

KEEP LAKE BEAUTIFUL MEETING – October 11, 2023

The Keep Lake Beautiful Committee met on Wednesday, October 11, 2023, at 8:30 a.m. in the Board of County Commissioner's Meeting Room, Lake County Administration Building, Tavares, FL. In attendance were Dr. Robert Olson, Deborah Jayne, Mayor Evelyn Wilson, Gary Rogers, Melisa Simmes, Banks Helfrich, Commissioner Parks, and Veronica Dau – staff.

CALL TO ORDER

Robert Olson called the meeting to order.

PLEDGE

Commissioner Parks led the pledge of allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Dr. Robert Olson asked that a motion be made to approve the minutes from the previous meeting that took place on July 12, 2023. Mayor Evelyn Wilson made a motion to approve, and it was seconded by Deborah Jayne.

COMPLETED PROJECTS

Veronica Dau went over the completed projects.

The Litter Survey required by Keep America Beautiful (KAB) was completed. Surveyed six areas covering the entire county. The county's total average was 1.92 an increase of 11.6% from 2022. The county's population has also increased by 11.85%.

Mayor Wilson reported that the grass height is excessive and there is litter about in Groveland. Veronica said she is working with both Lake County and FDOT mowers.

Dr. Olson asked where to report litter – Veronica responded it can be reported on the KLB Litter Reporter app, by contacting KLB and Road Operations can get involved, and the FDOT Report Litter phone number. Commissioner Parks offered his email if the problem was large, and no one was responding.

Deborah Jayne reported the Leesburg Chamber Sunrise Breakfast was well attended on July 27th. Veronica said there were two Adopt-A-Roadway inquiries from it.

Veronica said we have planted Pollinator Pathway Gardens, an America in Bloom project, at Cagan Crossings Library and Cooper Memorial Library. Both will be used for education on pollinators, native plants, and restful spaces, and provide a stopping place for the bees and butterflies. October 14th at 10:00 am Florida Native Plant Society will have their membership meeting at the Cooper Memorial Library for the “Opening” of the garden.

Gary Rogers said we cannot plant pollinator gardens at all the schools due to high allergies to bees. Check with the administration office and they will follow up with the Department of Education on what can be planted.

Every July the Realtors of Lake and Sumter counties have a Clean up Florida Waters project. This was a combined effort with Adopt-A-Lake and Lake County Water Authority and KLB to clean up between Lake Louisa and Crooked River in the Clermont Chain of Lakes. 16 volunteers collected 60 lbs. of litter.

At the event, Steve McDonald the president/CEO of the local Realtor of Lake and Sumter County office on SR 19 connected with Veronica about redoing the landscaping of the office in Clermont. Veronica asked if he would be interested in planting native plants to which he replied yes. Veronica was able to arrange a meeting for him with Brooke Moffis at the UF/IFAS outreach center and advised him on what to plant.

Veronica was able to attend the America in Bloom conference from September 28th – 30th. Tavares was awarded the Population award for their population category and the Coolest Downtown over all the cities participating. Groveland was awarded the Outstanding Achievement for Landscaped Areas award and recognized for its Environmental Initiatives. Eustis was recognized for the Overall Impression and nominated for the Best Youth Gardening Program award. Nan Cobb of Eustis and Traci Anderson of Tavares were also nominees for the Community Champion Award.

Recap of 2022/2023:

- There were 11 community clean-up events with 674 volunteers who provided a total of 2,034 service hours. They collected 25.97 lbs. of bulk, 12/44 tons of tires, and 8,310 lbs. of litter.
- There were 59 group clean-ups for Adopt-A-Roadway Programs with 538 volunteers who provided a total of 1,028 volunteer hours. They collected 7,096 lbs. of litter from 98 miles of roadways.
- There were 18 education programs over the summer, 8 community presentations, 3 beautification projects that utilized 560 volunteer hours and there were 7 America in Bloom Roundtables.
- There were 27 Clean Up-A-Spot events with 101 volunteers who provided 296.5 hours of volunteer service and collected 3,612 lbs. of litter.

Keep Lake Beautiful has been awarded the Keep American Beautiful President's Circle Award for the years 2022 and 2023.

Commissioner Parks asked that KLB attend the next BCC meeting and present the KAB Presidents Circle Award Information. He would also like a recycle bin at the November meeting(s) and they can stress that November 15th is America Recycles Day.

Groveland would like to make a proclamation that November is America Recycles Month and host a cell phone recycling event.

2024 KLB MEETING DATES

The committee discussed, voted, and agreed that the meetings would be on Wednesday afternoons at 3:30 pm.

PENDING PROJECTS AND DISCUSSION

Recycling Project – The company called 911 Cell Phone Bank distributes the phones to persons in need. Melissa Simmes asked if the cell phones collected would be returned to our local community. Veronica will find out if they stay in the community or not. Veronica has a request into the county attorney's office to make sure Lake County has no liability for cell phones that are collected. The cell phone recycling event will be in November or December.

School Recycling Programs – Veronica was contacted by a teacher at Treadway Elementary. Mr. Rogers said he agreed to put her in contact with Waste Management Recycling Coordinator, Mr. Steven Fisher.

On October 21st KLB will be partnering with the City of Leesburg Community Cleanup. There will be 4 starting locations where volunteers will be collecting bulk trash and litter.

On November 18th there will be a Community Cleanup in Sorrento. Volunteers will be collecting bulk trash, litter, and tires. Household hazardous waste will also be collected.

OTHER BUSINESS

KLB was able to secure the FDEP Tire Amnesty Grant up to \$25,000 to dispose of waste tires.

Veronica is working on getting a grant from FDOT that funds all Florida Keep America Beautiful. This does have to be approved by the county manager. If approved the \$25,000 grant would need to be spent by June 30, 2024.

We were also selected for three Walmart community grants of \$3,000 each.

Also, Board members can accept donations of up to \$1000 from the community for donations. Any amount greater than that must be approved by the County Manager would have to accept it.

Veronica asked what would the committee like to spend the grant funds on (future KLB projects only):

- Commissioner Parks – Native Plant Gardens
- Mellissa Simmes – Use reusable signs (write-boards) as an educational tool at the Native Plant Gardens. Suggested we have groups sponsor it and add a plaque with their name. Who would be responsible for updating the signs?
- Bank Helfrich – a machine that recycles plastic bottles into 3D printer filament.

Dr. Olson said there is a Living Shoreline grant of \$500.00 available for homeowners who live on a lake to plant erosion control plants and others. Residents can contact UF & the county grant program. plant erosion control plants and others.

Founders Day in Groveland in conjunction with National Agriculture Day in conjunction with Bike America Day on March 23, 2024. Mr. Olson asked if KLB would be interested in being involved. Veronica asked that the information be sent to her to look it over.

Next meeting date – January 10, 2024

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to address, the meeting was adjourned

DR. ROBERT OLSON, CHAIRMAN