



## MINUTES

### SUSTAINABILITY & ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING THURSDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2023, AT 6:00 P.M. CITY OF ST. AUGUSTINE BEACH, 2200 A1A South, St. Augustine Beach, FL 32080

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#### I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Krempasky called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

#### II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Committee recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

#### III. ROLL CALL

Present: Chair Sandra Krempasky, and Members Craig Thomson and Karen Candler.

Vice Chair Lana Bandy and Member George O'Brien were absent.

Also present: City Clerk Dariana Fitzgerald and Grounds Foreman Tom Large.

Chair Krempasky advised that this meeting should adjourn no later than 7:00 p.m. due to impending weather conditions.

#### IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF OCTOBER 12, 2023, REGULAR MEETING

**Motion:** to approve the minutes of October 12, 2023. **Moved by:** Member Thomson. **Seconded by:** Member Candler. Motion passed unanimously.

#### V. PRESENTATION OF REPORTS:

##### 1. Reforestation and Landscaping Projects

- a. Mickler Boulevard
- b. Parkette Planning/Green Infrastructure
- c. Urban Forestry
- d. Environmental Planning Projects

Foreman Large advised that 8<sup>th</sup> Street looks very good, but there were a few plants that did not make it and Leonardi's put more plants in. He said that the reason they did not make it was probably because the water truck was dumping too much water, so he backed off on the watering. He said that it probably needs about ten or fifteen more bundles of pine straw because it is already breaking down. Foreman Large introduced Shayan Khatibi, Ruah Gardens, LLC, who the Committee had hired to maintain the 8<sup>th</sup>

Street eco-garden. Chair Krempasky asked if they needed approval to buy more pine straw. Foreman Large said yes and advised that he would like to have Shayan put it down.

**Motion:** to approve Tom Large to purchase 10-15 bundles of pine straw to replenish 8<sup>th</sup> Street. **Moved by:** Chair Krempasky. **Seconded by:** Member Thomson. Motion passed unanimously.

Chair Krempasky advised that she was at the eco garden recently and that Lonnie told her that dwarf Fakahatchee grass would be better, but the plant list showed that they were not dwarf, so he thought that we should move one to another area because it will get too big. Foreman Large advised that he would monitor the grasses for now and when they get bigger, then he could move them and/or split them to be used elsewhere such as the Mickler Boulevard project.

Foreman Large moved on to the Mickler Boulevard wildflower garden and advised that it is being taken over by grass and that Public Works does not have the workforce or time to take care of it. He said that for the garden to look good by spring, SEPAC would need to move forward with having either Shayan or someone else take care of it and he provided a proposed cost from Ruah Gardens to maintain the wildflower garden on Mickler Boulevard [Exhibit A]. He suggested for SEPAC to think about it now before the grass encroaches even more in the spring. Member Thomson questioned whether SEPAC had \$1,400 in the budget to cover it. Chair Krempasky advised that it was not covered in this year's budget. She said that SEPAC has \$4,000 to spend on a planting project. Foreman Large suggested to keep in mind the continuing maintenance if SEPAC does another project on Mickler Boulevard because it stays wet in that area and the grass seems to come in a lot faster. Chair Krempasky said that Mickler Boulevard may not be an ideal place for SEPAC projects, and that they only did the wildflower garden there because Mr. Tredik wanted it to be beautified. She said that maybe SEPAC should spend some money to maintain the wildflower garden, but not do any other projects there.

Member Thomson asked Foreman Large to research what FDOT (Florida Department of Transportation) does to maintain their rights-of-ways/medians that have wildflower gardens. Foreman Large advised that he researched it about a year ago and that their process is to just mow it over, let it come back next year, but that over time the grass will take over and they would just start the process all over again. Member Thomson said that the City cannot even maintain its plazas very well let alone the rights-of-ways and he suggested that we look into it more.

Chair Krempasky said that Lonnie worked on some signage for the eco-garden, and she showed the draft for a 24" x 18" sign at 8<sup>th</sup> Street [Exhibit B]. She said it is pretty understandable, but he is open to changes and to email him directly. Member Thomson said that it was very good for communicating a good example to the public. Chair Krempasky advised that if SEPAC approves this sign, the money would come from our budget for the parkette this coming year and it should not cost any more than a couple hundred dollars. Foreman Large asked if it would be a sign that can be mounted on metal poles as we have done before. Chair Krempasky said that she thought it would be the same as what Lonnie did for the bioswale and the sign company could put holes in it. Foreman Large advised that he would use the poles that SEPAC already purchased.

