Minutes from the meeting of

November 16, 2023

1:30 p.m.

Sebastian City Hall, Council Chambers
1225 Main Street Sebastian, FL 32958

Attendance: Christine Bamberger, Frank Catino, Graham Cox, Jerome Gayman, Cynthia Hall, Cheryl McPhillips, Doug Patterson, Linda Roberts, Suzanne Scheiber, Keith Winsten

Guests: Beth Powell, Ashley Weber, Barb Ford

1. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance (Frank Catino, Chair)
   Frank Catino called the meeting to order at 1:32 P.M. and led the committee in the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Introduction (Frank Catino, Chair)
   Mr. Catino led the group in introductions.

3. Agenda Revisions (Frank Catino, Chair)
   No agenda revisions were brought forward.

4. Approval of Minutes (Frank Catino, Chair)
   Minutes from the Citizens Advisory Committee on May 4, 2023, and August 10, 2023.

   **Requested Action:** Approve Minutes from the CAC Meeting on May 4, 2023, and August 10, 2023.

   **MOTION WAS MADE BY JEROME GAYMAN TO APPROVE THE MEETING MINUTES FROM MAY 4, 2023, AND AUGUST 10, 2023. MOTION WAS SECONDED BY CHRISTINE BAMBERGER. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

5. Public Comments (Frank Catino, Chair)
   No public comments were made.

6. Lost Tree Island Conservation Area
   Beth Powell, Recreation & Conservation Director of Indian River County Parks, presented an update on the Lost Tree Islands Restoration and Enhancement Project. The IRL Council was a partner in funding. Ms. Powell started with a brief history of the land acquisition. The goals of the IRLNEP grant and design considerations were reviewed. The focus was habitat restoration and enhancement with invasive species removal and re-vegetation on Duck Head and Earman islands. The project will continue, and the ongoing tasks were presented.
7. Old Business
   None

8. New Business
   a. MOA with Brevard Zoo “Dollar for Conservation” (Duane De Freese)

   During the discussion, Dr. De Freese outlined the terms of the agreement. The plan is to collect one dollar from each admission ticket sale at the proposed aquarium to generate funds for an IRLNEP Request for Proposal (RFP). The guests of the aquarium will have input on how the dollar will be used (habitat, restoration, species recovery, etc.) Members suggested that this RFP be integrated into the current schedule deadline to make it easier for the proposal reviewers, staff, and those submitting proposals. Additionally, ten percent of the funds will be allocated to administrative costs.

   **Requested Action:** Motion to recommend that the IRL Council Board of Directors accept the Memorandum of Agreement between the IRL Council and the Brevard Zoo providing for the development and implementation of the “Dollar for Conservation” program.

   **MOTION WAS MADE BY DOUG PATTERSON TO RECOMMEND THAT THE IRL COUNCIL BOARD OF DIRECTORS ACCEPT THE MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE IRL COUNCIL AND THE BREVARD ZOO PROVIDING FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE “DOLLAR FOR CONSERVATION” PROGRAM. MOTION SECONDED BY JEROME GAYMAN. MOTION PASSED. KEITH WINSTEN ABSTAINED.**

   b. 2024 Legislative Priorities (Duane De Freese)

   Dr. De Freese presented the IRL Council’s legislative priorities for the year 2024. These priorities cover both federal and state levels and aim to support the goals of the watershed in the upcoming legislative cycle. Dr. De Freese emphasized that the NEP does not engage in lobbying activities.

   **Requested Action:** Motion to recommend that the IRL Board of Directors review and adopt IRL Council Legislative Priorities for 2024. Authorize the Executive Director to represent the IRL Council in legislative policy discussions and appropriations.

   **MOTION WAS MADE BY CYNTHIA HALL TO RECOMMEND THAT THE IRL BOARD OF DIRECTORS REVIEW AND ADOPT IRL COUNCIL LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES FOR 2024. AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO REPRESENT THE IRL COUNCIL IN LEGISLATIVE POLICY DISCUSSIONS AND APPROPRIATIONS.**

   c. Engaging with the Community Engagement Coordinators in 2024 (Kathy Hill)

   Ms. Kathy Hill opened the discussion by requesting the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) to give input on maximizing the Community Engagement Coordinators’ (CEC) value and making the CAC members’ time more engaging. Additionally, Ms. Hill asked the committee to submit events and presentations in which the CAC would like to have the CECs participate. The discussion included ways to disseminate accurate information across the watershed. This included engaging citizens and businesses, concern for the misinformation to be corrected, creating content for publications, providing content to news outlets, and hosting community meetings and listening sessions.
Requested Action: No motion is required—open Discussion.

d. 2024 IRL Council Meeting Calendar (Erin Bergman)

Ms. Erin Bergman presented the tentative dates and explained the date choices. The meetings will take place in the Historic Elementary School in Sebastian, which currently houses the office of the IRL Council.

