

**MANATEE COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL LANDS MANAGEMENT AND ACQUISITION  
ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
REGULAR MEETING  
COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE CENTER  
1112 MANATEE Avenue West  
Bradenton, Florida  
December 4, 2017**

Present were:

Bill Webster, Chairman  
Bob Nicholson, Vice-Chairman  
Mike Burton  
Randy Cooper  
Debbie Lansing  
Ingrid McClellan  
Jim Parks  
Tim Polk  
Scott Tussing  
Patsy Ugarte

Absent were:

Bradley Hawkins  
Patrick Healy  
David Landers  
John McDonald  
Richard Smith

Also present were:


Mike Elswick, Resource Management Division Manager, Parks and Natural Resources  
Vicki Tessmer, Deputy Clerk, Clerk of Circuit Court

A. **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

EL20171204DOC001

Chairman Webster called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m., and members introduced themselves.

B & C. **MINUTES**


 Motion was made by Member. Nicholson, seconded by Member Polk, and carried 10-0 to approve the minutes of December 5, 2016, and January 31 and March 13, 2017.

D. **CITIZEN COMMENTS**


There being no citizens present, Chairman Webster did not open Citizen's Comments.


E. **REPORTS**


**Preserve Updates**

 Mike Elswick, Resource Management Division Manager, provided updates on the preserves. There is no active acquisition program, but the management program is ongoing. Duette Preserve has an area currently closed off and will reopen after staff verification of a safety issue with the gun range. Hillsborough County and Quest Ecology approached staff regarding scrub jay monitoring and provide recommendations. There is a proposal to move two male scrub jays from Hillsborough County to Duette Preserve. The County received two grants: a gopher tortoise habitat improvement grant for \$14,900 and a Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation (FWC) upland invasive exotic grant for \$200,000 with a primary target of cogon grass. Mr. Elswick displayed a map of the cogon grass infestation, and upon question, stated research shows that fall treatments are the most effective, and the heavier

concentration in the southeast is due to the former use as a tomato farm,


 Mr. Elwick discussed the expansion at Robinson Preserve. There are Tree Trust fund plantings for the first round of plantings at the expansion. He displayed a map to show the location of the plantings. A recreational trails grant is being used for a 5K course in the expansion. The Nest (environmental classroom) will be finished in December and will be debuted in February to coincide with the 5K run. The surface on the running course is a rubber type material placed over the asphalt (photo submitted). Phase IIB, the final cuts, will be complete in 2019. Staff prefers to open the majority of the expansion at one time. There are encroachments with the Winston Tract and staff will meet with the neighboring property owners. The connection trail to Perico will not be open until 2019, due to grant funding. There have been some issues regarding the screening between neighboring homes and the border or Perico Preserve.

 Pine Island Preserve is located in the middle of the Braden River, and a FWC upland invasive work group grant of \$38,000, will be used for the perimeter ring around the Island to remove Brazilian pepper. The public can access the island, and primitive camping could be established. Mr. Elswick discussed two areas along Palma Sola Bay that are owned by the County where primitive camping could occur as well. Ongoing maintenance is occurring at the other preserves.


 Discussion ensued regarding the gopher tortoise habitat at Perico Preserve, prescribed burns at Perico, need to do a census of the tortoise population, waifs are not marked, FWC is called when new tortoises are found, and people dropping animals (cats, chickens, snakes, etc.) at preserves,

Mr. Elswick discussed the Restore Act funding being used on environmental projects, including land management plan development for \$40,000 a year for 6 years, and the installation of boardwalks and trails. There are funds for the department through impact fees and the infrastructure sales tax. He encouraged members to contact him for future topics.


EL20171204DOC002

 Discussion ensued regarding all questions from members should be directed to staff, and answers could be distributed to all members, or addressed at an ELMAC meeting.

### **ELMAC Description and Work Plan**


 Member Burton distributed a handout outlining the purpose and function of ELMAC. He noted the initial purpose of the committee was for land acquisition, and discussed how ELMAC could better serve the Board of County Commissioners (Board).


