Pinellas Partners in Recycling
Meeting Notes for 11/4/2026

Virtual

Overview and Attendance

Wei-Ting Liu, CDM Smith; Jonathan Campbell, City of Clearwater; Laura Valletti, City of Dunedin; Keely Kessler, City of Key West; Nick Le, City of Lakeland Solid Waste; Calley Pate, City of Oldsmar; Austin Smith, City of St. Petersburg; Joshua Sherman, City of St. Petersburg; Louis J. Neary, City of St. Petersburg; Vicki Fordyce, City of St. Petersburg; Edgar Castro Tello, City of Tampa; Tessa Coulter, City of Tampa; Holly Langston, City of Tarpon Springs; Nickolas Gerakios, City of Tarpon Springs; Veatrice Farrell, Digital Education Foundation; Jennifer Ciaravella, Florida DEP; Chris Perry, Florida DEP; Sommer Turner, Florida DEP; Tessa Jones, Goodwill Industries-Suncoast, Inc.; Timothy Felder, Goodwill Industries- Suncoast, Inc.; Angela Fama, Hillsborough County; Lisa Leseigneur, Hillsborough County; Pat DePlasco, Keep Pinellas Beautiful; Eric Morales, Manatee County Solid Waste; Mary Oquendo, Manatee County Solid Waste; Ashley Wyland, Pinellas County Solid Waste; Emily LeMay, Pinellas County Solid Waste; Philip Nichols, Pinellas County Solid Waste; Catherine Eichner, Pinellas County Solid Waste; Tyler Ward, Recycling Services of Florida; Daniel Penn, Resident; Shelby Lewis, RRS; Wilfred Holmes, Town of Belleair; Kylie Diaz, Visit St. Pete/Clearwater; Brenna Haggar, Waste Management; Andrew Mekemson, Waste Pro; Ciara Thanasides; and Tsung-Yen Tsou.

Andrew Mekemson, Waste Pro, recorded the notes.

Call to Order

Austin Smith, City of St. Petersburg, called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

Review of September 16, 2026, PPR Meeting Notes

No objections to notes as written.

Introductions

- No new members introduced.

Presentation

There was no presentation during this meeting.

Updates

State Updates

- Chris Perry
    - Tourism Report

        - Working on away from home tourism report – should have results soon
    - America Recycles Day - November 15th
        - Will be doing some events in the Panhandle to promote recycling

- Opportunity to acquire grant funds for composting pilot program
    - World Wildlife Fund (WWF), in collaboration with the Institute for Local Self-Reliance (ILSR), launched a **request for applications, "Education and Outreach for Residential Composting Programs Grants (RCP Grants)," at grants.endingwastedfood.org** to increase participation in and improve residential composting programs. Grants range from $75,000 to $250,000.
    - RCP Grant recipients will design and deliver evidence-based, credible, and measurable social marketing campaigns to increase participation and reduce contamination in residential curbside, drop-off, and on-site food waste collection and composting programs. Using behavior change strategies, RCP Grant recipients will work toward achieving a 50% increase in participation and a 50% reduction in contamination in communities supported through grants by 2030.
    - Eligible applicants include local and tribal governments, nonprofits, U.S. territories and states, and higher education institutions.
- WWF, in collaboration with ILSR, will award between 15 and 20 total grants. Projects are encouraged to include, but do not need to be limited to, members of low-income, rural, or Native American communities.
- Applications are due February 12, 2027. To learn more:
    - Visit the landing page: grants.endingwastedfood.org
    - Register for the informational webinar, Nov. 10, 2026, from 2:00 - 2:45 p.m. ET: https://wwfus.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_gnW5QcM-SWaGMgbHiUW0LQ
- Questions, email: **EWF.rfa@wwfus.org.**

Regional Updates

Hillsborough County

- Angela Fama
    - Recycling Education Campaign
        - Countywide campaign set to launch in January 2027 about a year ahead of the opening of the new WM recycling sorting facility
        - A smaller campaign focused on three collection routes with high rejection rates kicking off internally:
            - Met with the haulers, or Franchise Collectors, to learn about the individual needs of the community to get their feedback on how to support recycling education across the County.

