

Tampa Bay Association of Code Enforcement (TBACE)

Meeting Place: Hillsborough County Development Services Natural Resources Division Hillsborough County Extension 5339 South CR 579 Seffner, Florida 33584

The regular meeting of the Tampa Bay Association of Code Enforcement (TBACE) was hosted by Hillsborough County Development Services, Natural Resources Division on October 2, 2018. The following active members were present and signed-in on the Members Sign-In Sheet:

Jermaine Agurs	City of Bradenton	Doug Allen	City of Temple Terrace
Barbara Basílico-Riley	City of Tampa	Pam Beitz	City of Seminole
Shelby Brown	City of Clearwater	Steve Colandrea	City of Saint Petersburg
Robert Corley	City of Tampa	Joe Damien	J. Damien Consulting
Steven Eyster	Hillsborough County	Carl Gordon	City of Saint Petersburg
Leon Green	City of Tampa	Sergio Grillo	City of Pinellas Park
Joe Gross	Hillsborough County	Eric Jewett	City of Clearwater
Earle Hamilton	City of Saint Petersburg	Eric Hirvela	City of Saint Petersburg
Sharon Hollifield	City of Clearwater	Christa Hull	Hillsborough County
Angeline Johnson	City of Tampa	Demetrius Johnson	City of Saint Petersburg
Summer Jones	City of Pinellas Park	Jim Karr	Hillsborough County
Daniel Knight	City of Clearwater	Michael Maginness	City of Bradenton
Carmen Marcano	City of Tampa	Susan Meier	Hillsborough County
Zoraida Melendez	City of Saint Petersburg	Tim Miles	City of Tampa
Wallace Nelson	City of Tampa	Vicki Pratt-Boone	City of Tampa
Jean Primus	City of Tampa	Jeannie Rebholz	City of Saint Petersburg
Volker Reiss	City of Bradenton	Mark Runnals	City of Bradenton
Sam Sandy	City of Tampa	Jose Silva	City of Temple Terrace
BJ Slatton	City of Tampa	Dennis Sweeney	Hillsborough County
Shelley Thomas	City of Saint Petersburg	Casey White	City of Saint Petersburg

The following individuals signed-in on the bottom of the Members Sign-In Sheet :

John Beavers	Hillsborough County	Yusupha Touray	City of Clearwater
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The following individuals signed-in on the Visitor Sign-in Sheet:

Sharon Hollifield	City of Clearwater <i>(also signed-in above)</i>
Gregory Dixon	City of Clearwater
Laurie Smith	City of Temple Terrace
Casey White	City of Saint Petersburg <i>(also sign-in above)</i>

CALL TO ORDER:

President Mark Runnals called the meeting to order at 12:00pm

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

President Runnals thanked Joe Gross and his team at the Hillsborough County Development Services Department for hosting the meeting and for providing the lunch for the TBACE members. Newly hired code compliance officers were introduced and welcomed to TBACE. They included Alex Alvarez at the City of St. Petersburg, Gregory Dixon and Yusupha Touray at the City of Clearwater, and Laurie Smith at the City of Temple Terrace.

President Runnals announced this would be his last meeting as President, offered his farewell to TBACE members and thanked the current Board of Directors for their hard work and efforts over the last year.

President Runnals led the members in the Pledge of Allegiance.

REPORTS:

Treasurer: Treasurer Susan Meier provided an overview of the Treasurer's Report. The starting balance was \$819.78. New membership dues were collected in the amount of \$ 705.00. Expenditures of \$ 32.69 were incurred. The current balance is \$1,492.90. A motion to accept the Report was made by Alex Alvarez of St. Pete , seconded by Gregory Dixon of the City of Clearwater seconded by Yusupha Touray from the City of Clearwater and unanimously approved. The report was accepted and submitted to the Secretary.

Secretary: Secretary Joe Damien thanked the members for allowing him the opportunity to serve TBACE during the last year, and asked for a motion to approve the June 5, 2018 meeting minutes. A motion was made by Shelby Brown of City of Clearwater to accept the minutes, and seconded by Michael Maginess of City of Bradenton. The motion carried and the minutes were approved unanimously without changes.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM:

President Runnals introduced Kelley O' Connor, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) Biologist.

Ms. O' Connor spoke about the Legal History of protections that are in place for Gopher Tortoises in Florida and the permitting requirements for land owners and developers .

Gopher Tortoises are on the State threatened species list. Habitat loss is one of the main issues affecting the species. FWC strives to minimize the loss of habitat and increase and improve existing habitats.

Regulatory Authority:

Gopher Tortoises are protected by state law, Chapter 68A - 27.003, of the Florida FL Administrative Code.

Who is allowed to directly engage in tortoise relocation?

Only authorized gopher tortoise agents (who will have credentials) are allowed to work on surveying and relocating borrows.

