

Environmental Commission Meeting

Thursday, September 5, 2013 – 6:00 p.m.

Public Services Building

7700 Southern Avenue

MINUTES

Present

Chairman Joe Skelley

Clyde Davidson

Urania Erskine

Steve Fleischmann

Andy Foster

Linda Kaplan

Laura Meanwell

Paul Mosteller

David Thorpe

Staff

Bo Mills

Joe Nunes

Leslie Throneberry

Guests: Susan Threlkeld and Pam Beasley

Absent: Jimmy Davis, Alderman John Drinnon and Anne Wesberry

CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Skelley called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

ESTABLISHMENT OF QUORUM:

A quorum for the Environmental Commission meeting was established.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS:

Susan Threlkeld, former Environmental Commission member, and Pam Beasley, Director of Parks and Recreation, attended the meeting.

MINUTES APPROVAL:

The minutes of the August meeting were approved.

STAFF REPORTS:

Joe Nunes: Mr. Nunes reminded the Commission that Amnesty Day is coming up on September 21, 2013. He expressed his appreciation to the commission members that volunteer their time for this event. The volunteer sign-up sheet was passed around.

Mr. Nunes reported that Republic's performance has steadily improved since the strike. Patrick Lawton meets with Republic's general manager every month to discuss their performance.

Recycling volume is down for two months in a row. Mr. Nunes will meet with Republic to review the service numbers and recycling decline. The volume is down by 6% for the first two months of FY14.

TN Department of Environment and Conservation has a revenue sharing program that they call a recycling rebate. Germantown receives approximately \$3,500 from the state each year. This rebate has normally been used to fund our Amnesty Day. Since we are no longer paying for electronics recycling, Mr. Nunes

proposes using some of these funds to revamp our school education program. We have to submit an application by October 15, 2013 to be eligible for this rebate.

Neighborhood Services plans to review the City's solid waste ordinance. Mr. Nunes asked for potential subcommittee to assist in reviewing the ordinances. Linda Kaplan, Urania Erskine and Laura Meanwell volunteered to be on the subcommittee. He feels the unlimited yard waste collection will probably be changing. Laura Meanwell would like us to promote recycling in the City parks.

Bo Mills: Mr. Mills reported that the Wolf River Boulevard Grand Opening was a success. He thanked Linda Kaplan for attending. The project received the Audubon International Silver Certification for accomplishments in sustainable design, construction and management.

Mr. Mills will be attending a meeting next week with the Ground Water Institute to receive our annual report. He will share this information at the October commission meeting.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Steve Fleischmann: Mr. Fleischmann shared an article from the August 15, 2013 edition of *The Commercial Appeal* newspaper regarding the leasing of solar panels. California, Arizona and New Jersey, respectively, have the most residential solar units installed in the United States. The federal government offers tax incentives for up to 30% of the cost of the units.

David Thorpe: Mr. Thorpe stated that there are five ways utility companies are trying to prevent building more power plants. They are increase efficiency, use renewable resources, install smart meters, charge peak time rates and demand response.

Laura Meanwell: Mrs. Meanwell had nothing to report.

Paul Mosteller: Mr. Mosteller questioned if the City was spraying for mosquito. Mr. Mills informed him that Shelby County Vector Control is responsible for spraying Germantown.

Andy Foster: Mr. Foster reported on an article about British engineers creating gasoline from thin air. By using electricity, these engineers are able to generate petroleum. They are hoping to be able produce a ton of petroleum a day within two years.

Urania Erskine: Mrs. Erskine mentioned that many municipalities and other countries are no longer putting fluoride in the water. She would like to see Germantown follow that same action.

Linda Kaplan: Mrs. Kaplan shared an article that stated the U. S. Department of Agriculture is funding a test that to see if fields treated with human urine as a fertilizer yields more crops that an untreated field. The article says that Americans produce 31 billion gallons prime fertilizer per year.

Clyde Davidson: Mr. Davidson had nothing to report.

Old Business: N/A

New Business: Pam Beasley, Director of Parks and Recreation, reviewed the proposed Natural Resources Management Plan (NRMP) with the Commission. City Administration has asked the City's Environmental Focus Cabinet to review and update our current resource management planning tools. Once every five years, our Parks and Recreation Department goes through a national accreditation process similar to an audit. The management plans, policies, procedures and strategic plans will be reviewed. 153 standards have to be met. The City has had a NRMP in place since 2001 but it wasn't a very strong plan. Pam has been meeting with park directors from other cities to review their plans. She is asking several City commissions including the Environmental Commission, the Park Commission, the City Tree Board and the Beautification Commission to review this plan. The University of Memphis Urban Ecology Institute will review the plan. City of Germantown citizen, Neil Miller, a retired biologist with a background in urban forestry, and Tim Bierdz, City Stormwater Engineer, will also look at this plan. Ms. Beasley asked the Commission to rank things that are most critical. Leslie Throneberry will email a complete copy of the NRMP to each of the Commission members. They were asked to review the plan and be prepared to discuss it at the October Environmental Commission meeting. Ms. Beasley will be at the November Environmental Commission meeting to receive the Commission's input. Ms. Beasley explained that we can't manage what we don't know we have.

Ms. Beasley also shared information on upcoming events at the Bobby Lanier Farm Park. Farm Jam (an outdoor concert) will be held October 5, 2013 at 5:30 p.m. The Fall Harvest Festival at the Park will be held on October 27, 2013 from 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:25 p.m.