

Keep Lake Beautiful Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
315 West Main Street
BCC Chambers – County Admin Building
Tavares, Florida 32778
July 10, 2024

CALL TO ORDER:

Dr. Robert Olson called the meeting to order at 3:33 p.m.

Dr. Robert Olson led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Members/Staff Attending:

Municipal Representative: Mayor Evelyn Wilson, City of Groveland

Municipal Representative: Mayor Ed Freeman, Town of Lady Lake

Business Owner/Chamber Representative: Deborah Jayne

Citizen Representative: Dr. Robert Olson

Citizen Representative: Banks Helfrich

Commissioner Liaison: Doug Shields

Office of Solid Waste Director: David Salinas

Office of Solid Waste Associate Director: Shannon Dawkins

Keep Lake Beautiful Facilitator: Hillarie Burgess

Assistant County Manager: Cari Christian

Financial Associate: Ellen Nielsen

Members - Not Attending:

Civic Organization Member: Melissa Simmes - Excused

Citizen Representative: Vacant

CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIRPERSON NOMINATIONS:

Mayor Wilson and Commissioner Shields, respectively, made and seconded a motion to nominate Mr. Helfrich to Chairperson. The motion was carried 4-0.

A motion to nominate Ms. Simmes to Vice-Chairperson was made and seconded by Dr. Olson and Mr. Helfrich, respectively. The motion was carried unanimously, 5-0.

Mr. Salinas stated that Ms. Simmes would be recognized as Vice-Chairperson. Once Ms. Simmes is informed, if she declines, it will be reopened at the next meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A motion was made and seconded by Mayor Freeman and Mayor Wilson, respectively, to approve the April 10, 2024, minutes. The motion was carried unanimously.

INTRODUCTIONS, UPDATES AND PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS/COMMENTS:

No citizen comments.

Mr. Helfrich welcomed Hillarie Burgess and said she is a farmer and is into native plants, and he met her through the Native Plant Society. Mr. Helfrich asked Mr. Salinas if Ms. Burgess was the new facilitator and if she would be the one to send the committee emails. Mr. Salinas replied eventually.

Mr. Helfrich welcomed Shannon Dawkins, Associate Director of Solid Waste.

Mr. Salinas began the presentation by showing the 'Notice of Meeting' stating the meeting was properly advertised. The introductions were completed. The outline will also include Keep Lake Beautiful (KLB) program updates, an overview of completed projects, a discussion on pending projects, other business, and upcoming meetings.

Ethics Training:

Mr. Salinas gave the program updates, reminding the committee that the ethics training is an annual refresher. Four hours are required, and a signed, completed, notarized affidavit is due to the Lake County's Board Liaison by December 31, 2024.

Currently trying to set up a night to bring everybody in, not just KLB but other Committees as well, have a notary, and do it as a group. But that has not been laid out yet. If it does happen, KLB staff will email the committee and let them know about that option. The link was provided on a slide, but the committee can contact KLB staff to have it emailed.

Mr. Helfrich asked for the link to training to be emailed to the Committee. Mr. Salinas replied yes. Ms. Jayne stated she was a notary and offered to notarize the affidavits. Mr. Salinas asked if it was free, and Ms. Jayne replied yes, it is free. Mr. Helfrich asked Ms. Jayne if she wanted to do it after August. Mr. Helfrich verified it needed to be completed by December 31st and stated there was still time. Mr. Salinas stated that was correct.

Update on Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Grant Money:

Mr. Salinas gave the update to follow up on the discussion at the last meeting—200 new pickers and vests, bringing the count to over 300 for both items. Thousands of bags and disposable gloves were purchased. Unfortunately, the litter kits were promotional items, and a pre-made kit option was unavailable. Mr. Dawkins explained that KLB will buy items individually and put together 200 litter kits, which include foldable pickers with a belt holder, garbage bags, vests, misting fans to cool off at the clean-up events, gloves, green KLB wrist bands for volunteers to be able to promote in their everyday lives, drying towels, water bottles, and other promotional items. Ms. Burgess showed the committee the items that had come in. The misting fans, the towels, and the wristbands have not been received yet.

