



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE

**MEETING MINUTES
CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE
SUSTAINABILITY ADVISORY BOARD**

**Tower 101, Suite 1100
101 NE 3rd Avenue, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301
October 27, 2025 – 6:00 PM**

Cumulative Attendance					
1/2025 through 12/2025					
	Members	Appt by	Attendance	Present	Absent
1	Robert Daoust, Vice Chair (arr. 6:04)	II	P	6	2
2	Kelly Charles (arr. 6:15)	IV	P	8	0
3	David Blattner, Chair	I	P	8	0
4	Suzee Bailey	C	P	7	1
5	Spencer Lasday	IV	P	6	1
6	Vacant	III	-	-	-
7	Nicole Barnett	M	P	7	1
8	Sarah Rahmankhah	IV	P	5	0
9	Idan Straus	M	P	1	0
10	Vacant	III	-	-	-
11	Vacant	II	-	-	-
12	Parker Jacobson-Bertanzetti, Non-Voting Youth Chair (arr. 6:14)	C	P	5	3

Staff Present

Glen Hadwen, Sustainability Manager
 Dr. Nancy Gassman, Deputy Director of Parks & Recreation / Chief Resilience Officer – Sustainability (via Zoom)
 Luz Ramirez, Sustainability Administrator (via Zoom)
 Talula Thibault, Sustainability Analyst, SAB Liaison
 Melissa Doyle, Division Manager / Solid Waste and Recycling (via Zoom)
 Laura Tooley, Urban Forester
 K. Cruitt, Recording Clerk, Prototype, Inc.

Also Present

Ted Inserra, President, River Oaks Civic Association

I. Call to Order/Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. Roll was called and it was noted a quorum was present.

II. Approval of Minutes

I. September 30, 2025

A correction was noted to p.2 of the September 30, 2025 minutes: “Mr. Barnett” should be changed to “Ms. Barnett.”

Motion made by Ms. Rahmankhah, seconded by Mr. Lasday, to approve as corrected. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

New Board member Idan Strauss introduced himself at this time.

III. Liaison Report

• Net Zero Resolution

Ms. Thibault reported that the Net Zero Resolution is scheduled to be presented to the City Commission at their November 18, 2025 meeting.

• Resiliency Outreach

In the new fiscal year, the City will begin funding a pilot program to place solar panels on City facilities. \$100,000 has been allocated for this program each year over the next five years.

Mr. Hadwen reported that the City has hired a new Sustainability Coordinator whose responsibilities will include resiliency outreach to homeowners’ and civic associations and public events. She will be invited to address the Board at a future meeting.

• Next Year’s Topics

Ms. Thibault requested that the Board members begin considering focus topics for the Committee in 2026. These may include strategies pulled from the City’s Net Zero Plan as well as from the Urban Forestry Master Plan. The items can be discussed at the November meeting and voted upon in December.

Vice Chair Daoust arrived at 6:04 p.m.

Ms. Bailey suggested that potential topics for 2026 include the following:

- Flooding
- Waterway and drinking water quality
- Dredging at Port Everglades
- Mangrove retention in Dania Beach

Dr. Nancy Gassman, Deputy Director of Public Works/Chief Resilience Officer (Sustainability), noted that the City’s Infrastructure Task Force Advisory Committee

oversees infrastructure-related issues, and recommended the Board focus on topics more closely aligned with its core mission as defined by its governing Ordinance.

IV. Presentations

None.

The following Items were taken out of order on the Agenda.

VI. Old Business

- **Sustainability Advisory Committee Coalition (SACC)**

Mr. Lasday reported that he and Ms. Thibault attended a meeting of the Sustainability Advisory Committee Coalition (SACC), which is an organization comprised of members of all sustainability advisory bodies in the Greater Fort Lauderdale area. The SACC provides an opportunity for the exchange of ideas between different communities.

Ms. Thibault recalled that topics discussed at the most recent SACC meeting included the following:

- Composting
- Plastics reduction
- Florida's ban on balloon releases
- Fertilizer bans

She requested that any members wishing to participate in future SACC meetings inform her in advance.

Another topic discussed at SACC has been a potential ban on plastic grass. Dr. Gassman explained that Fort Lauderdale is currently investing in AstroTurf in several areas for different reasons, including management of stormwater and reduction of water use on some City's playing fields. She confirmed that the City Commission is increasingly supportive of certain types of landscape replacement, including artificial turf, and is reviewing Ordinances which would allow or encourage its use.

Ms. Jacobson-Bertanzetti arrived at 6:14 p.m.

Ms. Charles arrived at 6:15 p.m.

- **Discussion of Urban Forestry Master Plan (UFMP)**

Mr. Hadwen recalled that at the September 30, 2025 meeting, the Board saw a presentation from the City's consultant who assisted in developing the Urban Forestry Master Plan (UFMP). He recalled that the Board members had submitted their individual comments on the document.