Requested Action: Motion to recommend that the IRL Council Board of Directors review and adopt the proposed 2024 IRL Council Meeting Calendar.

MOTION WAS MADE BY CYNTHIA HALL TO RECOMMEND THAT THE IRL COUNCIL BOARD OF DIRECTORS REVIEW AND ADOPT THE PROPOSED 2024 IRL COUNCIL MEETING CALENDAR. MOTION SECONDED BY GRAHAM COX. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

9. IRLNEP Staff Reports

a. Community Engagement Update (Kathy Hill)

Ms. Kathy Hill shared the metrics on this quarter’s social media accounts. The metrics revealed the amount of time viewers spent watching videos. There was a 66% drop in views from 3-second views to 15-second views, and only eight viewers watched a 1-minute video. The Community Engagement Coordinators continue to serve the IRL Council by attending meetings and events, participating in fieldwork and projects, and providing outreach.

b. Information Technology and Data Science Update (Kathy Hill)

Ms. Kathy Hill presented on behalf of KJ Ayers-Guerra. The IRLNEP Master Project List Interactive Web Application has been completed. The tool houses all projects completed by the IRLNEP from 2016 forward and will be available to the public. Information on each project has been included.

c. IRL Project Update (Daniel Kolodny)

Mr. Dan Kolodny listed the 22 projects/activities completed in FY 2023. Mr. Kolodny presented project highlights for Brevard Zoo: Restore Our Shores: Community-Based Seagrass Restoration in the Indian River Lagoon and Florida Institute of Technology: Suffocating Sand; Mapping Hypoxia and its Impacts on Benthic Nutrient Fluxes in the IRL and University of Central Florida: Unintended Consequences: Are Non-plastic Materials now used in Coastal Restoration Always Better for the Indian River Lagoon?

d. Executive Director Report (Duane De Freese)

Dr. Duane De Freese gave an overview of his participation in presentations and activities. He shared the final statistics of the 2023 NOAA Transformational Habitat Restoration and Coastal Resilience Grants Program Proposal and gave a reminder of the 2025 RFP schedule due dates. Dr. De Freese thanked Tom Carey of Volusia County and Rich Paperno of FWC for their time served at the Management Conference and wished them well in retirement. Also noted was the affiliation change for Dr. Chuck Jacoby from St. John’s River Water Management District to the University of South Florida Flood Hub. Discussions with FDEP revealed opportunities for Dr. Jacoby to work on IRLNEP and FDEP projects.
10. **Final Comments** (Committee, Staff, Public)

   Mr. Dan Kolodny thanked Cynthia Hall for her eight years of service to the Citizens Advisory Committee as she resigned.

   Ms. Cynthia Hall extended an invitation to the Sebastian River High School PRISM band concert on December 7-10, 2023. Ms. Hall commented that she enjoyed her time on the CAC committee.

   Ms. Suzanne Scheiber announced that Volusia County has been awarded a $25 million USDA grant for land conservation. A public hearing with Florida Forever will take place.

11. **Next Meeting**

    **Tentative:** Thursday, February 8, 2024, at 1:30 p.m. Historic Sebastian Elementary School, 1235 Main Street, Sebastian, FL 32958

12. **Adjourn**

    The meeting adjourned at 3:54 p.m.

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**NOTE:** If a person decides to appeal any decision made by the Board with respect to any matter considered at such meeting or hearing, he or she will need a record of the proceedings, and that, for such purpose, he or she may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based. Section 286.0105, Florida Statutes (2014).

Pursuant to the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act, any person requiring special accommodations to participate in this workshop/meeting is asked to advise the agency at least 48 hours before the workshop/meeting by contacting: Erin Bergman at (314) 347-5854. If you are hearing or speech impaired, please contact the agency using the Florida Relay Service, 1(800) 955-8771 (TDD) or 1(800) 955-8770 (Voice). For more information, you may contact: Erin Bergman, IRL Council, 1235 Main St, Sebastian, FL 32958, (314)347-5854, or by email at bergman@irlcouncil.org.