

**Beautification Committee**  
Town of Redington Shores, FL  
May 11, 2023 2:00 PM  
**Minutes**

**Call to Order**

**Attendees:** Doris Heitzmann (Program Manager for Florida Friendly Landscaping with Pinellas County / IFAS), Vice Mayor Lisa Hendrickson (District 3), Commissioner Jennie Blackburn (District 1), Commissioner Christy Herig (District 2), Committee Members: Loretta Fricks, Susan Smith, and CJ Hoyt

**Agenda:** Walk through and evaluate the current landscape and plantings, as well as discuss the future social and landscaping needs at three municipal properties in Redington Shores: Del Bello park, the County Beach Parking lot, and the Town Parking lot at 178<sup>th</sup>. These properties were selected as the first three to be evaluated, because they have the most immediate needs.

**Notes / Comments from Doris Heitzmann:**

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The ecosystem in Redington Shores is “Coastal Strand”. Plants that can survive and sustain a Coastal Strand ecosystem are the ones that will perform most favorably.
2. The definition of Florida Friendly is putting the “RIGHT PLANT” in the “RIGHT PLACE”.
3. Need plants that are “long lasting, healthy, FL Friendly, and provide a diversity of heights and structures for wildlife.
4. Always ask “WHY” before making any changes or doing anything that will affect the landscape. Before any landscape (trees, bushes, plants) is removed, pruned, or fertilized, ask why the action is being taken and ensure that the outcome is going to be beneficial.
5. Doris recommends adding signs in parks to educate residents and tourists of important things surrounding the ecosystem. Examples include:
  - a. Describe “Coastal Strand” and what plants are found in this ecosystem.
  - b. Provide info and photos of trees and plants.
  - c. Provide guidance on maintaining plants and trees, such as do not over-prune Sabal or any other palms.
6. Pinellas County Parks are now planting only native FL plants and are also encouraging other municipalities to plant natives. Doris was contacted by Lyle Fowler (who is responsible for maintenance of Pinellas County Parks) to discuss this subject, as related to the County Beach Park in Redington Shores.
7. When developing the RFP for the Landscape Architect, be sure to include a section on “Maintenance”. The maintenance of the parks and landscape is as critical as the plantings, and we need to be sure to hire the correct company. Whoever maintains the parks and

landscape needs to be educated and competent in FL Friendly Landscaping practices. The landscape maintenance plan should also be included in the initial design and preferably recommended by and / or working with the FL Friendly Landscape Architect.

8. When selecting and hiring a Landscape Architect, be sure to provide the “what, where, when, and why” each park or area is being used.
9. Doris has provided the BC with a list of 5 FL Friendly Landscape architects who the Town Administrator can contact for bids for the Phase 1 at Del Bello and the plants around the Town Parking Lot at 178<sup>th</sup>.
10. When selecting and hiring a Landscape Architect, be sure to give them plenty of direction for what the Town needs.
11. When selecting and planting, always consider the value brought by any existing and new plants: butterfly attractors? drought tolerant? salt tolerant?
12. Select plants that have the appropriate sun tolerance:
  - a. Full sun – sun all day
  - b. Partial sun – 5-6 hours
  - c. Full shade – below 4 hours of sun
13. Ph test the soil in all sites
14. Top Trees for wind / hurricanes:
  - a. #1 is Live Oak
  - b. #2 is Sabal Palm
  - c. Commissioner Herig has a list of the “top trees” that she developed and will share.
15. Start with small areas and see how things go – do not try to do everything at once, even with a Landscape Architect.
16. Any new plants will need significant water at establishment.

### Del Bello Park

1. General recommendations for Del Bello, based on current and future social needs:
  - a. Expand and widen the perimeter to include more trees and more protection from Gulf Blvd in some areas.
  - b. Consider additional plants to add height diversity, including the existing Weeping Yaupon Holly trees.
  - c. In the expansive green spaces, consider adding some beds for butterfly gardens – taking into consideration that large areas in the center and north end of the park are being used for Christmas tree lighting and Yoga; the south end of the park could be an ideal location.
  - d. Be sure to Ph test the soil.
  - e. Select plants that have the appropriate sun tolerance. Full or partial sun, or partial shade.
  - f. Consider adding additional trees for shade, such as Live Oak.
  - g. Overall, Del Bello needs
    - i. More Nature
    - ii. More Color

iii. More Diversity

- h. At this point, we should implement an initial / small “Phase 1” project in this park, until a master plan is developed by a FL Friendly Landscape Architect and adopted by the Town.

