The ERM Division's technical reports were moved to the Consent Agenda.
- The Legal Department's update on Agency Policies was deferred to the July meeting.

d) Preview - July 16, 2009 EPC Meeting

- Dr. Garrity will submit a response to a BOCC budget item on the Consent Agenda. The response will address questions raised about delegations, merging the EPC Legal Department with the County Attorney's Office and the Water Team.

- The Executive Director’s report will include a follow up on the Agency’s informational meeting regarding the Sterling Business Model and a discussion on fee evaluation and cost sharing services.
- ERM Division staff will report on nutrient management issues as they relate to aquatic resources.
- The Legal Department will recommend adoption of appropriate BOCC Policies and will report on Executive Director Policies.

At this time, Chairman Jellerson, informed the Committee that Dr. Garrity had inquired whether or not the Committee would take any action regarding the Budget. In response, Hallie Calig offered the following motion:

CEAC recognizes the difficult budget challenge, but expresses grave concern that drastically diminished environmental protection not only irreversibly threatens our environment, but will also not certainly adversely affect the health, welfare and quality of life of residents of Hillsborough County, and especially unincorporated Plant City, Temple Terrace and Tampa.

Therefore, we support adoption of the budget as proposed by the Executive Director.

The motion was seconded and the Chairman called for discussion. Members debated the motion. An amendment was offered to strike the portion of the motion that referenced Plant City, Temple Terrace and Tampa. Ms. Calig accepted the amendment to delete the section that read “and especially unincorporated Plant City, Temple Terrace and Tampa.” A vote was called and the motion carried 7-4.

II. Items for Discussion, Action or Presentation

a) Pollution Recover Fund (PRF) – project presentations

The start time for the presentations was delayed due to the prior discussion concerning the motion to support the Executive Director’s proposed budget. Five PRF presentations were scheduled for this meeting. The applicants were allotted 10 minutes to make their presentations followed by a question and answer period in which CEAC members could ask questions and/or request additional information from the applicant. The project manager for the Artificial Wetland Cells project did not show and the Committee asked that Mr. Ash contact him and reschedule the presentation for next month if appropriate.

The following Pollution Recovery Fund project applications were presented at this meeting:

Nutrient Input Reduction into Tamp Bay by the Supplementation of Vegetative Buffer Zones Along Drainage System Tributaries

Applicant: University of South Florida, Dept of Integrated Biology
Project Manager: Peter Stiling

Project Details: The goals of this project are to construct artificial plant communities using dominant native plant species of the appropriate habit and hydric regime along the shores of five tributaries of the Tampa Bay drainage system, which will then be monitored for their effects on water quality and invertebrate community composition. The cost and benefits (i.e. results) of this pilot study will be calculated to determine if this technique provides a cost-effective management and restoration strategy for Tampa Bay. The objectives of the following proposal are to 1) assess native plant communities along the riparian areas of the Tampa Bay drainage system; 2) use these data to develop species diversity and dominance indices for these native plant communities; 3) establish experimental native plant communities (to serve as natural water filters) using the five most appropriate species (obtained from 1 and 2 above) along small tributaries of the Tampa Bay drainage system and 4) monitor the effects of experimental plant communities on water quality and plant and invertebrate community structure.

PRF Request: \$50,000.00

Several CEAC members asked questions and a request was made for an itemized breakdown of the budgetary costs.

Constructing a Rain Garden to Reduce Stormwater Runoff Pollutant Loads and Meet National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Requirements

Applicant: University of South Florida
Project Manager: Kamal Alsharif Ph.D.