**Motion:** to approve the proposed sign draft and approve up to \$250 for Public Works to follow through with the order. **Moved by:** Member Thomson. **Seconded by:** Member Candler. Motion passed unanimously.

Foreman Large advised that the water truck is better equipped with a pump now to take care of things, and as we get through winter, we can look at doing more. He said that the palm trees that Leonardi's planted look good and he believed we would be in good shape come springtime.

Chair Krempasky advised that the proposal from Ruah Gardens would be discussed at the next meeting. Mr. Khatibi stated that he was open to negotiations on the proposal, if they wanted maintenance done as needed or to skip certain months. He also suggested that the Committee could place a small barrier around the area for protection, just a string or something simple. Foreman Large said that the area gets a lot of traffic, and he suggested placing more pollinator boxes as barriers on Mickler Boulevard or possibly using some on 8<sup>th</sup> Street. Member Candler said that she would not want to put them on Mickler Boulevard if the flower bed is not going to survive. Foreman Large said that there are already a couple pollinator boxes there that are being used non-stop. Member Thomson said that the City has fifty-two plazas, and 8<sup>th</sup> Street is the only one that has an eco-garden, which was a good start, and that concept could be used at other plazas along with the pollinator boxes. He said that he liked the idea of evaluating it every spring and mulching/weeding it so the plants can become established, which might be a better use of funds and maintenance going forward. He said that we are promoting eco-gardens so that homeowners can do them in their own yards. For the next meeting, he suggested that SEPAC consider another plaza such as the one at D Street and the Boulevard, which is low enough and could be utilized. He said that he has put in some hurricane lilies and dune daisies and that he would like to get permission from Public Works to start modifying those beds and create some troughs around the trees to prevent the weed eater from scarring them. Foreman Large advised that he talked to the Public Works guys, and they definitely do not want to damage the trees, but we do not have the workforce to do it. He said that Public Works has mulch that could easily be done. Member Thomson said that he would try to create grass away from the tree trunks as an experiment to see how long it takes and then bring it back for discussion. Foreman Large advised that it is in the Charter, and it is something to look forward to trying to do in the future.

Member Thomson showed an email that he sent to Foreman Large regarding tree damage at the D Street plazas [Exhibit C]. He said that he would volunteer to do the experiment with Public Works. Chair Krempasky said that SEPAC spent just over \$2,500 on the 8<sup>th</sup> Street eco-garden and we have some money that we could spend on putting buffers around the palm trees. Foreman Large asked if she meant money to purchase buffers or to create our own. Chair Krempasky said money to purchase the buffers. Member Thomson said that he would like to know what that protective mechanism is for protecting the hard woods of the red Cedars and Oaks. Foreman Large advise that he would bring back information for the next meeting. Member Thomson said that otherwise we would need to extend the current design so the grass does not grow up against the trees and there are low areas that could easily take on an eco-garden. He suggested that it should be something that the City considers as part of its stormwater management, which is under environmental planning and projects.

Member Thomson advised that he emailed a City of St. Augustine ordinance regarding how to control runoff, grading plans, eco-gardens, etc. to the City Manager, the City Clerk, and Foreman Large today, which he would like to be a planning project [Exhibit D]. He asked the City Clerk to forward his email to everyone. City Clerk Fitzgerald advised that the last email she saw from City Manager Royle said that it should be directed to the Planning Board. Member Thomson said that he would like for SEPAC to at least look at the ordinance, the City of St. Augustine had a committee that studied it, and this site-grading ordinance is the way to do it. Member Candler said that it would only apply to new builds. Member Thomson said that it would apply to existing too, because if you are creating flooding on someone else's property and the ordinance says that you are not allowed to do that, then it could be a Code Enforcement issue. He said that he asked the City Clerk to distribute this to SEPAC and he does not mind talking to the Engineering and Planning Departments to make sure that they review it, but it may be inappropriate for SEPAC to go to the Planning Board without expertise from the Engineering/Planning Departments saying whether it is a good thing or not. Chair Krempasky asked if by Engineering and Planning Departments, he meant Engineer Sparks and Building Official Law. Member Thomson said no because he did not think that Building Official Law should wear two hats and that Jennifer Thompson and/or Bonnie Miller are the City Planners. Chair Krempasky said that if they agree that it is a good product, then they would take it to the Planning Board. Member Thomson said that they do this all the time, and it is what is needed because it is not going to get any better.

