

FEAB June 9th, 2023

FEAB MEETING MINUTES

June 9th, 2023

3:00 p.m. in the Fairhope Public Library, Board Room

Member Attendees: Gary Gover, Nigel Temple, Anna Miller, Jim Horner, Ben Frater, Carole Tebay, Jennifer Foutch

Members not in attendance:

Amy Paulson, excused absence; Steven Scyphers, excused absence

City of Fairhope: Daryl Morefield, Water and Sewer Superintendent; Kim Burmeister -Planning and Zoning Department

City Council: None

Honored Guests: Carl Couret (Active participant); Cynthia Rush, Dr. James Connors

Minutes taken by: Kim Burmeister

Nigel called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

FEAB Minutes:

May minutes were approved as written. Jim 1st , Nigel 2nd, unanimous.

Summary of meeting:

1. Dr. Connors is a retired professor and attended today's meeting with an interest in possibly assisting and/or joining FEAB in the future.
2. FEAB met new Water and Sewer Supervisor, Daryl Morehead, who attended today's FEAB meeting. Nigel offered FEABs assistance if needed.
3. Nicole Love is working on a grant that may provide funds for improvements of the city Butterfly Garden on South Mobile Street
4. Rotary Club may be interested in fully adopting Butterfly Garden
5. FEAB passed a motion to recommend city funding for butterfly garden improvements for 2024, pending coordination with Nicole.
6. FEAB is assisting Planning Department staff with Parks Brochure updates by evaluating each park in the brochure, specifically the features table.
7. Anna is providing a PSA Water Conservation document draft (edited by FEAB) to city leaders for use as they see fit.
8. FEAB suggests city offer a simpler means for the public to provide comments on the Triangle property.

Membership:

Carole is officially a FEAB member.

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Agenda from Nigel:

1. Housekeeping with Kim (max 10 mins)
2. Updates (Council meetings, steering committees, other efforts; max 15 mins)
3. Water Efficiency tips document review discussion - Anna to lead (20 mins)
4. New business (10 mins)

Introductions:

1st time attendees were introduced:

Dr. Jim Connors, retired professor: Kim will email him information on FEAB; Nigel encouraged him to attend as active participant.

Daryl Morehead, new Water and Sewer Superintendent. Nigel offered any assistance from FEAB to Daryl on water / sewer outreach or other projects that need biological or environmental expertise.

Triangle Property:

Nigel is on the Steering Committee. FEAB needs a better understanding of how the public should offer comments. Kim suggested send email to Nicole.

Further discussion was tabled until Nicole is in attendance. Nicole and Richard Johnson are key contacts for Triangle development.

Butterfly Garden and Pollinator Habitats / Native Plantings:

Ben: Nicole Love is applying for a \$10K grant to improve the butterfly garden area (Magnolia Beach Park, just north of the American Legion on South Mobile Street, beach bluff habitat). Rotary Club recently updated the sign and has expressed an interest in fully adopting the garden bluff area.

Note: History of Butterfly Garden/sanctuary: City installed the kiosk and signage more than a decade ago, exact year unknown. Initially Fred Nations, Naturalist, identified natural vegetation on site, primarily the active pollinators he saw. These were included on the sign/kiosk.

Ben said cost of restoring the butterfly garden (removing vegetation- mostly kudzu-and prepping/ planting desired species) would be about 15K. City may provide in kind services (dump trucks, etc.) to help cover some of the cost.

Gary: Would like to see more than one pollinator garden implemented in the city.

Carole: Jamie Rollins, Horticulturist, prefers starting with one for now, for maintenance reasons. She has created a draft list of proposed native plants, but it will be based on availability at time of planting. She said most of the pollinators indicated on the sign/kiosk can no longer be verified.

Nigel: Once vegetation is removed, it will be imperative to immediately establish and plant new vegetation, to prevent erosion and run off. Re-establishing the Magnolia Beach Park butterfly garden (sanctuary) will likely be a foot in the door to future pollinator projects around the city.

Gary encouraged FEAB suggest budget item for Magnolia Beach Park butterfly garden reparations, in case grant does not go through in a timely manner.

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Jim presented a motion:

FEAB, pending communication with Nicole Love, recommends city Public Works include \$15K in the 2024 budget for improvements to the Magnolia Beach Park Butterfly Sanctuary, to include:

1. *Removing existing vegetation, kudzu*
2. *Prepping slope area for replanting*
3. *Replanting of native species, according to what is available*

Motion approved: Nigel 1st: Jim 2nd. Unanimous

Nigel will contact with restoration biologist JJ McCool on rough draft for planting bluff area/butterfly garden.