Mr. Helfrich asked if the items were purchased from the FDOT grant, how much the grant was for, and if the entire amount was used. Mr. Dawkins responded that the FDOT grant was for \$ 15,000, reimbursable, and used to purchase the above items.

Completed Projects:

Mr. Dawkins discussed the completed projects. The Cassia Community Cleanup was held at the Cassia Community Clubhouse on Saturday, June 29, 2024. There were no volunteers at this event as it was not set up for volunteers. 6620 lbs. of litter and bulk, 100 lbs. of household hazardous waste, and 5.3 tons of tires were collected. The main focus of this event was to get tires out of the ecosystem in the Cassia Community.

Mr. Helfrich asked what was done with the tires after they were taken away. Mr. Dawkins stated that the tires collected were part of the Tire Amnesty and were sent to Liberty Tire for recycling. Mr. Helfrich asked if they were crumbled up and put through a shredder. Mr. Salinas added that there are many programs Liberty Tire, formerly Empire Tire, does with the crumb rubber from the tires. Unfortunately, there are times when they have more than people need, so sometimes it gets landfilled. Every attempt is made to recycle the crumb rubber into mulch, walkways, and things of that nature.

Pending Projects:

As a follow-up to the last meeting, Mr. Dawkins spoke on what the FDOT Grant money can be spent on. A lot of research was done to find a cheat sheet, per se, but none were found. There is a lot of legalese to go through in reference to trying to find out what can and cannot be spent on the grant. Examples of permitted program materials for which the grant money can be used are the purchased promotional items, advertising, and the KAB annual dues. Food, drinks, construction projects, and property/lease agreements are ineligible. Discussions can be had, and questions can be asked to further clarify items that can be purchased with the grant funds. Any questionable items can be researched before implementation.

Mr. Helfrich asked if the FDOT grant was used for the Cagan Crossing Event that KLB sponsored. Mr. Salinas said it was not used for that event because the grant money has been unavailable for the last two years. This was the first year the grant was brought back, but it could be used for those projects if available in the future. Mr. Helfrich asked if it could be used for beautification purposes and the supplies for it, not the labor because there would be volunteers, but it would be for plants and mulch or whatever is needed. Mr. Salinas replied yes.

Mr. Helfrich asked how an organization, that has contacted the committee would do that. Would they have to put a proposal together? Mr. Salinas responded it would essentially be up to the committee to hear what they are asking for, make decisions, and have votes on what projects to tackle in the future. It would be entirely up to the committee.

Mr. Salinas followed up by showing the committee the budget discussed in the last meeting. The donation money received has not yet been touched, pending the outcome of the Groveland Library project discussed in the last meeting. As for the (FDOT) Litter Control and Prevention Grant was discussed in the last meeting, there has been a little change to the amount KLB will put in for. KLB will be asking for all of the \$15,000 grant for Fiscal Year 2024. KLB was unsure at the time if it could spend all \$15,000 in such a short window, but it did and purchased a lot of supplies. The program should be covered for the future and should not need more pickers or other supplies for a while. 300 plus should be good.

Mr. Helfrich asked if that would take care of any litter control/litter pick-up events that will be held. Mr. Salinas replied yes, but there is usually no cost associated with that. Most of that was done by volunteers, such as the Groveland/Mascotte event, which was primarily volunteers. There are arrangements with the haulers to provide services to a certain number of events per year. The beautification projects where flowers, plants, and things like that are purchased are typically where the money goes, other than supplies.

Mr. Salinas continued the discussion on the budget, stating that currently, there is no KLB budget, and Solid Waste has been paying for the position, the truck, and other associated costs. KLB has proposed a budget for FY2025 to cover personal services, truck lease, maintenance, fuel, the KLB website, meeting advertisements, and office/operational supplies. Mr. Helfrich asked if it must be spent in a year or if it will roll over. Mr. Salinas replied that the only funds that carry forward are the donations, so the budget for the position and vehicles will all be spent, and the FDOT money is only for the State fiscal year, which ends on June 30. Mr. Helfrich asked if the money that is given to KLB is from FDOT and not from the County. Mr. Salinas said the grant is from FDOT. It is a reimbursable grant. FDOT does not give a check for \$15,000. As long as the items are approved, the receipts are turned in for reimbursement.