Mr. Hadwen concluded by asking if the Board wished to send a communication to the City Commission in support of the UFMP.

The Board members discussed the Plan as well as their comments. Mr. Hadwen recalled that when the Board endorsed the Net Zero Plan, they endorsed the document as a whole while also separately making recommendations on specific topics such as fleet electrification. The Commission had ultimately decided to support the Net Zero Plan and to adopt the fleet electrification policy recommended by the Board as well.

Mr. Hadwen reiterated that the UFMP is close to finalization and is scheduled to be presented to the City Commission at their November 18, 2025 conference meeting. Comments on the draft Plan were reviewed by the project consultant, who incorporated changes as appropriate. Urban Forester Laura Tooley further clarified that the consultant's recommendations included some flexibility for addressing additional concerns or comments during the plan's implementation. Once the final Plan has been submitted to the Commission, Staff can prioritize the additional recommendations.

Ms. Rahmankhah expressed concern that the Board members will not see the final draft of the document before it goes to the Commission for approval. Mr. Hadwen advised that the Board's recommendations were reviewed and included as appropriate with the final draft. There is also an executive summary of the Plan.

Ms. Rahmankhah explained that she had recommended the proposed City-wide tree inventory incorporate the population of trees on private lands, which is not included in the draft UFMP. Ms. Tooley stated that Staff is also reviewing the draft document to determine how comments have been incorporated. She further clarified that the draft includes general rather than specific recommendations.

Chair Blattner asked if the Commission will vote on the draft UFMP at the November 18 meeting. Mr. Hadwen replied that the Plan will be presented at the Conference Agenda meeting but is not scheduled for a vote at that time. Chair Blattner suggested that the Board's communication to the Commission should clarify that they have reviewed preliminary drafts of the Plan and have provided input.

The Board members discussed the inclusion of comments in the draft Plan. Dr. Gassman pointed out that the final document will be posted on the City's web page once the Commission Agenda is published, which is typically the Wednesday or Thursday preceding the meeting. This will allow the Board some time to review the document. The executive summary also provides some idea of how proposed changes were incorporated into the UFMP.

Ms. Tooley asked if there were any objectionable items in the draft the Board has seen. Ms. Charles noted that the draft UFMP proposes penalties and corrective actions related to illegal tree removal and/or tree abuse. She cautioned that these prospective penalties would not serve as deterrents to developers, who would most likely perceive the fines or other actions as minimal. She suggested that a more effective penalty could

be placing a moratorium on the development on which the illegal activity occurred. Another effective penalty could be a fine based on the value of the property or project.

Vice Chair Daoust recommended that the draft UFMP be divided into different sections for homeowners and developers.

Ms. Tooley commented that one of the Plan's recommendations was to consider density-related incentives for the preservation of mature trees. She acknowledged that because this would be a zoning issue, Staff would need to partner with Urban Design and Planning to determine what can be allowed by a property's land use. The incentives could include additional density, an additional floor or floors, and more.

Ms. Tooley continued that the UFMP document itself is intended to provide a framework with which to move forward. A Master Plan is not intended to provide a great level of specificity.

Ms. Charles expressed concern that the proposed penalties of \$1,000 to \$2,000 would mean little to a developer. Ms. Tooley replied that some payments since the City's Tree Ordinance was last revised in 2024 have been as high as \$35,000 to \$50,000 when specimen trees were involved. She emphasized that it can be difficult to regulate private property in the state of Florida, again noting that the UFMP is meant to provide a framework, with detailed information about implementation yet to be determined.

Ms. Charles suggested that the Board's communication to the Commission indicate their support of the Plan's concept while clarifying that they would like to see more details.

Mr. Hadwen reviewed more specific recommendations in both the current Tree Ordinance and the UFMP which address fines and equivalent values as well as clarify how appropriate replacement tree size is calculated. Ms. Bailey asked how these types of regulations would be enforced. It was also asked what entity would be in charge of the Tree Canopy Trust Fund into which tree-related fines are placed.

Ms. Tooley explained that the Tree Canopy Trust Fund provides funds for the replacement and/or relocation of trees. The City's Parks and Recreation Department also uses monies from this fund to add trees to City parks.

Mr. Lasday asked if a "cap-and-trade" policy has been considered as a potential mechanism for determining the value of trees, pointing out that some trees have a greater value to their environment than others. He cited mangroves as a particular example of a valuable species. Ms. Tooley advised that the City does not permit the removal of mangroves; according to state law, this must be permitted by Broward County. She added that there are existing recommendations to increase mangroves in Fort Lauderdale.

Ms. Rahmankhah pointed out that a tree inventory database will be a key factor in mitigating tree removal. Ms. Tooley advised that if removal is related to development,

the developer must provide a tree inventory and disposition plan identifying which trees on the property are protected. This inventory is required in the permitting phase and is reviewed by the Department of Sustainable Development (DSD). Landscape inspectors evaluate properties to ensure that allowances and conditions of permits have been met.