- Supporting ideas include creating bilingual educational recycling cart tags, road signs, cart labels, educational recycling tags, and geographically focused social media ads.

- Recycling Guide
  - The 2026 Recycling Guide, *Recycling Better Together*, has been translated into Spanish by NIE – it's now available online and in print:
    - Visit HCFL.gov/RecyclingGuide for both English and Spanish versions
    - Or view this link Juntos Reciclamos Mejor to directly access the Spanish-only version
    - For context, according to the 2025 Census Bureau, nearly one-third (32%) of Hillsborough County residents are Hispanic; including bilingual resources ensures all our customers have access to our recycling resources.

- Food Scrap Drop-off Program
  - Pilot drop-off program at the South County Solid Waste Facility in partnership with Renuable:
    - Solid Waste customers complete the sign-up form, receive a combination lock, and obtain access to free food scrap drop-off 6 days a week.
    - Visit HCFL.gov/Composting for more information and to view the drop-off station.

City of Tampa

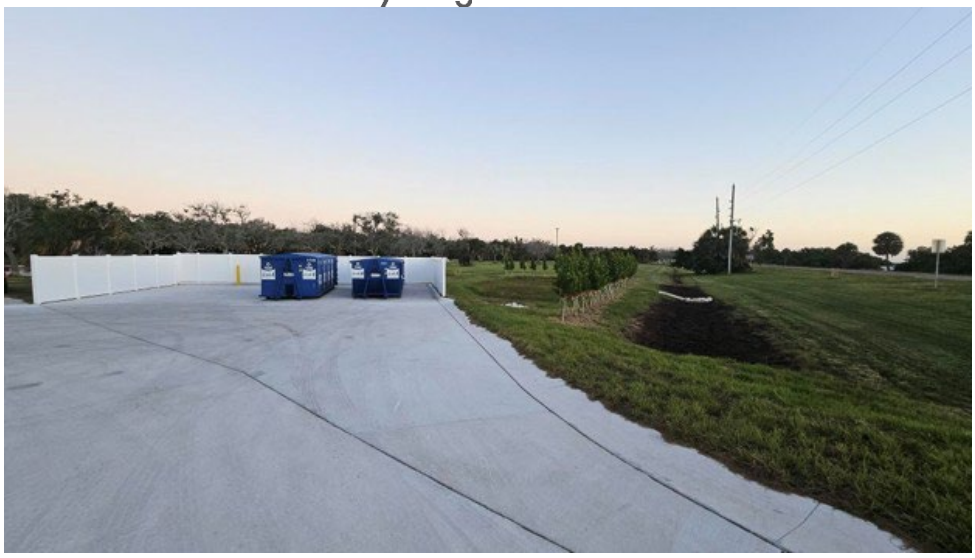
- Edgar CastroTello, Tessa Coulter and Natalia River-Escalante
  - Repair Café on 10/30 was successful!
  - Residents could bring small appliances, lamps, and small electronics to be fixed
    - 65% success rate (fixed around 11 items)
    - Items that could not be fixed were missing a part, but they could diagnose the issue and let them know if it would be worth it to fix
      - Total weight of items fixed: 100 pounds
      - Value of items fixed worth about $900
  - Repair | City of Tampa

Pinellas County

- Emily LeMay

- We include education and many other helpful things as a recommendation on the Contract Guidance page: Pinellas Partners in Recycling - Guidance for Developing Recycling Collection, Processing & Commodity Marketing Contracts - Pinellas County

