

Environmental Commission Meeting

Thursday, January 2, 2014 – 6:00 p.m.

Public Services Building

7700 Southern Avenue

MINUTES

Present

Chairman Joe Skelley

Clyde Davidson

Jimmy Davis

Urania Erskine

Steve Fleischmann

Andy Foster

Laura Meanwell

Paul Mosteller

Susan Threlkeld

Alderman John Drinnon

Staff

Bo Mills

Leslie Acerra

Guest: Christine Menzel

Absent: Linda Kaplan

CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Skelley called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

ESTABLISHMENT OF QUORUM:

A quorum for the Environmental Commission meeting was established.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS:

Dr. Davis' wife, Christine Menzel, attended the meeting.

INTRODUCTION OF MEMBERS:

Since the commission members already know each other, it was suggested that instead of routine introductions, the members would share information about themselves that wasn't already known. Therefore, each member shared a brief bit of personal information.

MINUTES APPROVAL:

The minutes of the November and December meetings were approved.

STAFF REPORTS:

Bo Mills: Mr. Mills shared the City's Open Records Policy and the Code of Ethics Policy with the Commission. The Open Records Policy basically states that nearly all records are open to the public upon request. The Code of Ethics Policy states that commission members cannot gain personally from the use of information, cannot receive gifts or services, personal interest must be disclosed, Mayor can investigate your actions and public censure is possible if the policy is broken. The commission members signed that we reviewed and they will support the Code of Ethics Policy. Ms. Acerra will forward these documents to City Clerk, Dotty Johnson.

Mr. Mills also shared which services are provided by our Public Services Division, which include water production and distribution, meter reading, sewer collection (Memphis processes the sewage), street maintenance (except for Germantown Road and Poplar Avenue which are state highways and are maintained by the State of Tennessee), storm water systems, gutters, catch basins, pipe network, ditches,

street signs, parks maintenance, grounds maintenance and animal control. There are aspects of City services that are contracted out. We contract our street sweeping, paving and cured-in-place pipe lining. We also have seasonal employees in our Grounds department. We consistently have 75 employees, 79 including our seasonal employees. Our Animal Shelter had no space related euthanasia in 2013.

Mr. Mills reported on behalf of Mr. Nunes that yard waste collection was behind in December due to the quantity of leaves. January should improve.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Clyde Davidson: Mr. Davidson praised the City's code enforcement department. He spoke to an inspector about a house on the northwest corner of Apple Valley and Cordova Rd having high shrubs. The code inspector had this corrected.

Urania Erskine: Mrs. Erskine expressed her appreciation for the Public Services department. She holds them in high regard.

Susan Threlkeld: Mrs. Threlkeld had nothing to report.

Paul Mosteller: Mr. Mosteller said that he is pleased with the services delivered by the Public Services department. Public Services has great crews as evidenced by the Amnesty Days that he has worked.

Andy Foster: Mr. Foster had nothing to report.

Steve Fleischmann: Mr. Fleischmann had nothing to report.

Jimmy Davis: Dr. Davis had nothing to report.

Laura Meanwell: Mrs. Meanwell wants to know if Mrs. Threlkeld would like to come back on board with education. Laura's passion is recycling and she would really like to see more recycling in our City parks.

COMMENTS BY CHAIRMAN SKELLEY:

In February, we will brainstorm about energy conservation, electric cars, solar energy, bicycle lanes, trails, etc.

Recently, Mr. Skelley was in Franklin, TN and attended their "Bark-toberfest" which was held at a location similar to our Farm Park. It was like a flea market with an animal theme. He would like to see if the City would consider doing something similar to this in conjunction with our other City commissions.

The commission would like to go on a field trip this year as in the past. Ideas discussed were a canoe float trip down the Wolf River and a bicycle ride on the Greenway. This will be discussed further next month.

Amnesty Day and Mulch Day are huge events for the citizens and for Public Services. Although they run very efficiently, are there any opportunities for educating the public that we are missing during these events.

NEW BUSINESS:

Susan Threlkeld shared information regarding the Eco Expo at Temple Israel on January 26, 2014 from 11:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. She asked if any of the commission members would like to volunteer to work in the booth. Ms. Acerra will put together water conservation cards for Mrs. Threlkeld.

The commission has been asked to research and formulate an opinion regarding fluoride in the water to be discussed at the February meeting. Germantown pays approximately \$28,000 per year to add fluoride to the City water supply. Fluoride is not a requirement. The commission can make a recommendation to the Board of Mayor and Aldermen (BMA) to discontinue the use. The BMA can approve to discontinue the use. The City would then have to notify customers of the change. There are 479 community water systems in the state of Tennessee. Approximately 300 of these communities put fluoride in the water. Columbia, TN is the closest community to Germantown to recently discontinue adding fluoride to the water, which happened in September 2013. They said that research showed that the chemical is hazardous to consumers who ingest it and to employees who handle it. However, local dentists disagree. They feel it will be detrimental to people who cannot afford proper dental care. The State of Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation Division of Water Supply, who governs our water production and distribution, does not care if we add fluoride or not. It is not a requirement. We add fluoride at .2 parts per million. In the last five years, we have reduced the amount of fluoride we add to the water supply.

Mr. Mills and Mr. Nunes will meet with City Administrator, Patrick Lawton, on January 7, 2014 to discuss their findings concerning in-house garbage services. Start-up costs are the problem. We can provide the services at approximately the same costs as we are paying now, which is around \$3.5 million per year.

The commission took up a collection to donate library books in David Thorpe's honor for his years of service to the Environmental Commission.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:53 p.m.