Type of Process: Community Organizing & Facilitative Leadership

Name of Organization: Sierra Pines Coalition

Description/Context:

The Sierra Pines (SP) and Meadowbrook Estates (MBE) neighborhoods are joined by streets and water features. Three branches of the Anclote River run through the neighborhoods. The neighborhoods were built prior to environmental resource permitting and local planning regulations and have no official stormwater systems. Pasco County owns the streets, roadside swales, one of the tributary canals, and some parcels throughout the Sierra Pines neighborhood. The Sierra Pines Coalition (SPC) formed in 2015 after historical rainfall events caused significant and prolonged flooding. The coalitions goals were to work with governmental agencies to identify issues and implement actions to improve flooding and drainage. The neighborhoods have no designated homeowner’s association. The coalition is a voluntary group of residents that support the actions of the coalition through time, money, and active involvement in stakeholder meetings. There are approximately 200 members in the coalition and 400 homes in the neighborhoods. Jessica Stempien facilitatively leads the coalition by organizing meetings, sharing information, facilitating workshops and meetings, and following up on action items.

The SPC formed a smaller group of members called the SPC Planning Committee (PC) to work with the agencies to implement specific SPC actions. The PC and the agencies had a consensus workshop in September of 2019 and agreed on specific actions they can take to improve drainage and flooding. The PC and the County both identified priority projects to implement within 1 to 2 years. The Pasco County and the Southwest Florida Water Management District’s (SWFWMD) Watershed Management Program are funding a long-term watershed management study to update the stormwater model and analyze drainage improvement projects at seven locations within the watershed. There are short term projects and long-term projects. Each type will involve coordinated action planning.

Priority Projects Include:

* Completing maintenance of swales and ditches
* Larger culverts at major tributary crossings
* Raising Meadowbrook Dr.
* Cleaning roadside swales and replacing driveway culverts
* Completing Watershed Study
* Selecting Watershed Study Projects to be funded

The SPC has had success since it’s formation and has been used as a forum to exchange information between stakeholders. Below are key events and projects prior to the formation of the SPC and after:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Key Events and Projects 2004 – 2011** | **Key Events and Projects 2012 - 2020** |
| 2004 – Flood Task Force Recommendations | 2015/16 – Summer Rain Events and Dewatering Impacted SP and MBE |
| 2005 – South Branch Tributary Project | 2015 – **Sierra Pines Coalition (SPC) Formed** |
| 2006 – SWFWMD Modeled Drainage Basin | 2015 – County Public Works - Culvert and Drainage Maintenance Report for SP Completed |
| 2007 – County Public Works and SWFWMD Cooperative Funding Agreement for SR 54 Stormwater Diversion Project | 2016 – County Purchased Easement and Maintained the Sandy Branch Tributary Canal from the western MBE boundary to SR 54. |
| 2011 – Anclote Watershed Management Plan Completed | 2017 – Suncoast Expressway Conveyance for the South Branch Tributary was cleaned by Department of Transportation. |
|  | 2017 – SPC Maintenance Exemption to permitting for 8 sites outside of the right of way |
|  | 2018 – SPC identified issue with bypass canal berm. Berm was modified to be lowered by 1 ft. |
|  | 2019 – **SPC formed planning committee** to work with agencies. |
|  | 2019 – **Stakeholder Consensus Workshop** to identify specific actions to implement to improve drainage and flooding. |
|  | 2019 – Cypress Ranch Master Planned Development amendment – SPC worked with agencies to require more comprehensive stormwater management systems on permits. |
|  | 2019 – SPC hired attorney and engineer to work on Cypress Ranch Master Planned Development stormwater design and permitting. |
|  | 2019 – Anclote East Watershed Management Plan Study initiated. |
|  | 2020 – Anclote East Watershed Management Plan Study Task Work Agreement Executed. |

Processes Used:

* Institute of Cultural Affairs, Technology of Participation
* Focused Conversations
* Consensus Workshops
* Stakeholder Meetings
* Stakeholder Site Visits

Documents Produced:

* Presentation pdf
* Consensus Workshop Product pdf