Member McClellan reviewed the specific tasks of ELMAC including serving as the Tree Advisory Board. There could be more adopt-a-spots in the County. But the original tasks need to be discussed.

 Discussion ensued regarding the ordinance being established in 1993, are these tasks still supported by the Board, there is no money to acquire land, and no land to acquire, ELMAC needs to be more visible in front of the Board, expanding role, not deleting any tasks, many of the tasks are supporting staff, lobbying opportunities, recommend new members receive a briefing on their responsibilities and obligations, review of ordinance and sunshine laws, draft a request to revise and update the ordinance, form a sub-committee and workshop ideas on how ELMAC can be more relevant, all local governments in Manatee County have similar committees, become more involved in Land Development Code re-write as the Tree

Advisory Board, and should know how trees are being managed in unincorporated county,

Ms. McClellan referenced the Keep Manatee Beautiful Manatee County Tree Canopy Analysis, and noted Manatee County does not have an urban forester on staff.


 Discussion ensued regarding what type of push back would be received by Building and Development Services Department, present to Board what other Counties do regarding urban forestry, and ELMAC is not qualified to make recommendations for regulatory items such as the Land Development Code.

5t  Discussion ensued regarding opportunities to address the Board and ELMAC participating at various public meetings, education programs regarding trees and canopy, other activities that are within the current scope, members can present ideas at the next meeting, lobbying efforts, legislative priorities already set, and advisory board members are not allowed to directly lobby.  
(Depart Mr. Burton) EL20171204DOC003

### **SB574**


Member. McClellan submitted SB 574 and a letter from Keep Manatee Beautiful to Representative Stube, and the bill would eliminate the Tree City USA's.


Motion was made by member Cooper to advise the Board of County Commissioners that ELMAC is opposed to SB574 regarding the regulation of Home rule for tree trimming and tree ordinances. The motion was seconded by Member McClellan.

 Discussion ensued regarding what the Boards position is on the bill, trimming mangroves is already under State law, the bill references the removal of trees on private property, debris on property, advisory boards can make recommendations to the Board, local control, not a lot of support for the bill, and oppose the bill as originally written.

 The motion carried 9-0 EL20171204DOC004


### **Tree Canopy Analysis**

 Member McClellan distributed the Manatee County Tree Canopy Analysis, a comparison of 2004-2014. Statistics are included regarding unincorporated county and the cities.

 Discussion ensued regarding oak trees uprooting sidewalks and the placement of trees, and what types of trees were planted, the County is at 32 percent tree canopy coverage, the recommendation for Manatee County is 40 percent, \$43 million worth of benefits to have a tree canopy, use native plant as replacement when invasive species are removed, native tree benefits, and air quality. EL20171204DOC005


### **Tree City/County USA Re-certification Application**

Member McClellan is working on the application, and it will be signed off by the County Administrator. A possible Arbor Day event could be along El Conquistador Parkway, where invasive species can be replaced. There are seven medians that can be worked on and the Homeowner's Associations could be involved.

 Discussion ensued about would the medians be removed when the road is widened, trees that do not invade power lines, and right tree, right place.

Motion was made by Member McClellan and seconded by Member Tussing for Charlie Hunsicker to look at opportunities to use the tree fund for this (El Conquistador Parkway) or any other day Arbor Day project. The motion carried 9-0.

F. **NEW BUSINESS**

 Ms. McClellan distributed a memo regarding the SR 64 Anna Maria Island Bridge Replacement, with a fixed span bridge. The existing bridge will remain in place until the new bridge is built. A suggestion was made to replace a proposed rock shore line with a living wall.

EL20171204DOC006

Discussion ensued regarding disease on Silver Buttonwoods.

G. **COMMITTEE COMMENTS**

There were no member comments.

**ADJOURN**

There being no further business, Chairman Webster adjourned the meeting at 8:01 pm

Minutes approved: \_\_\_\_\_