Water Conservation PSA

Anna provided a draft PSA for water conservation, which Mayor has asked her to provide to Paige when complete:

Water Conservation Tips for Fairhope Residents and Business Owners

The Mobile Bay area typically receives over 60" of rainfall each year. This abundance means we don't usually think about water efficiency. However, the landscape is changing. Development intensity, population growth, and periodic droughts place high demands on our municipal water system.

In June 2022, water use in the City of Fairhope reached 80% of system capacity for seven days. This triggered a water alert, and the city asked customers to voluntarily conserve water to avoid mandatory restrictions.

Thankfully, our community came together, reduced water use, and mandatory restrictions were not required. However, this situation highlighted a need to be more proactive with water conservation. Here are some proven ways we can reduce water waste at our homes and businesses.

Outside

The majority of residential outdoor water use is due to landscape irrigation. Over half of this is wasted, carried away by wind, evaporation, or runoff. To address this, we can use sustainable yard practices to reduce water needs, then meet the remaining needs in the most efficient way possible.

Plants and Trees

- **Leave a portion of your lot undisturbed and in a natural state.** Plants and trees that are established don't need irrigation. Natural areas also help maintain healthy soils, shade, and habitat.
- **Use trees to shade >30% of your landscaped area at maturity.** Shading substantially reduces evapotranspiration.
- **Get a soil test and amend if necessary.** Use organic soil amendments to improve soil health. Healthy soil is better at absorbing and managing water and other nutrients that help plants thrive.
- **Limit turf grass area.** Turf grass needs frequent watering to become established and during droughts. It requires regular mowing and is often treated with fertilizer and pesticides that are detrimental to the larger ecosystem. Consider drought tolerant turf grass or an alternative ground cover for lawn areas and limit overall lawn area as much as possible.
- **Cut your lawn at the highest recommended length.** This will shade the ground and reduce evaporation.*
- **Select a diverse array of plants for your landscape.** Species diversity can improve soil health. Healthy soil is better at absorbing and managing water.
- **Prioritize native species and avoid invasive exotic plants.** Native species are accustomed to our climate, so they typically do not need additional irrigation once established.
- **Group landscape plants based on watering needs.** This practice, known as hydrozoning, helps plants stay healthy while reducing overall water use.

Irrigation

- **Avoid installing permanent irrigation.** Instead, use sprinklers or drip lines temporarily during droughts or to establish new plants.
- **Collect rainwater in rain barrels or cisterns to use for irrigation.** There are plenty of DIY [options](#), or purchase a system from a local home improvement or hardware [store](#).
- **Use HVAC condensate to water plants.** Condensate from your HVAC system is simply distilled water. Use a container to collect [it](#), or direct it toward a rain barrel or landscape [bed](#)**
- **Water plants early in the morning.** Avoid watering at night and during the hottest part of the day.

- **Irrigate only when your lawn shows you it's needed.** Are the blades folding into a v-shape? Does the color of your lawn appear pale? Are footprints visible when you walk across the lawn? These are all signs that water is [needed](#).*

- **Measure the amount of water the lawn is receiving.** Use straight sided cans or other small containers to monitor this. Providing $\frac{1}{2}$ "- $\frac{3}{4}$ " of water promotes deep root growth, allowing you to water [less often](#).*

- **Water less in winter months.** In the winter, plants go dormant. This means their metabolism slows down significantly, and they need [less water](#).*

- **If you have permanent irrigation, consider:**

- Drip irrigation instead of sprinkler heads.
- [Microirrigation](#) in landscape beds and narrow areas. This includes drip, subsurface, bubblers and [microspray](#) irrigation.
- Subsurface drip for all turf grass areas.
- Smart controllers that adjust flow based on weather or soil moisture.
- Creating zones to allow watering needs to match plant needs.
- Pressure regulation at the head or valve.
- Check valves in low areas. Water pressure often builds in these locations, causing water to leak from heads after valves are closed.
- A leak detection or flow sensing system.
- Locating sprinklers and emitters >2 feet from structures and impervious surfaces like roads and paved driveways.
- Look for the [WaterSense](#) label on products for your irrigation system.

Inside

Bathrooms are the biggest source of water use in most homes, but small adjustments to all interior water use can yield big savings while conserving our community's natural resources.

- **Install WaterSense labeled showerheads, faucets, and toilets.** These fixtures use up to 30% less water than standard fixtures. Alternatively, look for fixtures that meet these flow rates:
 - ≤1.5 gallons per minute bathroom faucet
 - ≤1.8 gallons per minute kitchen faucet
 - ≤2.0 gallons per minute showerhead
 - ≤1.28 gallons per flush toilet
- **Add aerators to faucets.** These inexpensive add-ons increase water pressure and conserve water.
- **Use a water leak monitoring system.** From DIY sensors to professionally-installed systems with integrated shut-off valves, a range of options are available to monitor water usage.
- **Use compact water line distribution.** In new construction or renovation projects, limit the length of water lines as much as possible.
- **Select dishwashers and clothes washers that are Energy Star labeled.** These products help you save water and energy.

