



City of North Port
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
DEPARTMENT
Alaina Ray, AICP, Director
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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, Assistant City Manager

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

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

FROM: Jeremy Rogus, Arborist, Staff Liaison to the Environmental Advisory Board

SUBJECT: Advisement to City Commission from the Environmental Advisory Board use tree fund monies to acquire properties for conservation land/easements

DATE: January 8, 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 that a substantial portion of Tree Fund Monies be used to acquire land for conservation/preservation pursuant to the City of North Port Tree Protection Regulations Section 45-13 – *Tree Fund*.

Attachments:

- A. Advisement to City Commission from the Environmental Advisory Board to use tree fund monies to acquire properties for conservation land/easements

Attachment A

Dear Mr. Fletcher and North Port City Commissioners,

The Environmental Advisory Board (EAB) fully supports the Development Services Director in the creation of a Natural Resources Division. The forward movement in environmental stewardship is exciting. The creation of this new Division also highlights the need for land acquisition of conservation property/easements. As stated in the June 6, 2023 EAB memorandum to City Commission, the EAB vision is for hundreds of years. Conservation property will remain for hundreds of years despite turns in economy which would prevent full staffing of the Division or dissolution of the Division. There will not always be a Development Services Director, Commission, and City Manager who supports that Division and environmental stewardship. There will not always be favorable budget or code requirements to support that Division and environmental stewardship. It is impossible to see all the factors that will contribute to or harm the forward movement in conservation and the new Division over the next 300 years but conservation easements and land acquired for conservation will be here always and weather changes in staffing, budget constraints, and the whims of future City Managers, Commission Members, and Program Directors. With the creation of the Natural Resources Division it is imperative that the Commission also has the vision to understand it will change, ebb and flow, reduce, recreate, dissolve, re-create over the next hundreds of years but the acquisition of conservation property is perpetual and is necessary.

Please act now to acquire property for conservation. Please review the June 6, 2023 EAB memorandum to City Commission which states that "The EAB sees land acquisition for conservation as the most important and urgent goal for protection of trees and wildlife habitat within the City of North Port" and "The majority of the tree fund balance needs to be used for land acquisition, maintaining conservation property to promote wildlife habitat, and restoring native plants on public property to restore habitat." Also see the October 10, 2023 EAB memorandum to City Commission.

Although the City has the State Park and other large tracts of conservation property within its boundaries, these lands are not located where people live, work, and conduct daily life. It is imperative that we leave out these large tracts which are lying on the outskirts of North Port from discussion or influence on canopy calculations and conservation areas.

Conservation lands are an integral aspect of intelligent use of natural resources. Acquiring property for conservation and designating property for conservation demonstrates a responsibility and commitment to environmental stewardship. It is the course of wisdom to set aside an ample portion of our available and contiguous parcels as conservation property.

Thank you,

Environmental Advisory Board:

Desiree Holland	Casey McGowan
William English	Lola Robinson
Jessica Eik	Linda Amos
Erin Hall	Amber Clayton