The next America in Bloom (AIB) meeting is scheduled for September 5, 2024. The location is to be determined, and KLB staff will be talking with the cities to host the event. The County has hosted at the Ag Center a lot and thinks it would be a good opportunity for the cities to start holding these meetings to show off their cities and maybe offer a 'come check out what changes have been done as a result of America in Bloom (AIB).' KLB staff will send an email once there is confirmation of a city that will host and a time, but it will be September 5th. Mr. Helfrich asked Mayor Wilson if Groveland would be interested in hosting. Mayor Wilson replied yes Mayor Freeman also stated that Lady Lake might be interested in hosting. Mr. Helfrich asked Mayor Freeman if Lady Lake was a part of AIB. Mayor Freeman responded that Lady Lake is not yet a part of AIB but will be. Mr. Helfrich asked Mayor Wilson if it would be held in one of the dioceses. Mayor Wilson said possibly the Lake David Center or even Lake David if the weather is cooler by then because then they could see what Groveland has been doing. Mr. Salinas stated that Laura Kunkle, Executive Director for AIB, would need access to Teams to participate. Mayor Wilson asked if Laura would be coming down for this event. Mr. Salinas replied that Laura only attends the February event because their annual conference in Orlando is at the same time. Mayor Wilson stated that some of her staff are looking to attend the conference this year. Mayor Wilson will get with her staff to see what they can put together, and if the city says yes, would she contact Mr. Salinas or Laura? Mr. Salinas responded to let the KLB staff know, and they will facilitate it, as they have done in the past. Mr. Salinas reminded Mayor Wilson that she is the representative for the KLB Committee and does not know if that will impact the decision because if she is acting in the City capacity, only one representative from KLB could attend. Mayor Wilson said so you mean nobody else from the committee can attend? Mr. Salinas stated that was correct because it is an unadvertised meeting. Mr. Helfrich also stated yes, it is only you. Mayor Wilson would like to see other cities, who are not participating in AIB, go to the meeting to see what it is about to get more cities involved with AIB. Mr. Helfrich asked if it could be publicized to make it open to everybody. Mr. Salinas responded, 'No'. Mayor Wilson said she would stay away and asked if everyone could go then. Mr. Salinas said no, only one representative from KLB could attend. Mayor Wilson asked if someone could choose a representative. Mr. Salinas replied when the committee voted on representatives previously the first, second, third representatives, and alternates were appointed. Mayor Wilson replied that she was the representative and was trying to make it so someone else could attend because she knows her city. Mr. Salinas said the unique thing about this situation compared to when the scenario was brought up asking if she could act in her City capacity; attending a meeting is a little different than hosting a meeting. Mr. Salinas will look for further clarification on the issue because it may be technically different than her attending in the capacity of Groveland. Mr. Helfrich informed Ms. Jayne that she was the second representative with AIB, and he was the third.

Mr. Salinas gave the update on the Groveland Library Beautification. KLB did have the initial meeting with the director of Library Services, George Taylor, and was made aware of a possible FDOT project that may affect the project. Mr. Taylor is waiting for feedback on the flowers typical of beautification and possibly some painting, which would be fine. Details will have to be forthcoming until he gets more information on how the FDOT

project and the Native Flower Society, The Friends of the Library, determine what they want regarding beautification. Unfortunately, KLB did not have any information at that time. KLB staff will email the details if it happens before October 9, 2024. Mr. Helfrich asked if the Bassinger Library came to KLB about this project. Mayor Wilson said no, she brought it up. Mr. Salinas said KLB made contact with them and thinks everyone is on board with doing it. It is just about settling on what projects to complete and determining the FDOT impact before the plans are implemented. There are ideas about where to put planters, but the efforts would be wasted if they get removed as part of the FDOT project.

