

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MEETING
March 4, 2010 6 PM
MUNICIPAL CENTER

MINUTES

Present

Chairman Joe Skelley
Susan Threlkeld
Andy Foster
Clyde Davidson
Dr. Jimmy Davis

Linda Kaplan
Urania Erskine
Judith Goden

Staff

Bo Mills
Tim Bierdz
Juanita Bell

Visitor

Ken Adams

Absent: Brandy Miller & David Thorpe

CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Joe Skelley called the meeting to order at 6:05 PM.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW MEMBERS AND GUESTS:

The Commission welcomes Ken Adams as a recurring visitor.

MINUTES APPROVAL:

The minutes of the February 4, 2010 meeting of the Environmental Commission were unanimously approved with one correction: Ken Adams was added as a guest to the Commission and one clarification to Joe Nunes' report, "Currently the price for landfill is \$31.85 per ton and recycling is \$13.00 per ton not counting the collection charge." should read "Currently the price for landfill is \$31.85 per ton and recycling is \$13.00 per ton. This does not include the additional collection charge on either."

STAFF REPORTS:

Bo Mills:

Mr. Mills advised the Commission that Well #5 at the Southern Avenue Water Plant had failed last year and crews will begin digging the new well tomorrow. Recently Well #3 at Southern Avenue has failed and Well #1 at Johnson Road Water Plant has incurred electrical damage resulting in a burned motor.

Mr. Mills reported that the Ground Water Institute created a plan about two years ago to implement the MS Abatement Water Aging Process in which the GWI will test water and wells for chemicals to find out the actual age of the water we are pulling from the ground. Germantown has supported the GWI annually and has been contacted for additional support in this project.

Chairman Skelley inquired as to how long this project would take.

Mr. Mills said it would take years to complete all the water testing because it will require digging wells and be very expensive.

Tim Bierdz:

Mr. Bierdz reported on behalf of Joe Nunes:

Recycle volume for February is up 2%. Average tons per working day are up 2% from 2009. Overall trash volume was up 5.3% for February. Recycling markets are improving. The contract with FCR is still planned.

Mr. Bierdz reported that the storm water fee was passed in the February meeting. He passed out Q & A reports to the Commission. Fees will begin in April and residential fees are as follows:

\$3.00 – 0 - 10,000 square feet

\$3.25 – 10,001 – 22,000 square feet

\$3.50 – 22,001 - ----- square feet

The Board chose to set the fee at a lower rate than expected which means that funds will be tight to get the job done.

Mr. Bierdz reported that the EPA has not finalized a new permit with guidelines and testing qualifications but should by April. There is a possibility that we will be forced to visually inspect and test laterals.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Jimmy Davis – Research:

Dr. Davis reported a story he had heard called "Grow Your Own Drugs" in which a gentleman from Oxford describes all these formulas for taking natural herbs and converting them into anything you want to treat. The author stated that he was a Botanist and not a doctor and advised readers to see a doctor first.

Dr. Davis reported to the Commission on the "boom box" which involves using boom energy and was reported on the CBS website. A company out of California is creating fuel cells with sand and a certain kind of paint. These fuel cells are made in cubes and can be used to create energy for homes and businesses. It is suggested that in 2-3 years, it will be available for residential.

Susan Threlkeld – Composting/Xeriscape:

Ms. Threlkeld announced that the Bartlett Garden Club postponed their meeting due to weather. Botanic Gardens had a class on the green roof. It demonstrated using 4” thick tiles which contain 90% of water. Unfortunately native grasses could not be used because they are classified as water seekers. The tray system is interlocking for easy growth and installation and tiles weight 20 lbs per square foot.

Linda Kaplan – Think Green:

Ms. Kaplan discussed Earth Day 2010 which will mark the 40th anniversary for this holiday. Shelby County Parks is sponsoring an event and will include communities, businesses, nonprofit organizations and others to organize activities in the week prior to April 25th.

Ms. Kaplan reported that Israel released reports that they are attempting to stop using oil and go to electric cars. The plans involve 500,000 outlets and will provide stations to swap batteries and will be faster than a gas fill-up. Also, they are researching complimentary electricity producing highways with generators embedded below the asphalt 2 inches. Project managers estimate that 1 kilometer would produce enough electricity for 25 houses.

Judy Goden – Water Conservation:

Ms. Goden inquired whether we had paperwork or brochures promoting water pollution.

Tim Bierdz stated that we do have a grant with Water Works to produce one thousand residential storm water, one thousand commercial and five hundred farm brochures and pamphlets. It does cost the City but not sure of the cost.

Ms. Goden inquired about public awareness. Do we offer tours of the Water Plant?

Mr. Mills stated that we have about 15-20 groups come in per year to tour the Water Plant.

Ms. Goden reported that Collierville sponsored an Earth Day poster contest. The winners received small gifts. Also, can the City give incentives to residents who conserve water for residential and commercial?

Mr. Mills stated that it has been encouraged through the Home Owners Association but metered water is private and the City is not able to publicize people who use less or to offer rebates.

Ms. Goden inquired as to whether the City could provide leak detection tablets or some sort of free gifts for residents to incentivize.

Mr. Mills said we would look into it.

Andy Foster – Energy Use Resource Management:

Mr. Foster announced to the Commission that there is a device that can crush fluorescents safely with no landfill dumping. Multiple states are currently using them and University of Arkansas stated that they save \$20,000 per year using this device.

Urania Erskine – Storms/Wetlands/Sanitary Sewer:

Ms. Erskine inquired about composting dog feces. Ms. Threlkeld stated that it is possibly negative because feces can't compost in our clay soil.

Ms. Erskine stated that families overseas purchase bags to be picked up and euro waste is collected differently. By doing that, people that generate more trash, pay more for bags.

Sandra Hayne – Neighborhood Preservation Commission Liaison:

Arbor Day should go more smoothly this year because trees will be pre-packaged.

The Home Tour Show will be held on April 25th from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. There are currently 6 homes lined up.

Goodwinds will be hosting another Garden Series on April 6th at 10:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.

OLD BUSINESS:

Andy Foster mentioned that due to recent negative comments about the City Shelter, he wanted to propose a committee to advise and advocate on issues such as proper handling of animal waste on behalf of the Commission.

Mr. Mills advised that we would need to discuss with the Mayor.

Linda Kaplan inquired if Amnesty Day computers were being re-used or recycled and if it could be considered to donate them to Kids N Technology. Bo will check with Joe regarding Kids N Technology.

Radio Shack is currently offering store credit for old electronics.

NEW BUSINESS:

Amnesty Dumpster Day sign-up sheet was circulated.

Chairman Skelley inquired about Mulch Day and Joe Nunes will email Commission with dates.

ADJOURNMENT:

The Commission adjourned at 7:30 p.m.