Project Details: The rain garden will filter the sediment and nutrients and will mitigate stormwater pollution. It will increase the size of the natural and pervious areas, and help reduce pollutant loads to the stormwater system. The project will assist the University of South Florida to meeting NPDES Municipal Separate Stormwater Sewer System (MS4) requirements. The project will also help with the TMDL program in Hillsborough County, specifically for nutrient load reduction from non-point sources to Hillsborough River. The rain garden project will be evaluated according to the following. First, is it meeting the NPDES requirements for stormwater management by the USF? Second, the survival of the plants species chosen for the site. This will be done by continuous monitoring and checking the survival rates of the plants. Third, its capacity to filter nutrients. This will be done by taking samples of the water runoff before it enters the rain garden and after it leaves it. Fourth, by tracking the number of visitors to the site and their willingness to adopt this technique to improve water quality on their lands.

PRF Request: \$49,618.00

Several CEAC members asked questions and a request was made for an itemized breakdown of the budgetary costs.

Effects of Restoration on Use of Habitat by Neo-Tropical Migratory Songbirds

Applicant: Quest Ecology
Project Manager: Lauren Deaner

Project Details: Loss of native habitat for has contributed to the decline of nearly two-thirds of all migratory birds. No research has currently been completed on the use of restored or created habitats by migratory songbirds. The planned result of this restoration is to provide optimal stopover habitat for migratory songbirds whose populations have declined, some as much as 75%, but that are not listed under the Endangered Species Act. Quest Ecology Inc., in association with Hillsborough County Parks and Recreation, Natural Resources Division, and Audubon of Florida, has established a long-term monitoring program at Cockroach Bay Aquatic Preserve. Commencing in the Spring of 2007, Quest Ecology's Avian Ecologist, Lauren Deaner, with the assistance of volunteers, has been banding neo-tropical migratory songbirds during spring and fall migration. Spring of 2007 and fall of 2007 were partially funded by grants from the Tampa Port Authority (Sovereign Lands Program) and the Tampa Bay Estuary Program (Mini-grant Program) respectively. Spring 2008, Fall 2008, and Spring 2009 have all been self-funded by Quest Ecology Inc. The project has been well-received by the community.

PRF Request: \$84,081.00

Several CEAC members asked questions. The Ms. Deaner was asked if they had received any official letters of support from their Partners. She indicated that they had and would provide those letters to Mr. Ash.

East Lake Watershed: A Student-led Action Plan to Improve Water Quality

Applicant: Suncoast Earth Force
Project Manager: Scott Willis

Project Details: The goal of this project is for students to develop an East Lake Watershed Action Plan that is based on management plans for this area, water quality data from an array of scientific organizations, and both water quality data and land use analysis that these students have collected over an entire year.

Students will gain:

- scientific knowledge including the basics of watershed management from professional scientists
- how to communicate effectively with homeowners, business owners, and water management professionals
- leadership skills required to coordinate diverse groups of students and analyze scientific data

Service-learning is emerging as a critical topic in K-12 schools, higher education, and community organizations that work with youth. This is because students participating in service learning show improvements in academic achievement, career preparation, feelings of self efficacy, behavior, attendance, and civic engagement (Dr. J. Follman, Director, Florida Alliancefor Student Service, Florida State University).

PRF Request: \$46,300.00

Several CEAC members asked questions and a request was made for an itemized breakdown of the budgetary costs.

Other Business

At this time, Chairman Jellerson noted that there was a quorum and called for a motion to approve the June 1, 2009 minutes. A motion was made to approve the minutes with two corrections. The scrivener's errors to be addressed are on page 2, Dr. Henningsen was referred to as Mr., and on page 3, the letters in the initialism PRF were transposed. The motion carried 12-0.

Chairman Jellerson introduced an item for discussion at the request of Deborah Cope. According to Mr. Jellerson, Ms. Cope, who had to miss the meeting due to the change in date, felt that absences of this nature should not be held against a member and suggested this might be an issue for the Committee to address. It was decided that this issue could be taken up at a later date, after the PRF project reviews and recommendations were completed.

Agenda Items for August 3, 2009 CEAC Meeting

The remaining PRF application presentations are scheduled for the August meeting. The Artificial Wetland Cells application will be added to the list if appropriate.

A motion was made to adjourn. The motion passed and the meeting was adjourned at 4:38 p.m.