

**CITY OF TEMPLE TERRACE, FLORIDA
RIVER WATCH TASK FORCE
REPORT OF MEETING**

**Monday, December 20, 2010
Council Workroom
4:30 p.m.**

The Temple Terrace River Watch Task Force met on Monday, December 20, 2010, in the Council Workroom at City Hall.

PRESENT WERE: Task Force Chairman Jack Westberry and Task Force Members Frank Chillura and Ron Smith. **ABSENT WAS:** Task Force Member Terry McMahon.

ALSO PRESENT WERE: Legislative Secretary Sobeida LeBlanc, Task Force Liaison Joe Gross, Dr. Marty Kelly, and John Rodgers.

The meeting was called to order at 4:37 p.m. by Chairman Westberry.

1. Approval of the Minutes of Previous Meetings:

Upon motion of Task Force Member Smith, seconded by Task Force Member Chillura, and unanimously carried, the **REPORTS** of the September 20, 2010, and November 15, 2010, meetings were **APPROVED**.

Persons Wishing to be Heard on Items NOT Listed on the Agenda:

None.

2. Introduction of new Marine Patrol Officer – Greg Stevanus:

Chairman Westberry informed the Task Force that Marine Patrol Officer Stevanus will not be in attendance this evening.

3. Presentation by John Rodgers on Aquatic Plant Control and Funding:

Chairman Westberry stated John Rodgers is in attendance this evening to give a presentation on the situation with water hyacinths.

John A. Rodgers, Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission, gave a presentation titled "Aquatic Plant Control & Funding", a copy of which is a part of the record. Mr. Rodgers explained several PowerPoint slides, i.e., Funding for Aquatic Plant Management, Fiscal Year 2009 Budget, Funding Source and Priorities, Public Water Bodies, Water Hyacinth & Water Lettuce, Hydrilla, and also discussed various problem areas.

4. Current River Water Level:

Dr. Kelly reported the gauge at the City of Tampa dam this morning, indicated water levels of 20.22 feet and the Fowler Avenue gauge indicated 20.31 feet. He submitted a copy of the USGS Real-Time Water Data Report dated December 20, 2010, for the record. Dr. Kelly continued October was the worst October rainfall record they've ever had; they had zero inches of rainfall throughout the whole district. He said unless something changes, the outlook for rainfall is not looking very good for the next several months.

Chairman Westberry questioned whether the river will get some relief during the dry season. Dr. Kelly responded he does not know what the City of Tampa's plans are, but he knows they are continuing to augment out of the middle pool on the By-pass Canal.

Task Force Member Smith stated he read on the newspaper that the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) stopped pumping water out of Sulphur Springs and he questioned why. Dr. Kelly explained that when it gets really cold the manatees go to Sulphur Springs where it is comparatively warm. He continued that if they move water to the base of the dam, it cools down during the process; therefore, they leave the flow at Sulphur Springs so that heated water is left there and the manatees move up there.

Task Force Member Chillura questioned whether there have been further water restrictions put in place since the water levels on the river keep dropping. Dr. Kelly responded they are on Phase I restrictions.

Task Force Member Chillura questioned whether in previous years the river has ever been at this level during this time of the year. Dr. Kelly responded affirmatively, adding that in 2001 it was actually lower.

Task Force Member Chillura questioned whether SWFWMD would consider removing obstacles, such as a sunken boat, that are in the river along the main passageway. He explained the river is low and clear now, which would make removal of debris a lot easier. Dr. Kelly responded they normally do not remove debris from the river. He explained the only time he can recall that SWFWMD actually went in and physically removed debris was in 2004 when several hurricanes came through and dumped a lot of debris in the Alafia and Peace Rivers. He added there were so many log jams that it became both a navigation and flood control issue; therefore, they had to obtain a permit to do some clearing.

Task Force Member Chillura questioned if there are any agencies out there that take care of that. Dr. Kelly responded he does not know of any agencies that do that. Mr. Rodgers interjected that Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission does not either, but in the past they have cut up logs that have fallen in the river to allow boat passage. He explained their program has paid for that and justified funding by saying they could not get to the water hyacinth. The Task Force described various sections of the river with obstruction problems.

