

# City of Delray Beach

*100 N.W. 1st Avenue  
Delray Beach, FL 33444*



## **Minutes - Draft**

**Thursday, August 21, 2025**

**09:00 AM**

**SOC Lobby Conference Room**

**Green Implementation Advancement Board**

## 1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:07 AM by Chair Evan Orellana.

## 2. Roll Call

**Present** 4 - Evan Orellana, Vinnie Ardillo, Adam Jones, and Catherine Toms

**Absent** 1 - Max Zengage

## 3. Approval of Agenda

A motion was made by Ardillo, seconded by Jones, that this be approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

**Yes:** 4 - Orellana, Ardillo, Jones, and Toms

**Absent:** 1 - Zengage

## 4. Approval of Minutes

The July 17, 2025 minutes were reviewed.

- **Correction:** Vinnie Ardillo noted that prior minutes incorrectly used he/him pronouns for her; this will be corrected to she/her.

A motion was made by Jones, seconded by Ardillo, that this be approved as amended. The motion carried by the following vote:

**Yes:** 4 - Orellana, Ardillo, Jones, and Toms

**Absent:** 1 - Zengage

**Attachments:** [GIAB Meeting Minutes - 2025-07-17.pdf](#)

## 5. Public Comments on Agenda & Non-Agenda Items

- **Mark Cassini, Community Greening:** Provided an update on the city's tree planting campaign.
  - o Reviewed history of the Tree Canopy Assessment (2016–2017) and subsequent City Commission approval of a 10,000-tree campaign (goal of 28% canopy by 2035).
  - o Noted that Year 4 of the program ends today and the contract is not being renewed due to insufficient funds in the Tree Trust Fund.
  - o Advocated for continuation of the program at a scaled-down level through the "Tree Drop-Off Program" (residents select trees online and receive drop-offs).
  - o Emphasized importance of maintaining momentum and highlighted success planting at schools, parks, and along right-of-ways.
  - o Proposed focusing remaining Tree Trust Fund resources (~\$90,000) on drop-off distribution (~400 trees).
  - o Board members discussed funding mechanisms, equity of canopy coverage, fruit tree options for low-canopy neighborhoods, and alternative funding sources (e.g., grants, sustainability fee models).

**Board Consensus:** Draft a memo to City Commission recommending continuation of the tree planting program in scaled form, prioritizing the Drop-Off Program.

## 6. Old Business

### 6.a. Climate Action Plan

- Update from Chris Chitester:
  - o Three department-wide meetings held; further sessions planned.
  - o Developing plan alignment with the Always Delray Comprehensive Plan. Each strategy is being mapped to existing goals, objectives, and policies.
  - o Process aims to ensure an actionable, integrated plan adopted and supported across departments.
  - o Distinction clarified between Climate Action Plan (greenhouse gas emissions focus) and Adaptation Plan (resilience and adaptation strategies). Long-term goal is eventual integration.
- Discussion:
  - o Board members supported alignment and integration approach.
  - o Use of AI tools (ChatGPT, Perplexity) discussed for policy cross-reference efficiency.
  - o Noted City Manager request for a substantial Climate Action Plan update by September 15, 2025.

### 6.b. Educational Initiatives

#### 6.b.i. Florida Climate Week

- Board discussed potential Climate & Conversations event at Arts Warehouse.
- Due to short timeline, consensus was to instead explore hosting in December or January for better planning and attendance.
- Evan Orellana will reach out to Arts Warehouse regarding availability for December 5, 2025, or early January.
- Board emphasized collaboration with nonprofits and community partners, and importance of using city email for all official board communications.
- Consensus was reached among the Board for Evan to act for the board in regards to setting up an event with the Arts Warehouse.

### 6.c. Legislative Issues

- Evan Orellana raised concerns about SB 180, which restricts local governments from adopting “burdensome” redevelopment rules in federally declared disaster counties (effectively the entire state).
- Discussion highlighted risks to resiliency policies and climate action measures.
- Evan Orellana mentioned that the City Commission reportedly considered joining litigation challenging the law.
- Add SB180 to Legislative Issues for next meeting.

### 6.d. City Arborist

- Discussion on whether to recommend creating a City Arborist position.
- It was clarified that staff (David Glover and another employee) already hold arborist certifications.
- Uncertainty remains on how their skills are currently utilized.
- Board agreed not to issue a memo at this time. Instead, Chris Chitester will invite certified staff to a future meeting to explain their work and

potential contributions.

## 7. New Business

Add "Tree Planting Program Memo" to new business for next meeting.

## 8. Board Comments

- Concern noted regarding board member attendance requirements (Max has a standing conflict; this was his first official absence since appointment).
- General agreement on importance of member participation to maintain quorum and progress.

## 9. Staff Comments

**Tree Planting Update:** Staff (Chris Chitester) reported that in the past month, 84 right-of-way trees were successfully planted in coordination with Public Works and Community Greening. Prior to this effort, no new city or partner trees had been added this fiscal year. Recent plantings included corridors along Congress Avenue and Lake Ida Road, where gaps in canopy were filled with species such as live oaks, mahoganies, and silver buttonwood.

**Projected Capacity for FY 2026:** If the program is scaled back to include only the Drop-Off Program, the city could expect to distribute approximately 420 trees next year, based on Community Greening's proposal and available Tree Trust Fund balances.

**Program Efficacy:** Staff emphasized that the Drop-Off model is cost-effective and impactful:

- Larger-caliper trees provided through drop-offs will establish more quickly and contribute to canopy goals sooner.
- The model shifts responsibility for planting and maintenance to residents, reducing ongoing costs for the city.
- Data shows strong demand and uptake from residents. There is an uneven distribution across higher- and lower-canopy neighborhoods with less participation in lower canopy areas that need it most.

**Community Engagement:** Staff noted strong community visibility of the program. Yard signs and QR codes have been used in neighborhoods to increase participation, and word-of-mouth has generated additional demand.

Lower-canopy neighborhoods have shown greater interest in fruit trees, suggesting a potential opportunity to diversify future offerings.

Attachments: [GIAB Staff Report - 2025-08-21.pdf](#)

## 10. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:35 AM by Evan Orellana.