Ms. Bailey cited a pause on work as one example of an effective penalty. Ms. Tooley explained that Building Inspectors issue Stop Work orders if they see violations of Florida Building Code, as this Code is part of state law; however, there is less appetite for enforcing municipal Ordinances in a similar way.

Chair Blattner returned the discussion to how the Board can support the UFMP on November 18, or whether they should wait until a later date.

Ms. Charles suggested that the Board at least support the Plan's concept. Chair Blattner added that the Board will also further review the Plan to determine which areas need improvement and may make recommendations related to those needs. Ms. Tooley reiterated that the Plan is intended to be a living document which can be amended later. Ms. Barnett proposed that the Board offer suggestions on what should be prioritized in the Plan.

Mr. Hadwen pointed out that Conference Agenda meetings do not include voting. If the Commission determines that a vote is necessary, Staff is directed to bring that item back as a Resolution. In addition, any Ordinance resulting from the Plan's proposals will likely take years to implement. He emphasized that any Ordinance resulting from the UFMP would come before the Board.

Ms. Tooley concluded that it is also possible the Commission will request more information on aspects of the Plan. She noted that if the Plan is approved, there is no funding assigned to its implementation in the current fiscal year. Items with little cost would most likely be implemented first.

VII. Proposed Communication

- **Recommending adoption of UFMP**

Ms. Thibault presented a proposed communication to the City Commission regarding the UFMP, pointing out that this document was part of the members' Agenda packets. The Board members discussed and made revisions to the proposed communication. The final language was as follows:

On September 30, 2025, the Sustainability Advisory Board (SAB) received a presentation on the City's Urban Forestry Master Plan (UFMP). This presentation outlined the UFMP's findings and proposed recommendations to achieve an overall tree canopy coverage of 33% by the year 2040.

The UFMP provides 14 action areas, which include incentives that support stewardship of the City's urban forest. The UFMP is consistent with and provides for the implementation of the City's Comprehensive Plan, Press Play Fort Lauderdale Vision Plan, and Fast Forward Fort Lauderdale 2029 Strategic Plan.

The Sustainability Advisory Board encourages the City Commission to adopt the proposed Urban Forestry Master Plan by resolution at an upcoming Commission meeting.

Strategic Connections

This item supports the *Press Play Fort Lauderdale 2029* Strategic Plan, specifically advancing:

- The Infrastructure Focus Area, Goal 3: Be a sustainable and resilient community

This item advances the *Fast Forward Fort Lauderdale 2035* Vision Plan: We Are Ready and We Are Here

This item supports the *Advance Fort Lauderdale 2040* Comprehensive Plan specifically advancing:

- The Neighborhood Enhancement Focus Area
- The Conservation Element
- Goal 3: Conserve, protect, and appropriately utilize the City's terrestrial and marine habitats.

Motion made by Mr. Lasday, seconded by Vice Chair Daoust, to adopt this proposed communication. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

It was decided that Mr. Lasday would represent the Board at the November 18, 2025 City Commission Conference Agenda meeting.

V. New Business

- **Proposed future presentation by Parker Jacobson-Bertanzetti, "Students 4 Resilience Innovation Challenge"**

Ms. Jacobson-Bertanzetti explained that she interned with local group Residents 4 Resilience over summer 2024, and was tasked with the creation of the Students 4 Resilience Innovation Challenge. She hopes to expand this group to include other schools in the Fort Lauderdale area.

The Innovation Challenge is open to students who are interested in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM), as well as in public policy or other related

topics. Examples of activities include living seawalls, vertical oyster gardens, planting of mangroves, and more. Students would be able to work with local experts in these fields.

Motion made by Ms. Barnett, seconded by Ms. Rahmankhah, for Parker to be able to present her Innovation Challenge to the Board. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

VIII. Comments

Ms. Thibault reviewed upcoming local events, which included:

- 30th annual Florida Remediation Conference in November
- North American Association for Environmental Education Conference
- Keep Florida Beautiful event in Coral Gables
- 20th annual Sustainable Communities Workshop
- 17th annual Southeast Florida Climate Leadership Summit in West Palm Beach

IX. Items for Next Meeting

- **November 17, 2025**

Mr. Hadwen noted that additional time can be reserved at the November 17, 2025 meeting for further discussion of the UFMP. This may include a deeper dive into specific items, such as fees, penalties, incentives, and more, including discussion of other topics not reflected in the draft Plan. Chair Blattner encouraged the Board members to review the final plan and communicate any ideas for further discussion to Ms. Thibault's office.

It was noted that the November meeting is scheduled one week earlier than usual in November to accommodate the Thanksgiving holiday.

X. Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Committee at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 7:12 p.m.

Any written public comments made 48 hours prior to the meeting regarding items discussed during the proceedings have been attached hereto.

[Minutes prepared by K. McGuire, Prototype, Inc.]