Urban Wilderness Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, February 21, 2024
Broward County Parks Administration, South Building Conference Room
950 NW 38th St., Oakland Park, FL 33309

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 6:10 p.m.

Roll Call: Roll was called; a quorum was present.

Board Members Present:
Corey Callaghan
Ken Evans
Roberto Fernández, III
Brian Rosen

Staff:
Linda Briggs Thompson, Manager, Environmental Management Group
Cheri Gagné, Broward County Parks and Recreation
Elena Suarez, Environmental Specialist, Environmental Management Group
Michel Therrien, Environmental Project Coordinator, Environmental Management Group
Amanda Tolbert, Assistant County Attorney

Public Input: NONE

Old Business:
Approval of Minutes from the December 6, 2023, Meeting: Brian Rosen made a motion to approve the minutes for the December 6, 2023, meeting and Corey Callaghan seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Logo Update: Michel Therrien presented a logo for the Urban Wilderness designation that took into consideration Board member comments from the previous Urban Wilderness Advisory Board meeting. Discussion was had about the logo including adding the words Broward County, changing colors, materials where it would be added, and the process of incorporating it into the Urban Wilderness Park System.

Vice Chair Ken Evans made a motion to approve the updated Urban Wilderness logo as presented and Dr. Callaghan seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Status of Sites to Add to Inventory: Linda Briggs Thompson stated that the section had met with four cities (Parkland, Wilton Manors, Coral Springs, and Coconut Creek), and all were in favor of adding sites to the Urban Wilderness Park System with the exception of Coconut Creek, who were not in favor of it. Ms. Briggs Thompson stated that Park staff has a meeting next week about these sites moving forward in the designation process.

Chair Roberto Fernández, III inquired if Board members need to be at the public hearing. Ms. Briggs Thompson replied that it is not required, but would be nice and she would keep the Board apprised of any meetings.

New Business:

Board Membership: Ms. Briggs Thompson stated that the Board is down to six members and that Paul Callsen was removed due to absences. Ms. Briggs commented that the Board has the power to excuse a member's absence if there is an acceptable reason for the absence.

Dr. Callaghan made a motion to excuse Diana Guidry's absence, which was due to a funeral, and Vice Chair Evans seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Section Update: Michel Therrien reviewed agreements, amendments, grants, and other projects. He provided updates on the Helene Klein fire, the Miramar Pineland parking lot, restoration projects, and monitoring/surveying.

Chair Fernández inquired if there are plans for creating an archival database that would be released to the public of surveys that include rare plants, so the data is not lost. Ms. Briggs Thompson replied that the data is being responsibly tracked, but in order to protect plants from being poached, it is not provided on a public database, and she stated that there is no current need to at this time. Discussion was had on the advantages and disadvantages of making this information publicly available, how this information is available for research permits, and how plants were taken from a natural area after a hurricane when staff was not allowed to work. Chair Fernández commented that maybe protection and monitoring of rare plants could be included in the disaster response plan and Ms. Briggs Thompson agreed that it was a good idea.

Elena Suarez reviewed the laurel wilt management and bat monitoring. Mr. Therrien provided pictures of a naturalist walk that was coordinated with the Special Populations section.

Additional New Business: Chair Fernández asked if the Board could do a site visit to Deerfield Island and Ms. Briggs Thompson replied in the affirmative.

Chair Fernández asked for an update on the Miramar Athletic Park Addition. Ms. Briggs Thompson stated that the site has been cleaned up and pictures could be provided at the next meeting. She included that the city is working on how to include it in the management of the Miramar Athletic Park.

Chair Fernández inquired about an update on the land acquisition topic that was discussed at the last meeting. Dr. Callaghan reviewed the topic of the large piece of land that might be for sale that he considered natural in nature. Ms. Briggs Thompson stated that the City of Sunrise is interested in the site as it is a key part of their surface water management in the area.

Chair Fernández stated that he received a copy of the Parks and Recreation Division Master Plan and asked if the Board had reviewed the plan before it was finalized. Ms. Briggs Thompson stated that she did not believe so as it was not part of a Board task. Chair Fernández commented that he wanted to bring it up and put it on the record that since his name was in the Master Plan, he felt he

was coopted as approving the plan when he had not reviewed it. He stated that he wanted the director to know that he felt it was disrespectful to the Board. Ms. Briggs Thompson apologized to Chair Fernández and added that while the natural areas were included in the plan, the focus of the plan was not on natural resource management and was not a task that was included within the section of the Environmental Management Group.

Ms. Briggs Thompson explained the master plan process, which is required for accreditation and included public meetings. She added that the master plan is mostly focused on the amenities and facilities at the regional parks. Ms. Briggs Thompson highlighted the differences between a master plan and a resource management plan and how the resource management plans do get presented to the Board.

Chair Fernández asked when the next accreditation period was for the Division and Ms. Briggs Thompson replied that she would research it and provide it at the next meeting.

Discussion was had about when to schedule the Deerfield Island site visit. Staff will provide a list of options to the Board via email.

Next Meeting: May 15, 2024, at 6:00 p.m.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 7:16 p.m.