Mr. Dawkins spoke on Lake County Water Authority (LCWA) property beautification. The LCWA reached out to KLB to assist with beautification. Ms. Burgess was out there planting wildflowers representing KLB. This was done to beautify the facility and roadway on State Road 19, but it was also an educational event to show the public what you could do with small spaces. It is not 100 percent complete, as some work still needs to be done. This was just the start of the project.

Other Business:

Mr. Helfrich said that in the last meeting, he mentioned that Head Start of Clermont was interested in a beautification project and asked if it would be protocol for them to contact Ms. Burgess. Mr. Salinas stated that they could contact KLB staff, but they could also contact Mr. Helfrich. About 30 days before the next meeting, KLB staff will reach out to the committee to ask if any items need to be added to the agenda. At that time, if there was a project that a member would like to propose, they could. Then, vote on whether the committee should move forward with it. Mr. Helfrich responded he would do his due diligence because they had approached him regarding a beautification similar to the Cagan Crossing plants and planters. Mr. Helfrich will reach out to the Clermont Head Start.

Commissioner Shields asked Mr. Salinas if the committee had been updated on tires and what to do with them, as the Board of County Commissioners are looking at a possible solution. Mr. Salinas asked if he was referring to Carbotura. Commissioner Shields responded yes. Mr. Salinas stated that the County Commissioners were approached by a company called Carbotura. What this company is looking to do is provide an alternative to landfiling. While we do not have all the details, the concept revolves around microwaving the waste. They essentially take all the waste, chop it up, bale it, and store it for up to ten days. Then, it goes into a regensis process, which will microwave and separate the molecules, and Carbotura can reassign them. 16 to 20 percent of the molecules would go to their energy, water; they create all of it. They are self-sustaining and would not have to be hooked to the electrical grid. The other 80 percent would be made into graphene or graphite. There are only a few limitations, such as nuclear materials and ammunition, but they have had great success with tires, possibly in Saudi Arabia. They will be able to take all the tires, yard trash, and everything the landfill generates, except nuclear material and ammunition. This would be a 100 percent circular economy. All products are 100 percent recycled and made into new materials. Mr. Helfrich asked if this was something the Commissioners were interested in pursuing, at least.

Commissioner Shields said the Commissioners have asked staff to move forward with it. It sounds like science fiction. Why Lake County because they have not done much in the United States yet. They just got this patented and are getting up and running. One reason is that a couple of the people on the sales team live around here, and the second reason is that there is a cell at the County Landfill they are not using. To get the permits, this must operate somewhere in the landfill. All they will create is a product they can sell, primarily for batteries for electric vehicles. This would be a 200-million-dollar investment, and they have asked the County for nothing other than the space and 40 trucks a day of waste, 40 tons or something like that to get started. Mr. Salinas stated they are asking for a commitment of 400 tons of waste daily. Commissioner Shields said instead of the

trucks heading to the landfill in Sumter County, some of them will stay in Tavares and feedstock for their end product. If what they say is true, it will completely revolutionize how trash is handled in Florida. They can even retrofit the equipment to handle sludge. There are 80 thousand septic systems in the County, and it all must go somewhere, so it will be quite amazing to see. They can scale it up and keep adding these self-contained units that do not require power because they can generate their power through the combustion process. There are no emissions, and in the end, you get graphene, which they sell for roughly 80 thousand a ton. Mr. Helfrich asked if there was no initial cost from the County. Commissioner Shields said zero. We are giving them a piece of dirt. Mr. Helfrich responded, "And a lot of garbage." Commissioner Shields said they have to pay to dump anyway. Mr. Helfrich noted that we would save on that and asked if the end product was batteries. Commissioner Shields responded that it is carbons, graphite, and graphene. Mr. Helfrich said which makes batteries. Commissioner Shields said yes, car batteries. Mr. Salinas stated that they are looking to offset China's monopoly on reusable batteries, so they are intentionally attacking this. They can make many different products, but they choose graphene not only for that reason but also because of the percentage of profitability that they can make on that material right now. Mr. Helfrich asked where the company was from. Mr. Salinas responded that there is an office in Florida and believed there is one in South Carolina. Mayor Wilson asked if this would also be with tires. Commissioner Shields responded that they will take tires. Mayor Wilson asked if this would be beneficial to Carrol Fulmer trucking. Commissioner Shields responded yes. Mayor Wilson said she would like to meet with Commissioner Shields.