**It was the consensus of the SEPAC members to authorize Member Thomson to work with staff on it.**

Chair Krempasky asked when the City of St. Augustine adopted the ordinance. Member Thomson said that it was new, and he was not sure whether it was codified yet. Chair Krempasky said that she would talk with the City of St. Augustine's Public Works Director, Todd Grant, about it.

## 2. Educational Programs

- a. Environmentally Friendly Landscaping Recognition
- b. Environmental Speaker and Film Series
- c. Newsletter Topics
- d. Environmental Education Materials

## VI. OTHER COMMITTEE MATTERS

Chair Krempasky advised that one of the things that we should be discussing at this meeting is the selection of the new Chair and Vice Chair. She said that she believed that something would be changing with Vice Chair Bandy's job, and she would not want to elect her as Vice Chair tonight without her being here. City Clerk Fitzgerald advised that it could be put off and done at the beginning of the January meeting.

Member Thomson thanked Chair Krempasky for going to the Commission to get SEPAC's quorum reduced to five members. He said that right now we do not have any alternate members, so we need to concentrate on finding people. Chair Krempasky agreed and she asked Shayan if he was

interested. City Clerk Fitzgerald advised that he cannot be a member because he is working for SEPAC now.

Member Thomson asked what the status was for doing an environmental education flyer for Item V.2.d. Chair Krempasky advised that we do not have money in the budget to do it. She said that she had some materials that Engineer Sparks created that SEPAC used for its October film series. She said that Engineer Sparks is looking for opportunities to follow up with grants that he has to comply with educational materials so it may be worth talking to him to find out what he wants to work on next or possibly provide him with suggestions. Member Thomson suggested to make a flyer from the eco-garden sign that Lonnie created, and he asked if Engineer Sparks had seen the sign. Chair Krempasky said no but that she would send it to him. Member Thomson asked the Chair to also let Engineer Sparks know that SEPAC wants to do a flyer for eco-gardens.

Chair Krempasky said that there was only about twelve people at the Environmental Speaker Film Series on October 26<sup>th</sup> and that we should discuss it at our January meeting and decide whether we want to continue with it. She said that it is a lot of work for the small audiences it has had and there are opportunities to work with other groups that are already doing film series events such as the one at the Yacht Club, which she had tried to coordinate with. She said that there is a great adult-rated documentary about "fast-fashion", which are clothes that are not sustainable and are being sent to Africa. She asked if Dr. Sandy Bond was still involved with them. Member Thomson said that she was involved with the Sierra Club but had to give it up. Chair Krempasky said that she could follow up with Eco Cinema to see how SEPAC could support them because they get those speakers for their series. She said that the one at the Yacht Club has vendors, etc. Member Thomson said that the Sierra Club usually had a table with different programs they were running along with other environmental groups. Chair Krempasky said that maybe SEPAC could get a table there. Member Thomson said yes, it would be perfect for handing out eco-garden flyers. Chair Krempasky said that she would send this to Engineer Sparks to get his feedback and talk to Lonnie about repurposing the sign as a flyer.

Chair Krempasky said that she did not know if Ms. Conlon had sent a press release to Cliff Logsdon of the Beaches News Journal about the awards that SEPAC did but that Mr. Logsdon emailed her and mentioned that he was at the meeting, and he should have taken a group picture. City Clerk Fitzgerald said that she did not know if Ms. Conlon provided him with the information. Chair Krempasky said that she would email Ms. Conlon.

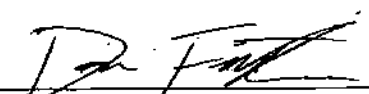
VII. ADJOURNMENT

**Motion:** to Adjourn. **Moved by** Member Thomson. **Seconded by** Member Candler. Motion passed unanimously.

Chair Krempasky adjourned the meeting at 6:37 p.m.

