

Environmental Commission Meeting

Thursday, August 7, 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
Linda Kaplan
Laura Meanwell
Susan Threlkeld
Alderman John Drinnon

Staff

Bo Mills
Joe Nunes
Leslie Acerra

Absent: Paul Mosteller

CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Skelley called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

ESTABLISHMENT OF QUORUM:

A quorum for the Environmental Commission meeting was established.

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES:

The minutes of the May meeting were approved.

STAFF REPORTS:

Joe Nunes: Mr. Nunes shared the Germantown by the Numbers report which is basically numbers from all City departments regarding fiscal year 2014. Household trash decreased by 7% in FY 14 as compared to FY 13. Recycling volume decreased by 6% in FY 14 as compared to FY 13. The decrease in household waste and recycling is partially due to the decrease in news print volume, newspaper subscriptions and packaging and the fact that manufacturers are trying to become more environmentally friendly. Yard debris had a 16% increase in FY14 compared to FY 13. With the new FY 15 just beginning, new business plans and objectives were set to have a decline in solid waste volume and increase in recycling volume.

Collierville is already using 96 gallon recycling carts. Memphis is phasing these carts in also. Germantown has two years remaining on the current sanitation contract. The specifications are being put together for the next contract. There is a possibility of Germantown changing to the 96 gallon recycling containers with every other week pickup.

Bo Mills: Mr. Mills reported that TDEC Stormwater Division did a site visit. The only problems were that copper sulfate treated posts and roll of chain link fence needed to be relocated out of the weather. We received a great report.

Mr. Mills also reported a recent increase in consumption which is good for sales. He encouraged having people change their irrigation routines from Monday, Wednesday and Friday to Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday to ease the stress on the system.

Mr. Mills shared that the City of Germantown won the Region 11 Best Tasting Water competition through the Tennessee Association of Utility Districts. We will be competing in the statewide competition in Gatlinburg next week.

Mr. Mills stated that the paving of Dogwood is complete and looks great. The City has a few signs left to install.

Mrs. Meanwell asked how much responsibility the City of Germantown and the Public Works Department will have in regards to the schools' parking lot maintenance and cross walks. Mr. Mills explained that Patrick Lawton says that Germantown Municipal School District stands separately. Although we may do a little for the GMSD, they are not our real responsibility.

Mr. Skelley asked about any response we have gotten about the utility rate increase. Mr. Mills told him that so far most people have been ok with it.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Andy Foster: Mr. Foster shared that the Supreme Court had a case concerning EPA global warming rules. The EPA was trying to regulate whether emission producing companies can expand. In a 5 to 4 ruling, the Supreme Court denied that the EPA could regulate solely based on emissions.

Mr. Foster also shared an article about Antarctic glaciers are heating up due to hidden volcanos under the glaciers.

Mr. Foster explained that the National Gas Alliance wrote an article for Earth Day about the advantages of natural gas. Some people were concerned because some of it was coming from fracking. He will bring more information next month after he has time to do further research.

Mr. Foster will try to bring a guest next month who has a Tesla electric car and uses solar panels in his home.

Jimmy Davis: Dr. Davis reported on three mosquito-borne illnesses and the Ebola virus.

- West Nile Virus has been in the United States since 1999. It is spread by mosquitos that get it from infected birds. Many people (80%) have no symptoms. One in five has fever. Less than one percent develops encephalitis or meningitis. It has been detected in this region. Vector control sprays in our area.
- Lacrosse encephalitis is found in the upper Midwest and in Appalachia. The symptoms are similar to West Nile Virus but fatality is very rare.
- Chikungunya is a new illness. It was discovered in the Carribbean in 2013 and is now in the United States. Symptoms include headaches, muscle pain, joint swelling and rash.
- The Ebola virus could be bats but this has not been confirmed. It occurs in humans and primates. There are five different subspecies; four have caused disease in humans. This is an extremely serious illness. It is spread by blood or other secretions from an infected person and it is also airborne. 932 have died out of 1,700 cases which is a 55% death rate.

Laura Meanwell: Mrs. Meanwell is trying to establish contact with green teams or environmental clubs in the schools. She has developed a Google survey that she is going to send the principals of all eight schools located in the city of Germantown. Mrs. Erskine shared that the Parks & Recreation Department is having a program at the Farm Park on August 26, from 3:30-5:00 that will address environmental issues

(composting, gardening, rain barrel, etc.). All of the schools will be invited to this event. Goody bags of freebies will be given away. Mr. Nunes will send rulers to Pam Beasley to include in these bags.

Urania Erskine: Mrs. Erskine hopes to do a rain barrel work shop next year at the Farm Park. They are accepting rain barrel donations now.

Alderman John Drinnon: Alderman Drinnon stated Germantown Festival brings approximately 2,500-3,000 visitors. Mr. Mills shared that the Running of the Weenies is the Germantown Animal Shelter's biggest fundraiser of the year.

OLD BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS:

Amnesty Dumpster Day is September 20, 2014. A sign-up sheet was passed around for volunteers.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:59 p.m.