- Ashley Wyland
  - Reordering Recycle Guides in 2027
    - If you need more, email us at recycle@pinellas.gov.
    - We will reach out at the beginning of next year to coordinate pick-up or delivery of any additional copies.
  - Tire Disposal Fee Waiver for Residents
    - Concluded on 10/30
    - During the waiver, our Scalehouse processed **165 transactions and collected a total of 534 tires!**
    - **Here's the breakdown:**
      - 1 tire: 22 transactions (22 tires)
      - 2 tires: 20 transactions (40 tires)
      - 3 tires: 20 transactions (60 tires)
      - 4 tires: 103 transactions (412 tires)
    - **Total: 165 transactions / 534 tires**
  - Fort De Soto Recycling Drop-off Center
    - Construction is complete at the boat ramp center, and the campground center is officially closed.
    - The new and improved boat ramp drop-off center has reopened! The mural at the campground center has been replicated at the boat ramp drop-off center.
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Pinellas County Municipal Updates

City of St. Petersburg

- Vicki Fordyce
    - Has been attending meetings and events to provide educational information about recycling.
    - Great American Teach-In – already have five or six schools scheduled. Will take a recycling truck out.
    - Areas with high recycling contamination have been identified
        - Making sure those specific areas get the educational information for recycling properly
- Louis Neary
    - Equipment Demo Day – Tuesday, November 17th from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
        - https://floridacompostingcouncil.org/event-6813432
    - Boyd Hill Backyard Plant Giveaway – Saturday, November 7th from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
        - https://ilovetheburg.com/event/boyd-hill-backyard-plant-giveaway/
- Composting Workshops
    - https://www.stpete.org/residents/utilities/residential_trash___recycling/composting_waste_reduction.php
- Austin Smith

- Recycling one-pager completed!
    - Being handed out by inspectors.
- Getting better tracking equipment for sanitation fleet – testing begins Monday with tracking and cameras
    - Optimize routing
    - Improving safety

City of Clearwater

- Jonathan Campbell
    - Routeware was installed on 53 trucks – goal is to help improve customer service and address complaints
    - Residential recycling survey was released last week
        - Goal of the survey is to get an idea of how residents want to be communicated with about recycling rules and how to recycle better
        - Biggest issue is bagged recycling
- Participating in the Great American Teach-In on November 18th

City of Dunedin

- Laura Valletti
    - Contract with Waste Pro expiring
        - City Commission meeting on October 22 to reconsider recycling contract – unanimous yes
        - City staff, County staff and residents were heard at the meeting. Commission learned a lot about why recycling and waste diversion are important and why conserving landfill space is important.
        - Hopefully this will help launch other diversion programs within the city.
        - New contract with Waste Pro includes:
            - Two hours of b-roll from their MRF to show residents how it operates
            - Two city-collaborated educational videos
            - Waste Pro must attend at least five city events per year
            - Up to 20 city staff can tour MRF every year

- Pumpkin Landscape Contest
    - Construct a pumpkin landscape to highlight organic and recycled material
    - All materials will be composted or recycled at the end of the contest
- Christmas Lights Recycling Program
    - November through January – a drop-off site for non-working Christmas lights will be available

City of Oldsmar

- Calley Pate
    - Finishing up recycling assessment
        - SPC student worked with them on the study
        - Found that there needs to be better signage and recycling reminders & tips
        - Main challenge: getting to the bottom of what the recycling contractor accepts. There is some contradictory information on what is accepted

Community Updates

Keep Pinellas Beautiful

- Pat DePlasco
    - Keep Florida Beautiful Conference – November 18th, 19th and 20th
        - Visit St. Pete Clearwater is sponsoring the conference
        - https://keepfloridabeautiful.org/about-us/annual-conference/
    - Hard-to-Recycle Plastics Recycling Program
        - Scanning, grinding, melting and forming hard to recycle plastics, like bottle caps, and turning them into things like carabiners and rulers.
        - Work with elementary to college aged students to show them how to use the machinery and how the program works.
        - Will be showcased at KPB's Holiday Open House in December!
    - Electronics Recycling Drop-off Event
        - Partnering with Dirty Deeds Electronics Removal and Recycling
        - Saturday, November 14th at KPB's office

- What to bring: printers, scanners, gaming systems & controllers, cords, chargers, computers, stereos, DVD players, small electronics, TVs, flat-screen displays, laptop computers, desktop computers, computer monitors, cellphones and tablets.