  
Sandra Krempasky, Chair

ATTEST

  
Dariana Fitzgerald, City Clerk

*\* Existing*

**City of Saint Augustine Beach  
Garden Maintenance Proposal  
Native Wildflower Garden (Mickler Rd)**



**Thank you for the opportunity to submit a garden maintenance proposal for our city.**

**Proposed Site: Native Wildflower Garden located on the Eastside of Mickler Rd. near Pope Rd. Garden is delineated by two bee boxes.**

**Frequency: Quarterly**

**Scope: Professional garden maintenance including weed control (no herbicide, only manual removal), prune plants as needed and keep the garden at a show quality level while cultivating into a naturalized/native style garden. Maintain bed edge and recommend new plantings/ideas.**

**Rate: 350/quarter**

**Recommendations: May need some reseeding in spring (April/May) depending on what comes up.**

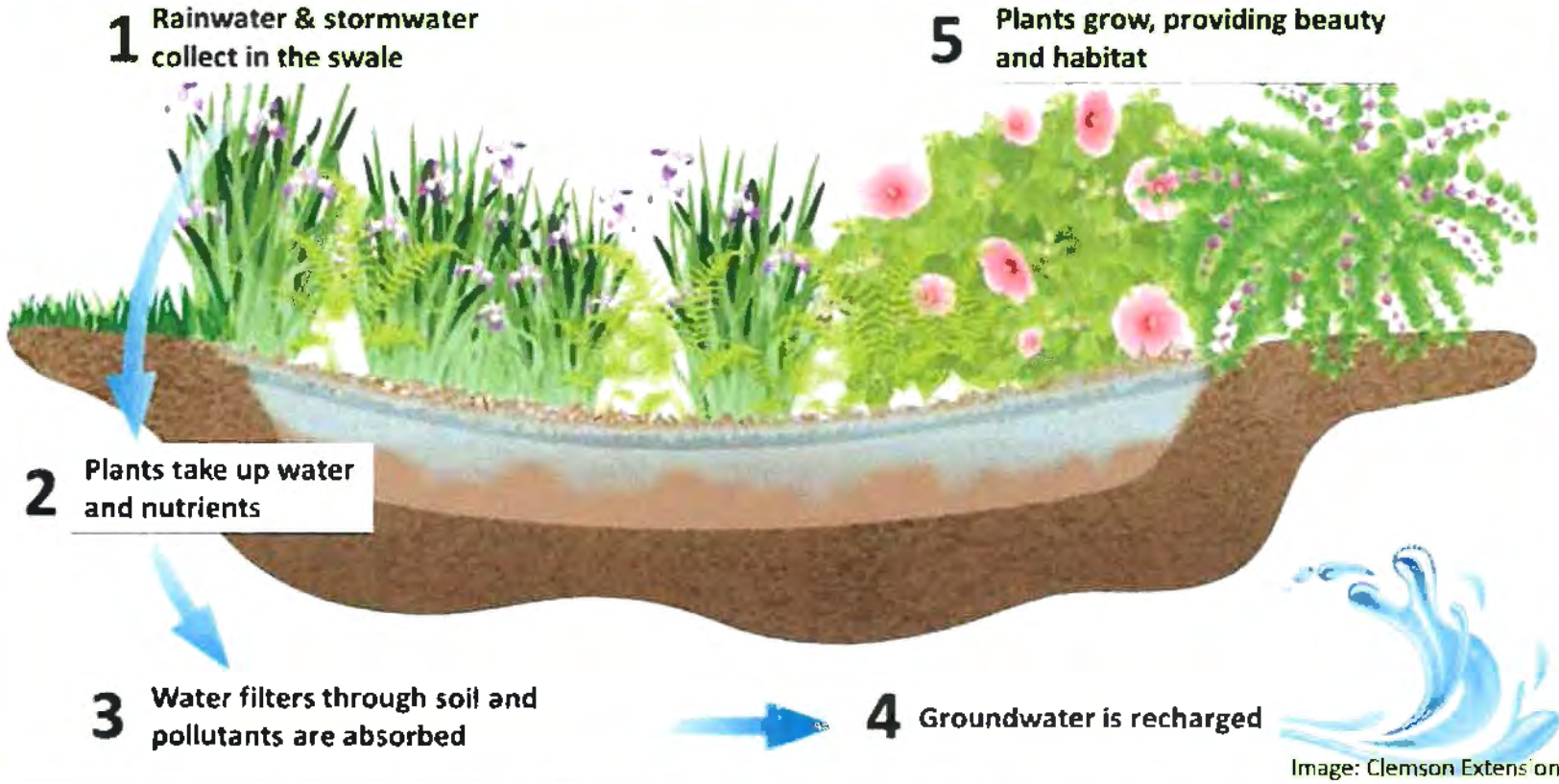
**Exhibit** A  
**Date** 12-14-2023



# Eco-Gardens of St. Augustine Beach

You are looking at an eco-garden, which is an attractive environmentally friendly way to improve water quality and biodiversity.