Sources:

[2020 National Green Building Standard](#)
[EPA WaterSense](#)
[Florida Green Building Standard](#)
[Florida Water Star](#)
[Florida Friendly Landscaping](#)
[Alabama Cooperative Extension Service](#)

Figure 1 Water Conservation PSA draft

Anna suggests FEAB later add direct links, but this will be provided for now. This will likely be used on social media sites, like Fairhope's Facebook page. There is a current water advisory in Fairhope.

Jim asked Daryl how residents could better monitor their water use. Daryl is not aware of a way for citizens to easily read their meter, including on-line direct sources for usage readings. This may exist for some digital meter systems. He said most of Fairhope's meters are analogue, whereas Daphne is mostly digital. Giving residents an easy way to track their usage may be a good project idea for the future.

City Budget

Gary reminded everyone budget requests must be in by this month. Not sure of exact date.

Parks Brochure:

At the May meeting, Kim asked FEAB to consider assisting staff with Parks Brochure update, specifically verifying amenities listed in the features table and evaluating each parks written description. FEAB originally helped create this brochure 10+ years ago.

Carole evaluated several parks on the list and offered updates to description and features table. Nigel asked other FEAB members / participants to consider evaluating a park. He emailed a draft designation list. There are six parks left unevaluated:

1. Stimpson Field (Mike Ford Tennis Court)
2. Fairhope Municipal Sporting Parks/Volanta Sports Complex
3. Colony Nature Park
4. Founders Park 25-acre Sports Complex
5. Manley Rd. Soccer Complex
6. Barnwell Field

11 Stimpson Field (Mike Ford Tennis Center) has five public tennis courts, 4 pickleball courts, a 2,095 linear foot asphalt running track, and seven open acres for team, family, or individual sport activities. On Murphy Avenue between

12 Fairhope Municipal Sporting Park/Volanta Sports Complex, Hwy 98 and Volanta Avenue north of downtown Fairhope, is the City's 50-acre sporting complex with indoor/outdoor swimming pools, a kid's play pool, a fitness center, 7 baseball fields, a football stadium, a gym, a basketball and racquetball court, picnic area, and playground. An un-supervised skate plaza is located along Volanta Avenue. Skating is at your own risk. Safety equipment is required. A dog park is located on Volanta Avenue near the skate park. Dogs are allowed only in the dog park. Open green space. For more information, call (251) 960-0174.

13 Marietta Johnson Botanical Garden & Tree Trail is located on the Coastal Alabama Community College campus in downtown Fairhope, Fairhope Avenue. The garden is named for famous educator Marietta Johnson. The garden and tree trail is a joint project of the college, the Wistana Garden Club and the Fairhope Tree Commission.

14 Volanta Beach Park is strictly for the able-bodied. At the south end of North Mobile Street off Perdido Ave., walk down a staircase and trek through a cypress swamp to the beach. Beware of poison ivy, cypress knees and swampy conditions.

15 Colony Nature Park on Twin Beech Road (Hwy 64) east of Hwy 98, is a 40-acre park owned by the City of Fairhope. It is vehicle accessible and has a variety of habitats including wetlands.

16 *Founders Park is a 25-acre Sports Complex located on County Road 44, east of Highway 98. This complex includes 5 softball fields and approximately 15 acres of multi-use fields.

17 Jasmine Park is located in a residential area at Jasmine Street and Yupon Avenue (off Gayler Avenue). This three-acre park has playground equipment suitable for small children. No designated parking.

18 *Nichols Landing is a walk-in only park off South Mobile Street (at Nichols Ave.); exceptional bay views.

19 *White Avenue Park is a paved drive area off South Mobile Street where you can stroll and fish off a short pier.

20 Museum Plaza is downtown off Hancock Ave., behind the Fairhope Museum of History. Home to the Mullet Run, a fountain designed by America Jones and funded by COPA. Restrooms when open.

21 Manley Road Soccer Complex includes 10 soccer fields, a walking track and a playground area. CR.13 @ Manley Rd.

22 Barnwell Field is a City-operated park on Hwy. 98 in Barnwell. The home of Fairhope Youth Football, it has two youth football fields, two baseball/softball fields and shaded pavilions.

