



City of North Port
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
DEPARTMENT
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MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Mayor & Members of the North Port Commission

THRU: A. Jerome Fletcher II, ICMA-CM, City Manager

THRU: Jason Yarborough, ICMA-CM, Deputy City Manager

THRU: Alaina Ray, AICP, Development Services Department, Director

THRU: Lori Barnes, AICP, Development Services Department, Assistant Director

FROM: Stefan Kalev, Natural Resources Division Manager, Staff Liaison to the Environmental Advisory Board

SUBJECT: Recommendation to determine, track and review North Port's Environmental Health (EH)

DATE: January 26, 2024

Honorable Mayor and Members of the North Port Commission,

Code of the City of North Port Chapter 4, Boards and Committees – Article IX, Environmental Advisory Board – Section 4-182, states that The Environmental Advisory Board (EAB) shall advise the City Commission on matters pertaining to preserving and promoting wildlife, habitat protection, trees, the City's natural and environmental resources, its flora and fauna, tree planting and care, beautification of public spaces, and safeguarding environmental quality for the future.

On January 8, 2024, during their regular meeting, the EAB discussed and made motion to approve the attached advisement to request and advise City Commission to determine, track and review North Port's Environmental Health (EH).

Attachments:

- A. Advisement to City Commission from the Environmental Advisory Board to determine, track and review North Port's Environmental Health (EH).

Attachment A

Dear Mr. Fletcher and North Port City Commissioners,

Like many rapidly growing communities, North Port needs to find the appropriate balance between development and environmental health. While development metrics are regularly measured and promoted (population, building permits, business licenses, etc.), environmental health metrics for North Port are practically non-existent. In fact, if you were to ask a number of city officials or employees, 'How would you rate North Port's environmental health?' you would most likely receive a variety of qualitative or subjective answers, but struggle to find a comprehensive, fact-based response. This would be akin to having a medical checkup without any of the necessary metrics to determine your personal health. For North Port to achieve the appropriate balance of development and environmental health, the city needs to objectively measure, track, and review the environmental health of the city.

In accordance with the Environmental Advisory Board's (EAB) charter, the EAB recommends that North Port create and publish a quarterly Environmental Health scorecard. The scorecard should include measurable targets and results for the following categories:

- Air quality
- Water quality (drinking and open water bodies i.e. canals, creeks, and rivers)
- Tree canopy
- Wildlife habitat and protection
- Compliance with state and federal environmental regulations
- Grants and incentives applied for and received relating to the preservation and health of the city's environment and wildlife habitat

The EAB also recommends an annual review of North Port's Environmental Health, involving the appropriate city personnel, elected officials, and the public, based on the results of the previous year's scorecards. According to the Environmental Resiliency & Sustainability portion of North Port's 2022-25 Strategic Plan:

"North Port seeks to be the role model in the region as a community that values environmental resiliency and sustainability in the design and operation of its facilities, programs, services, and development through forward-thinking policies, ordinances, and education."

With the recent addition of a Natural Resources Division, this recommendation seems timely as a way to measure not only North Port's Environmental Health but also the new division's effectiveness as we strive to become a regional role model.

Thank you,

Environmental Advisory Board:

Desiree Holland
William English
Jessica Eik
Erin Hall

Casey McGowan
Lola Robinson
Linda Amos
Amber Clayton