Mr. Helfrich stated the central landfill has paint that they give away. Mr. Salinas replied that the paint brought in for disposal is checked, and if it is reusable, residents can fill out a waiver and take up to 20 gallons per year. Mr. Helfrich said he just learned about it, and now that he knows about it, he wants to tell everyone about it. How can the committee reach out to other people? He asked if it was the good stuff: Behrs, Sherwin Williams, etc. Mr. Salinas said it is all brands. Mr. Helfrich noted there are five gallons and 1 gallon containers, and it is good paint. How do we get the public to know about this so they are not going out and buying paint when they can get it for free? This is a free service. Mr. Salinas said there used to be heavy promotions on it. Residents can visit the website to get information on it.

Mr. Salinas said there is also a Re-Cycle program. Last year, 121 bicycles were removed from being disposed of and given away to residents of Lake County. A lot of people are unaware of that, as well. Mr. Helfrich asked how the committee could utilize the paint and the bicycles in the clean-up endeavors. A lot of kids go to the clean-ups. Maybe we could give a free bicycle to every kid that shows up. The paint has to be picked up at the dump; it cannot be brought to the events. Thinking about the Groveland clean-up event, there were 125 people, so how do we entice them or have them get prizes or something? Mayor Wilson suggested adding it to newsletters and communications in the city. Mr. Helfrich asked if this was something Mayor Wilson would be interested in. Mayor Wilson will talk with the Communication Department, she took some informational magnets provided by KLB, and they can put it out there. If they have any questions, they can contact KLB staff. It could be done as a monthly type of interesting story. That is for Groveland. Mayor Wilson does share, and people are on her Facebook page, but she thinks the County would put it out there, as well as Lady Lake. Mayor Freeman said Lady Lake has a Facebook page, and this is the type of stuff they put on it every day. and asked if the County has a Facebook Commissioner Shields said yes. Mr. Salinas said KLB staff would coordinate with our communications team if we wanted to do a joint venture of some kind to get the word out. One of the unique things with the reorganization of Solid Waste is that with Mr. Dawkins' position, not only is he the backbone for KLB, but one of the things we need to address is our messaging and consistency, so we are working on that. We made upgrades to our website and have more scheduled, doing more videos and creating new pamphlets, as the pamphlets we have are seven years old. We are taking on a lot to hopefully get the work back out there. It is a bit of a process because we are essentially starting from scratch.

Mr. Helfrich said right, so bicycles and trails - we have trails, so whenever we clean up a trail or a trail is being connected, the idea is to get these bicycles out. Does Solid Waste charge for the bicycles? Mr. Salinas said they are free: six bicycles per household per year. We typically have families come in with their children. We do not have a huge problem getting rid of bicycles. There are enough people out there who have gotten the word out that we typically do not hold on to many bicycles. The paint program is a little bit different; it has died off. In both cases, a waiver must be filled out to indemnify the county; even though the paint is checked, there is no guarantee it will be brand new. Mr. Helfrich said that talking about painting at the Groveland Library is the perfect example of using the paint that we have that is free. We would just go pick it out; hopefully, there will be enough. He also asked about other programs that are similar to recycling or litter control or some way we can incorporate them into our litter pick-up event. Mr. Salinas said there is Adopt-A-Highway, managed by Public Works, so some of the programs that have been broken up KLB does not participate in right now; they have their own facilitator like Adopt-A-Highway. So, we have our clean-up a spot where the kits will be handed out to the residents, who hopefully will continue doing it, which is why we do the better gloves and everything. They do keep the kits. That has been successful, but there is room for growth as well.

Reports/Updates:

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 9, 2024.

Adjournment

With no other business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 4:20 p.m.

BANKS HELFRICH, CHAIRMAN

Date