- Holiday Open House
  - Friday, December 11th from 8:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.
  - At the KPB Office – 5090 66th Street N. St. Petersburg, FL

- Register online via www.kpbcares.org/upcoming-events



Visit St. Pete Clearwater

- Kylie Diaz
  - Fin Fest – Ocean Conservation and Education Music Festival
    - Sustainable event, reducing single-use plastics
    - Speakers will be there talking about the upcoming Ocean Race event
    - https://flfinfest.com/st-petersburg/home
  - Art Everywhere – happening this month
    - https://www.visitstpeteclearwater.com/featured/art-everywhere
  - Launched Capital Funding Program
    - Funding projects related to tourism

- Applications are due in January
- https://www.visitstpeteclearwater.com/partners/capital-projects-funding-program

Goodwill Suncoast

- Timothy Felder
  - Goodwill Suncoast won an award for their plastic film recycling initiative!
    - Florida Recycling Partnership Foundation – 2026 Recycling Champion
    - 150,000 pounds of soft plastic have been recycled over the last year
  - America Recycles Day Event on November 14th
    - At hub location from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
    - Collection of hard-to-recycle items

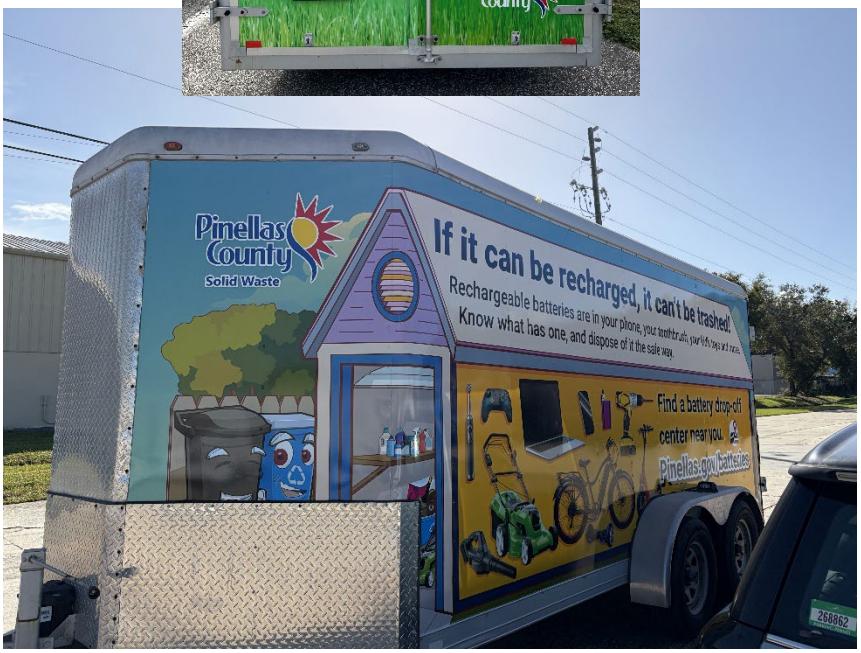
Work Group Updates

Contamination – Ashley

- No future meetings scheduled at this time.
- Pinellas County will be working on larger ads for batteries (bus stops, billboards).
- Working on a postcard to be handed out at the Scalehouse and looking into providing stores that sell batteries with them as well.
- Business Waste Assessment Team is working on a Guide to Managing Batteries brochure for businesses. This will be handed out during inspections and added to the website with the other material guides - Guide to Recognizing Hazardous Waste - Pinellas County.
- Hillsborough County is working on Phase 2 of their battery awareness campaign.
- Pinellas County recently rewrapped a trailer used by our Household Hazardous Waste Program
  - Included side dedicated to safe battery disposal
  - Another side dedicated to the HHW collection program

- Before





- After

Open Discussion

- N/A

Announcements

- 2027 Meeting Dates
    - January 13, March 17, May 19, July 28, September 15 and November 3

- 9:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. via Teams

Adjournment

- Next Meeting: Wednesday, January 13, at 9:30 a.m. via Teams