An eco-garden is something that anyone can create in their own yard. It can beautify your yard but also help the city's infrastructure and natural biodiversity. You may see that part of it is a shallow depression that temporally retains stormwater during heavy rains, which will help reduce flooding roads and other parts of the city. The water will then percolate thru the soil and plant roots, which will filter out fertilizers, oil, and pesticides that would otherwise end up going thru a storm pipe and polluting the ocean and intracoastal waterways killing seagrass and causing toxic algae blooms. An eco-garden results in cleaner water for the fish, manatees, and you!



## Want to Help?!

Everyone with a yard can help pitch in by adding an eco-garden to their own yard; big or small, any size will help. Non-native grasses that make up most lawns provide very little habitat for native Florida organisms and have shallow roots that absorb little water during heavy rains. Native wildflowers, shrubs, and trees have deeper roots and absorb much more water and provide habitat and food for native Florida animals, like birds and butterflies. They also absorb more CO<sub>2</sub>.

Some easy native plants to start with are Sunshine Mimosa, Dune Sunflower, Scarlet Sage, Coreopsis, Black-eyed Susans, Goldenrod, Partridge Pea, Muhly Grass, Hummingbird Bush, and Southern Red Cedar.

Exhibit B

Date 12-14-2023

Funded by City of St. Augustine Beach Sustainability & Environmental Planning Advisory Committee.

Contact us to volunteer or donate (904) 471-2122 . Learn more at <https://homegrownnationalpark.org/>, <https://www.fnps.org/>, <https://floridawildlifefederation.org/>, <https://xerces.org/>, <https://www.plantrealflorida.org/>, <https://www.flawildflowers.org/>

## Dariana Fitzgerald

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**From:** craig thomson <craigthomsonaa@mac.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 14, 2023 1:39 PM  
**To:** Tom Large; Dariana Fitzgerald  
**Cc:** craig thomson  
**Subject:** Public tree damage from weed whacking plazas and Beach Boulevard ROW

CAUTION: This message originated from outside of your organization. Clicking on any link or opening any attachment may be harmful to your computer or the City. If you do not recognize the sender or expect the email, please verify the email address and any attachments before opening. If you have any questions or concerns about the content, please contact IT staff at IT@cityofsab.org.

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Tom,  
attached are photos from D St Plazas...  
I would like to share these at the CPAC meeting this evening and get a recommendation from public works as to how to prevent future scarring and damage to public trees .  
thanks  
Craig

Exhibit C-1  
Date 12-14-2023





Exhibit C - 2

Date 12-14-2023









Sent from my iPhone

Exhibit C-4  
Date 12-14-2013

## Dariana Fitzgerald

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**From:** craig thomson <craigthomsonaa@mac.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 14, 2023 3:16 PM  
**To:** Max Royle; Dariana Fitzgerald; Tom Large; undine george; Comm Samora  
**Cc:** Craig Thomson; Prof. Sandy Bond; Longin Kaczmarzsky  
**Subject:** New Stormwater, drainage ordinance CoSAB  
**Attachments:** Residential-Stormwater-Grading-Packet.pdf

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Max

There has been a lot of recent discussion, in our Community ,including the recent Vision Plan review/workshop ,concerning the need for a more sustainable stormwater management system.

It appears obvious that stormwater flooding presents the most prevalent threat to property damage for both residential and commercial properties in SAB.

Yet , relatively recent changes to our zoning regulations and LDR's have relaxed versus restricted the amount of stormwater runoff occurring in our community.

The city of St Augustine has studied this issue for the past two or three years and produced a new ordinance to help guide new an existing construction to curb stormwater runoff and protect adjacent properties,

As a member of SEPAC I have addressed this problem at several city commission meetings over the past six years.

Would it possible for our engineering and planning departments to review this Ordinance and make a recommendation regarding the adoption of a similar ordinance in our city?

I appreciate your review and recommendations in this matter

Craig Thomson

<https://www.citystaug.com/DocumentCenter/View/7115/Residential-Stormwater-Grading-Packet>

Sent from my iPhone

Exhibit D  
Date 12-14-2023