2. Specific recommendations based on walk-through of park:

- a. Need to remove all invasives.
- i. Brazilian Pepper
  - ii. Carrotwood
  - iii. Strangler Fig
- b. Sea Grapes only need minor clean up – remove dead branches, keep height – the sea grapes are supposed to grow tall and are offering protection from the parking lots on either side.
- c. DO NOT let anyone (tree service, maintenance, etc.) over-prune the palms. The way that the Sabal and Queen Palms have been being pruned is killing them. Doris pointed out multiple examples where the trunks have narrowed significantly due to over-pruning. Sabal palms are supposed to have a “ball” for a head – they are NOT supposed to be pruned to a “hurricane cut”. The “Hurricane Cut” actually weakens palms and makes them more vulnerable during high winds.
- d. Mulch all landscape beds with natural, non-floating wood mulch:
- i. “Florimulch” (Melaleuca)
  - ii. Eucalyptus
  - iii. or Free mulch provided by Pinellas County
  - iv. Do not use Cypress mulch.
- e. Along Gulf Blvd:
- i. Do a better job of maintaining the beds by removing the seedlings of unwanted plants and “volunteers” so a bigger problem is not created later with having to remove large “weeds”.
  - ii. Remove suckers.
  - iii. Remove Carrotwood and “Quack Grass” from Hawthorns and beds.
  - iv. Remove dead Hawthorns.
- f. Around the Del Bello Sign:
- i. Since we will be replacing the sign, we should consider the area around the sign as “PHASE 1” to implement our first section of incorporating FL Friendly landscaping into the park.
  - ii. Also incorporate the area with the dead Hawthorns along Gulf Blvd. into the Phase 1 project with the area around the sign.
  - iii. Use these areas as the first places to test new landscape designs.
- g. Along the northern side of the park:
- i. Clean out all of the invasives.
  - ii. Cut any dead branches out of sea grapes, but do not prune or unnecessarily trim the height or width of the sea grapes.

- iii. Where grass is dying under sea grapes, consider putting a shade tolerant ground cover.
- h. Along the Intracoastal / bayou side of the park:
  - i. There are lots of invasives – they need to be identified and removed.
  - ii. Plant more mangroves where the Brazilian Pepper is to be removed.
  - iii. Add Educational and Informational signs to Del Bello, as detailed in notes above.
  - iv. Check for GRANTS with the following programs:
    - 1. Tampa Bay Watch
    - 2. Tampa Bay Estuary Program
    - 3. Tampa Bay Water
  - v. Recommend re-naming of Del Bello Park from Del Bello to a previously suggested park name of the Redington Shores “Nature Preserve”. This recommendation needs to be adopted prior to the new sign being made for this park.
- **RECOMMENDED IMMEDIATE ACTIONS FOR DEL BELLO**
  - **Commissioner Herig to work with Redington Shores Town Administrator and Town Maintenance Staff to train staff on identifying invasives so that they can be removed from Del Bello.**
  - **Dead Hawthorns to be removed.**
  - **Dead branches to be removed from Sea Grapes.**
  - **Weeds to be removed from all beds**
  - **Melaleuca or Eucalyptus mulch to be added to beds.**

### Pinellas County Beach Park

Redington Shores is responsible for the maintenance and landscaping at this park.

1. General Comments / Recommendations
  - a. Doris noted that this is the most hostile environment any plants can encounter – full sun, wind, salt, heat from beach, as well as parking lot. Only natives will survive under these conditions.
  - b. Doris reviewed the two proposals that the Town received for the landscaping around the park. She explained that the majority of the plants recommended in the proposals will not work for the environment or space, because many of those plants will not survive the harsh conditions of the park.
  - c. Doris said that she had been contacted by Lyle Fowler with Pinellas County Parks Maintenance, who told her that the county will not allow Redington Shores to remove or cut the sea grapes. The only allowable trimming of the sea grapes is to keep them at the height of the fence along Gulf Blvd for safety reasons for police to be able to see into the park parking lot.
  - d. The importance of this park is to mimic nature and provide as natural of a landscape as possible.

- e. Doris encouraged us to ask and understand the reason “WHY” the fence is being removed and replaced.
  - f. Ph is extremely high at this park because of all of the shell groundcover. Shell is very acidic and is not good for plants.
  - g. Remove the invasives.
  - h. Prune all plants to the curb
  - i. Leave Sea Grape leaves down as natural mulch in beds.
  - j. For future consideration curbs on parking islands / medians need to be repaired and /or replaced.
  - k. Remove the Cardboard Palm/Plant that has become overgrown in many places.
  - l. STOP OVER PRUNING – especially the Sabal Palms. The way they are being pruned is killing them and we are in danger of losing them.
2. Specific Recommendations based on walk-through of the park:
- a. Gulf / West side – Sea Grapes need to be allowed to grow high. The purpose of the Sea Grapes growing high is to protect the turtles from the lights inland and to offer protection from the gulf.
  - b. North Side – Get rid of invasives, as many of these are coming from neighboring property.
  - c. Entryway – Get rid of Hawthorn – possibly add beach/dune sunflower
  - d. Gulf Blvd side – Let Sea Grapes grow to height of fence at a minimum, remove grass.
- **RECOMMENDED IMMEDIATE ACTIONS FOR PINELLAS COUNTY BEACH PARK**
    - **Commissioner Herig to work with Redington Shores Town Administrator and Town Maintenance Staff to train staff on identifying invasives so that they can be removed from the County Beach Park.**
    - **Remove any dead branches from Sea Grapes.**
    - **Sea Grapes pruned to height of fence only along Gulf Blvd, if needed.**
    - **Evaluate ground cover in beds – possibly remove shell and add Melaleuca or Eucalyptus mulch to be used in tandem with the natural Sea Grape leaves.**
    - **Remove any trash from in, around, and under trees and plants – this should be part of regular maintenance.**

#### Town Parking Lot at 178<sup>th</sup>

1. We did not have time to evaluate this lot. The BC will use our knowledge and recommendations from Doris to help determine what plants to incorporate around this parking area.
2. Additionally, we have a list of 5 FL Friendly Landscape Architects that the Town Administrator can contact to provide bids for this small project, as well as possibly Phase 1 at Del Bello, which has been discussed with Jeff Shoobridge.

Adjourn – 4:00pm