

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE
City of New Port Richey
Meeting Agenda
New Port Richey – Public Library
Thursday – April 16, 2026 – 6:00 p.m.





ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE

City of New Port Richey

The Environmental Committee of the City of New Port Richey develops and endorses environmental events in the City, renders annual and special reports as members may deem advisable, and explores new environmental initiatives for the City. The ECCNPR was established in 1989 and recreated in 2011.

Meeting Agenda

New Port Richey **Public Library**

Thursday – April 16, 2026 – 6:00 p.m.

ANY PERSON DESIRING TO APPEAL ANY DECISION, WITH RESPECT TO ANY MATTER CONSIDERED AT ANY MEETING OR HEARING, WILL NEED A RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS AND MAY NEED TO ENSURE THAT A VERBATIM RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS IS MADE, WHICH INCLUDES THE TESTIMONY AND EVIDENCE UPON WHICH THE APPEAL IS TO BE BASED. THE LAW DOES NOT REQUIRE TRANSCRIBED VERBATIM MINUTES; THEREFORE, THE APPLICANT MUST MAKE THE NECESSARY ARRANGEMENTS WITH A PRIVATE REPORTER (OR PRIVATE REPORTING FIRM) AND BEAR THE RESULTING EXPENSE. (F.S.286.0105)

Welcome

Roll Call:

Dell deChant, Committee Chair; Rose Mohr, Vice Chair; Margaret (Sophia) Carswell, member; Amanda Zborek, member; Catherine Capello, Secretary.

City Staff Liaison, Colin Eichenmuller

Volunteer Coordinator, Sasha Bartenuk

Guests

Vox Pop (3 minutes for members of the audience – on items not on the agenda)

Approval of Minutes March 12, 2026

Regular Business

Liaison Officer (A) Advice on EC agenda, and (B) CC items: A) Advice from City Liaison is requested on all items before committee and (B) items on City Council agenda relevant to Environmental Committee (open)

Special Item - Report on Mayoral Election and reelection of Chopper Davis as mayor.

- No change in composition of City Council.
- Brief discussion by committee

Business of Committee I – On-going Projects and Events

Congress Avenue Land near Gulf Middle School (Colin)

Update on development of the property and environmental issues.

- Without objection: Last listing for time being, pending further developments

Library Seed Lending Program (Amanda)

- Note: Seed of the month program.

Urban Agriculture Program (Dell)

Dell or Catherine will draft a new garden registration for New Port Richey for approval by the City

Update on inclusion of City Property in Urban Agriculture Ordinance (All)

- Update from Colin

Wildflower Installation Initiative & Wildflower Ordinance (Chair & Colin)

- Colin reports on administration's plans for Wildflower Ordinance

Fruit Tree Peninsula (Colin Rose, Catherine)

- Update from Colin and Rose
- Update from Colin: 2 dwarf mangos will be planted around March
- Report from Catherine: FarmNet acquisition of 3 native wildflowers and donation of one to City for FTP

River Report (Colin & Sophia)

- Sturgeon research update.
- Catherine on communication with Tori or Sophia presenting at an Earth Day event.

Duck Colony (Colin)

- Without objection: Last listing.

Business of Committee II - New Projects and Topics (and projects of limited duration, including annual events)**HOA Garden Club Story** (Sophia and Catherine)

- Update on HOA communication with Sunbridge on tips to change HOA landscaping practices
- Update on presentation for HOAs.
-

Discussion of City's Acquisition of old Schwettman/Gulf High School Property and Building (Colin & Chair)

- Committee action: Keep on agenda as on-going project or remove
- Without objection: Last listing for time being, pending further developments

Mangrove Planting Project (Catherine & Colin)

- Update on funding from Community Development Block Grant to restore mangroves on Green Key.
-

Review of City's urban reforestation program (Dell, Sasha, Colin)

- * Monthly Report on Tree Budget, remaining funds for planting (Colin)
- Next walk (Sasha)

Grey Preserve invasive plant removal project (Sasha & Colin, others)

- Committee member asked to coordinate with FDACS Plant Inspection Department for next project.

Low Mow Spring (Sophia)

- Confirming committee decision to include Low Mow Spring in "Recommendations" section of the 2025 Annual Report (Report covers fall 2024 through fall [December] 2025)
- - Note: Report is typically presented in late spring early summer. Suggested date: July.

* Details: Low Mow Spring would be implemented from February to May.

** For further reflection/action: Additional or related recommendation: Establish/allow herbicide and pesticide free zones and encourage citizens to adopt pesticide-free practices.

*** Reference Note: Relates to policy/promotion of “No Mow May,” introduced in Wisconsin in 2020 and proposed for New Port Richey in ENV COM Annual Report of 2021 – Recommendation 4:

4. Create Herbicide/Pesticide-free Zones As is occurring in other areas of the nation and the world, we proposed establishment of herbicide/pesticide-free zones, with the City taking the lead and discontinuing the use of herbicides and pesticides on select public properties – using an incremental approach. This means native plants, insects, and animals would have an opportunity to thrive in these designated zones – which would also be safe and healthy for all of us as well. The City would encourage home owners to adopt this approach in their own yards and gardens. Given sufficient funding this approach could be promoted with educational materials, workshops, and signs. Having these zones is another step toward restablbing a healthy ecosystem in the city and beginning to reverse the impact of poisons on our environment and our health.

A companion proposal establishes a program to allow native vegetation to flower in the spring to nourish insect and bird populations to thrive during breeding season. Dubbed “No Mow May” in other areas, the program encourages property owners not to mow during the month of May to allow native plants a change to flower. Here, we’d probably have to go with No Mow April and May.

Seasonal Events - Note: Events noted here are supported and endorsed by Environmental Committee.

* Volunteers needed for all events.

Calendar 2026 - 2027

April 11: Events from April 6 -11 - **Florida Loquat Festival** 13th annual (Sims Park) (Presented by New Port Richey FarmNet in cooperation with the City of New Port Richey) (Sim’s Park/Peace Hall).

- Short Report
- Event was very successful.

Earth Day/Week (April 22, 2026) – 36th annual (1st 1992)
(Tori Ladd, Manager/Director) (Host: Host New Port Richey ENV COM & Library)

Monarch Festival – 5th Annual (May 2, 2026) 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
(Host: New Port Richey ENV COM, New Port Richey Public Library, and New Port Richey FarmNet)

September 3, 2026, 11:00 – 1:00 p.m. **The West Pasco Okra Occasion**, 11th annual
(Presented by New Port Richey FarmNet. Host: Host New Port Richey Public Library,)

November 21, 2026 , 11:00 – 1:00 p.m. **New Port Richey Sweet Potato Roundup** 11th annual
(Presented by New Port Richey FarmNet. Host: Host New Port Richey Public Library,)

January 15, 2027 – **Arbor Day** 38th annual (3rd Friday in January) (Host: ENV COM) 10:00 a.m. Frances Ave.
Colin: Contact Genesis School (?)

January 9, 2027 - **Collards Festival** at Grand Gardens, 12th annual (Presented by NPR FarmNet, Host: Grand Gardens)
(Grand Gardens) 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. +

Plants & Pints, 4th Tuesday, monthly. Next event, April 28, 2026, 5:30 to 7:30 – Florida Room

Meeting Schedule for 2026 "The environmental committee shall meet once every ninety (90) days unless it determines to meet more frequently." * Committee has determined it is best to meet monthly.

Next Meeting: Thursday, May 14, 2026, 6:00 p.m. – Library