The Parks of Fairhope

Seahorse Sculpture at Utopia Park

Museum Plaza

*These parks were donated to Fairhope by the Fairhope Single Tax Corporation for the benefit of all its citizens

Park Features & Numbers	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
Restrooms	X	X				X	X			X	X	X							X	X	X
Picnic Tables	X	X				X	X			X	X	X							X	X	X
Grills	X	X				X	X			X	X	X							X	X	X
Playground Equipment	X	X				X	X			X	X	X							X	X	X
Beach	X	X				X	X			X	X	X							X	X	X
Trails	X	X	X			X	X			X	X	X							X	X	X
Pier	X	X				X	X			X	X	X							X	X	X
Bay View	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X							X	X	X
Boys Allowed on Beach	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X							X	X	X
Historical Signage	X	X				X	X			X	X	X									
Picnic Shelters	X	X				X	X			X	X	X									X
Fishing	X	X				X	X			X	X	X							X	X	X
Riding	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X							X	X	X
Trails or Strolling Track										X	X	X							X	X	X
Swimming Beach View										X	X	X							X	X	X
Playground Access	X	X	X			X	X			X	X	X							X	X	X
Public Parking	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X							X	X	X

1 *Fairhope's Municipal Pier, Rose Garden & Fountain, at the West end of Fairhope Avenue, is a favorite destination. Originally built in 1895, the pier has been rebuilt several times, most recently after Hurricane Katrina. Alongshore, enjoy Fairhope's Purple Martin River. On the pier, watch fishermen cast nets for bait or catch a variety of fish. You must have a saltwater fishing license unless you are 65 or older. View Fairhope's July 4th fireworks from here. Rose garden is American Rose Society accredited. Dogs are not allowed on the pier. View the pier and Rose Garden from the web cam: piccam.cofairhope.com

2 *North Beach Park. North of the Rose Garden, is Fairhope's premier beach park for walkers, runners, beachgoers, and picnickers. The paved Beach Tree Trail encircles the park. An official Alabama's Coastal Biking Trail destination, the park has ducks, geese, and a wetland treatment pond. Watch for a green flag at the entrance, showing it is safe to swim. There is an entrance fee if you do not have a city sticker from City Hall on your vehicle.

3 *South Beach Park. South of the Fairhope Municipal Pier, has a short multiple-use cement loop trail (approximately 1,300 linear feet long) alongshore and benches and picnic tables among the trees. It is often used for weddings, special events and Earth Day activities. A small beach exists at the South end. Equipped with handicap areas for picnics.

The Parks of Fairhope

Legend: City Parks (Red Circle), Pier Location (Green Circle)

This map is not to scale. Use it for general orientation.

Parks 15, 16, 21 & 22 are not indicated on this map.

4 *Knoll Park, fronted by Fairhope Avenue at Magnolia Avenue, is wooded, and is being restored to a fire-resistant longleaf pine forest and native habitat. Some of its pines are over 130 years old. This park is named for George Knowles, a Charter Member of the Fairhope Single Tax Corporation.

5 *Henry George Park, on a grassy bluff above the Municipal Pier and Fountain, is the site of Fairhope's Fourth of July celebration and Baldwin Pops Concert. There is also a Veterans Memorial Statue (Tears of Sorrow, Tears of Joy), by Fairhope artist Stephen C. Spears, dedicated in 2013. Bring a picnic to enjoy all of the events.

6 *North Bluff Park is located off North Bayview Street (north end) and is an excellent area for viewing a bay sunset from a park bench or a tree swing. Overlooks the beach front Park and has a stairway leading to North Beach Park.

7 Magnolia Beach Park, between Laurel Ave & Pier St along South Mobile St, has live oaks draped in Spanish moss and a multi-use path favored by strollers, bench sitters, and dog walkers. Dog bags and receptacles are available, as is a water source for dogs. The short piers along the bay are open to the public. Water quality results are posted near one of the central piers. A small butterfly sanctuary attracts the Gulf fritillary, swallowtail, and monarch butterflies in season. Public parking and a no-fee boat launch.

8 Fairhoppers Community Park, built by Fairhope volunteers in downtown Fairhope along Church Street and Morphy Avenue, is a kid's paradise with creative playground equipment, climbing towers, and a giant dinosaur. A gazebo offers shade. Dogs are not permitted. Open sunrise to sundown.

9 *Utopia Park overlooks South Beach Park. It features a bronze statue by Frances J. Neumann, Barbara Casey and Richard Arnold honoring Marietta Johnson, 1907 founder of the School of Organic Education in Fairhope and an early advocate of progressive education. To the south is a seahorse sculpture by Bruce Larsen and John Reznier. Parking available along South Mobile St.

10 Fels Toddler Park, at Fels Avenue and Liberty Street, is a small, quiet neighborhood park with playground equipment and picnic tables.

Figure 2 Parks Brochure Draft 2023 (includes Carole's updates)

Kim will amend features table when complete.

FEAB June 9th, 2023

Meeting adjourned at 4 p.m.

Next meeting: Friday, July 14th @ Fairhope Municipal Library, 3 p.m.

FEAB CONTACT INFORMATION:

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