Options to Address Tortoise Presence:

There are four available options to address the presence of gopher tortoises on lands slated for development:

1. Avoid development;
2. Avoid destruction of tortoise burrows;
3. Relocate tortoises on-site (permit required); or
4. Relocate them off-site (permit required).

Permit Requirements:

Relocation is required if development is going to impact existing tortoise habitat. There are valid exemptions for agricultural lands.

If more than 10 burrows exist there needs to be an authorized tortoise agent on site.

FWC permit may be applied for on-line. The application requires an accurate survey of all tortoises on the property. No tortoises are to be left behind. It also requires a Soil & Land cover map, a local land development permit and proof of ownership of the land.

Surveys are required so FWC biologists can confirm burrow locations. Permits will show how many tortoises there are on site, where the tortoises are being relocated from and where they will be moved to. Permits are required to be posted on site. A barrier must be maintained around construction site at all times. Tortoises may be excavated or trapped.

An After Action Report is done after work is completed, that will include details of when and where tortoises were captured and when and where they were released.

“No Tortoise Left Behind” is their motto.

10 or Fewer Burrows Permit

The 10 or Fewer Burrows Relocation permit is for projects, usually single residential construction, which require the relocation of five or fewer tortoises (10 burrows or less).

Temporary Exclusions Permit:

includes temporary linear utilities installations, but habitats must be restored upon project completion.

Disturbed Site Permit:

Disturbed site permits (after the fact) requires payment for impacted burrows, of \$2000 per tortoise, where evidence of disturbing is found and/or too much damage on the property to survey properly

Permit may be required for development projects where premature disturbance to the ground has occurred before gopher tortoise burrow surveys are complete or before gopher tortoise

capture and relocation activities have been completed at the development site. This permit allows for the mitigation and relocation of gopher tortoises from disturbed portions of project sites.

Recipient Site Permit:

Recipient sites are privately or publicly owned lands onto which displaced tortoises are to be relocated.. The objective of this program is to provide the highest level of long-term security for the gopher tortoise and its habitat on that site.

Why are permits required?

In summation, Ms. O'Connor reiterated that permits are required:

- To minimize habitat loss
- To increase and improve populations
- To restore and enhance habitats

Ms. O'Connor provided her contact information:

- Phone: 863-648-3858
- Email: kelly.oconnor@myfwc.com

Q & A Session

- How far from burrow do they get day-to-day ?
 - On average between 100 to 200 feet from the burrow.
 - They may have a couple of burrows.
- How deep are the burrows?
 - Usually 10 – 15 feet deep, but have found them as deep as 45 feet.
- How much do the tortoises weigh?
 - They weigh about 15 pounds.
- Does Florida have other land tortoises?
 - The Gopher is Florida's only 100% dry land tortoise. They don't swim well
- Are they allowed as pets?
 - No.
- What about tortoises on residential homes properties?
 - On existing home sites homeowner may hire a professional, but if one is not available, there is information for homeowners on how to trap and remove and relocate.
- Do they carry any diseases to be concerned with if handling a tortoise?
 - Usually no disease that affects humans, but they may have salmonella on exterior, if you handle, do so with care, and wash hands after.

- Will they bite?
 - They do bite, so avoid the beak. However, their neck does not extend like a snapping turtle.
- Do Permits expire?
 - Permits are non-expiring, but must be transferred to new land owners upon sale of land.

President Runnals thanked Ms. O'Connor for her presentation.

OLD BUSINESS:

President Runnals had no old business to discuss, and asked if there was any from the Members. Hearing none, he moved onto ne business.

NEW BUSINESS:

President Runnals thanked Shelby Brown for her work on the election committee, and presented her a gift from the Board for her fine work.

Election of new TBACE Board Officers

The following slate of volunteers was submitted for the Member's consideration:

President:	Demetrius Johnson	City of St. Pete
Vice President:	Jay Bloomer	City of Pinellas Park (not present in training)
Secretary:	BillieJo Slatton	City of Tampa
Treasurer:	Doug Allen	City of Temple Terrace

President Runnals asked for additional nominations from the floor. No nominations were forthcoming. A motion to close the nominations was made by Shelby Brown. It was seconded by Jeannie Rebholz of City of Saint Petersburg and Vicki Pratt-Boone of City of Tampa. All members voted in favor and nominations were closed.

There being no additional nominations from the floor, a motion to approve the full slate of volunteers was made by Jose Silva of Temple Terrace, and seconded by a Member from the City of Tampa. A vote of the Members unanimously approved same and the new Board was elected.

President Runnals thanked all the members and asked if there were any other issues or items of discussion. Hearing none, he moved to adjourn.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 1:05pm

Respectfully submitted by:

Joe Damien
 TBACE Secretary
 October 17, 2018