

# Environmental Commission Meeting

Thursday, November 7, 2013 – 6:00 p.m.

Public Services Building

7700 Southern Avenue

## MINUTES

### Present

Chairman Joe Skelley

Urania Erskine

Steve Fleischmann

Linda Kaplan

Laura Meanwell

Paul Mosteller

David Thorpe

### Staff

Bo Mills

Leslie Throneberry

Alderman John Drinnon

Guests: Susan Threlkeld

Absent: Clyde Davidson, Jimmy Davis, Andy Foster 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, attended the meeting.

### MINUTES APPROVAL:

The minutes of the September and October meeting were approved.

### STAFF REPORTS:

Joe Nunes: Amnesty Day was held in September and collection was down in most categories. There were more people but less volume collected. Paul Mosteller asked if we can take microwaves on Amnesty Day. Linda Kaplan questioned whether we can take clean pizza boxes in our recycling. Mr. Nunes informed them that we can take microwaves on Amnesty Day and that pizza boxes and even coated juice boxes are acceptable recyclables now. Mr. Mosteller asked if we could possibly have some stickers made and give them to the pizza delivery companies to put on the boxes to indicate that the boxes are now recyclable.

Mulch Day was held on October 19th. Our solid waste contract includes us receiving 600 cubic yards of mulch per year which is divided into 400 cubic yards in the spring and 200 cubic yards in the fall.

Mr. Nunes shared a chart from the Shelby County Office of Sustainability. This compares the collection of recycling tons per person for municipalities in Shelby County for the last four years (2009-2012). Germantown recycles more per person. However, in our FY14, we are down about 7%. This reduction is due in part because newsprint is down; therefore, people do not have as much paper to recycle. Household trash volume is actually down also, approximately 12%, which is because of the economy. The problem

with going to the larger 65 gallon carts instead of the 35 gallon carts that we currently use is that the larger carts do not have the RFID chip in them which helps us track participation.

Bo Mills: Mr. Mills reported that he and Mr. Nunes have put together a cross-functional team to research the possibility of bringing the sanitation collection services in-house. Mr. Nunes explained that this is because of the service problems we are having with our current provider. Mrs. Erskine was not in favor of this option. One reason she mentioned was the pensions. Mr. Mills would like the Commission to look over the team's research results.

Mr. Mills also explained the City's Environmental Focus Cabinet reports on the CO2 emissions. This quarter, the City's fuel usage has been reduced by 2.4% over the same quarter last year partially due to using more hybrids and crew-oriented trucks. They are also in the process of developing an idling policy for City vehicles.

Mr. Mills reported that the TVA has a Platinum Program for Sustainable Communities. The City of Germantown has achieved the Gold level. We are working towards Platinum. If attained, we will be one of only four cities in the Tennessee Valley with the platinum rating.

Alderman Palazzolo sent Mr. Mills the Green Power Initiative flyer to share with the Commission. This program supports alternative energy sources by pledging financial resources through ones MLGW bill.

#### COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Joe Skelley: Mr. Skelley thanked Urania Erskine, Linda Kaplan, Paul Mosteller and Susan Threlkeld for working the commission booth at the Senior Expo.

David Thorpe: Mr. Thorpe mentioned that citizens had questioned whether the City accepts needles on Amnesty Day. The State of Tennessee requires "sharps" to be in puncture-proof containers. This does not include blood products or human organs and body parts.

Mr. Thorpe also reported that he researched the air quality section of the proposed National Resource Management Plan. In Shelby County, motor vehicles produce about 80% of the CO2 emissions; therefore, any air quality improvement that we would like to make will need to be centered around vehicles. Motor vehicles create approximately 35% of the VOCs (volatile organic compounds) in Shelby County. Trees create approximately 30%. As a City, we need to discourage the use of vehicles and encourage walking, biking, carpooling, public transportation, etc.

Steve Fleischmann: Mr. Fleischmann had nothing to report.

Paul Mosteller: Mr. Mosteller brought water conservation information that he gave to Mrs. Meanwell to use in the school education programs.

Laura Meanwell: Mrs. Meanwell reported that America Recycles Day is November 15, 2013 and more information can be found at [AmericaRecyclesDay.org](http://AmericaRecyclesDay.org). She will be using some information from the website for educational opportunities in the schools. Additional opportunities are at the Farm Park. Public education for adults as well as students would be advantageous for Germantown's recycling efforts.

Linda Kaplan: Mrs. Kaplan shared a newspaper article on a company called Shred Shop of Memphis. They do personal shredding and also destroy hard drives for computers. They recycle the paper and destroyed media.

Mrs. Kaplan also shared a newspaper article on “use by” dates on food. There is a misconception about the use by date being the expiration date on most food. The dates are to help retailers to manage their inventory.

Mrs. Kaplan shared a letter from the Memphis and Shelby County Office of Sustainability about a “Lunch and Learn” at noon on November 21, 2013 at the Botanic Garden. The cost is \$5 and Andy Pouncey, Germantown’s landscape architect, will be the speaker. He will give an in-depth talk on the recently completed Wolf River Boulevard extension project which is the world’s first Audubon Silver Certified Roadway.

Mrs. Kaplan informed the committee of a call for nominations for Recycler of the Year. The Tennessee Recycling Coalition is currently accepting nominations of individuals, organizations, schools and businesses that have outstanding recycling programs.

Urania Erskine: Mrs. Erskine would like the City to pursue discontinuing adding fluoride to the water supply. Mr. Mills agreed to look into this after the first of the year.

Old Business: N/A

New Business:

The Environmental Commission Holiday Party is set for December 5, 2013 at Susan Threlkeld’s home.

Applications for the Germantown Boards and Commissions are due to the City Clerk’s office by Thursday, December 3, 2013.

The spring Amnesty Dumpster Day is normally held on the third Saturday in April. This year it will fall on Easter weekend. It has been agreed that it will be moved to April 12, 2014.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m.