5. Liaison Report:

Task Force Liaison Gross reported that the Technical Advisory Council met on November 16th. He said they are in the process of switching the River News from paper copy to email, and he advised he took the liberty of sending the City Clerk's Office's River Watch email distribution list to them so that everyone who expressed interest in the river will get the River News via email. He continued that the I-275 bridge is being widened over the Hillsborough River; they are expanding the shoulders, but not adding any lanes. Also, he advised the Task Force that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has delayed nutrient requirements for 15 months.

Task Force Liaison Gross reported that the River Board met on December 6th. He said they have a new City of Tampa representative, and they adopted some policies on how to handle their business. Also, he said, they recapped the State of the River Tour.

Task Force Liaison Gross continued the River Roundtable, which is now the "Livable Tampa Roundtable" met on December 8th. He said they are looking at continuing focus on the Hillsborough River, but also improving overall conditions in the Tampa Bay area. He continued they will be having a candidate forum for the Tampa Mayor Election in March to find out their interests.

Task Force Liaison Gross reported the “Keep Hillsborough County Beautiful Committee”, met on December 14th. He said they are planning a Recycle Regatta in the river for March 24, 2011, where high school teams build watercrafts from recycled materials and race them across the river; the course will be from Tower Park to Lowry Park, he added.

Task Force Liaison Gross reported that the Hillsborough River Watershed Alliance met on December 15th. He said this group is also partnering with the Recycle Regatta and will present the 2011 Alan Wright Award during the event.

Task Force Liaison Gross recapped upcoming meetings and events: Livable Tampa Roundtable meeting on January 12th, Arbor Day event at Riverhills Park on January 15th, and Technical Advisory Council meeting on January 18th.

In looking forward to other things going on, Task Force Liaison Gross said he met with the Community Development Department last week about the Comprehensive Land Use Plan. He explained that every five years they have to submit an Evaluation Appraisal Report (EAR) where one of the components is conservation/aquifer recharge. He continued there are standards and expectations that are part of this report which involve the river. Since the Task Force is in existence, Task Force Liaison Gross suggested they have the City Planner give an overview of the plan. He said he would set up a future meeting with the City Planner.

Task Force Member Smith said it appears that Marbella Condos is doing some type of work at their dock and questioned what it is they are doing. Task Force Liaison Gross responded he is not aware of anything, but will check into it and report back to the Task Force.

Task Force Member Smith said he read an article about Tampa Bay Water minimizing their use of the desalination plant and questioned what this is about. Dr. Kelly explained that because of the expense of running the desalination plant, Tampa Bay Water would rather use other sources of water first. He said Tampa Bay Water has a request for a permit to increase their withdrawal amount off the Alafia River, but he doesn't know what the resolution is going to be.

6. Marine Officer Report:

None.

7. Other Business:

Chairman Westberry expressed appreciation to the Task Force Members, the Legislative Secretary, Task Force Liaison Gross, Dr. Marty Kelly, John Rodgers, and other visitors for attending these meetings even though they have not discussed any critical issues. He stated he really enjoyed working with everyone this year.

The Legislative Secretary brought to the Task Force's attention that next month's meeting falls on January 17th, which is Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday; therefore, the meeting needs to be rescheduled to another day. After some discussion the Task Force agreed to reschedule their meeting to Wednesday, January 19, 2011, at 4:30 p.m.

Task Force Member Smith questioned if the Task Force needs to elect a new Chairman and Vice-Chairman, to which the Legislative Secretary responded affirmatively, adding it will be on the next agenda.

Chairman Westberry questioned whether Task Force Member McMahon will continue to serve on the Task Force, to which the Legislative Secretary responded he expressed interest in reappointment. She added his application for reappointment will be going before the City Council tomorrow night.

Task Force Member Smith questioned whether any progress has been made to fill Mr. Pogorilich's vacant seat. Task Force Liaison Gross responded they have received one application so far.

The Task Force discussed an attempted house break-in in one of the neighborhoods and the importance for everyone to be on the look out and watch for each other's safety. Everyone wished each other happy holidays.

There being no further business to consider, the meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

Submitted by,

Sobeida LeBlanc
Legislative Secretary