

Environmental Commission Meeting

Thursday, January 8, 2015 – 6:00 p.m.
Public Works Building
7700 Southern Avenue

MINUTES

Present

Chairman Joe Skelley
Jimmy Davis
Urania Erskine
Steve Fleischmann
Andy Foster

Linda Kaplan
Paul Mosteller
Scott Schoefnacker
Susan Threlkeld
Jayu Wagh

Staff

Bo Mills
Leslie Acerra

Guest: Mayor Mike Palazzolo

Absent: Joe Nunes

CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Skelley called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

ESTABLISHMENT OF QUORUM:

A quorum for the Environmental Commission meeting was established.

INTRODUCTION OF MEMBERS:

Two new members, Scott Schoefnacker and Jayu Wagh, were welcomed to the commission. All members introduced themselves and shared a brief bit of personal information.

INTRODUCTION OF GUEST:

Mayor Mike Palazzolo attended the meeting. He has been a resident of Germantown off and on since 1977. Prior to being elected as Mayor, he was the Position 3 Alderman. Mayor Palazzolo explained that the person who fills the vacated alderman position will be the alderman liaison for the Environmental Commission. Mayor Palazzolo discussed the Code of Ethical Conduct for Officials of the City of Germantown. He also explained that work toward an updated strategic plan for the city (2030 or 2040 plan) begins in mid February. This will be approximately a yearlong process. There have been many changes in the city since the 2020 plan was developed including a new school district, new ambulance service, new administration, new Board and an embracement of smart growth and modern urbanism.

Mayor Palazzolo briefly covered the Code of Ethics Policy for commission members and thanked all for their service to the city.

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES:

The minutes of the December meeting were approved.

STAFF REPORTS:

Bo Mills: Mr. Mills added comments regarding the Ethics review, including that the Open Records Policy informs that nearly all records are open to the public upon request and that the Code of Ethics Policy also informs that commission members cannot gain personally from their commission membership.

Several of the commission members returned their signed Ethics Policy form. Ms. Acerra will send them to City Clerk, Dotty Johnson.

Mr. Mills also shared a list of services provided by our Public Works Division, which include water production (24 million gallon per day capacity) and water 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 (curbs, gutters, catch basins, pipe network, drainage canals and ditches), signs (decorative signs, street name signs, regulatory signs, informational signs and overhead signs), parks maintenance (tree maintenance, athletic fields, playgrounds, greenways and natural areas) and animal control (We have not had a space related euthanasia since May 2012.). There are aspects of Public Works that are contracted out. We contract our major street paving, grass cutting, herbicide and fertilizer applications and street sweeping. We provide a high level of service. We have employees on call for after hour emergencies.

Mr. Foster asked whom to call about natural gas leaks. Mr. Mills informed him that MLGW handles this; however, the fire department would be a good secondary contact if you have a concern. Mr. Mosteller asked about the paving schedule for 2015. He is particularly concerned with Poplar Pike and Hacks Cross. Mr. Mills explained that he didn't have the schedule with him but that he knows two sections of Poplar Pike are in the schedule, including Poplar Pike from Forest Hill to Poplar. Mr. Mosteller stated that Hacks Cross south of the railroad tracks to the city limit needs paving. Mr. Mills explained that the paving has gotten behind because budgets were cut after the financial problems in 2008. He stated that the total budget for paving is \$1.3 million this year which is more than in the last few years. It will take several years to catch up on the deferred maintenance. He is trying to get some paving projects completed through the capital improvement budget. Wolf River Blvd is scheduled for paving through an MPO project through the State of Tennessee. The state will pay for 80% of the cost and we will pay for 20%. Mr. Foster also asked about the McVay curve project. Mr. Mills shared that it is also still in the plans. It is another MPO project through the State of Tennessee.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Jimmy Davis: Dr. Davis researched latest findings from the CDC on influenza. There have been 24,000 samples tested for the possibility of the flu. Of those, 30% tested positive. The mortality rate for pneumonia and flu is below the epidemic threshold. There have been six pediatric deaths associated with flu. The national baseline is normally about 2% of doctor visits are flu related. Currently, this is up to 6% so it is above the baseline but not to epidemic level. What kind of flu virus do we have? There are two types of viruses, Influenza A and Influenza B. There are three antiviral drugs available which are all effective. Dr. Davis distributed a graph to show the percentage of deaths due to pneumonia and flu from 2009 to 2014. Mr. Foster questioned how many deaths per year nationwide due to the flu. Dr. Davis reported that during the 2011-2012 flu season, there were 37 deaths; 2012-2013 had 171 deaths; 2013-2014 had 109 deaths; and 2014-2015 has had 21 deaths so far.

Urania Erskine: Mrs. Erskine shared a clip about the pay as you throw trash service.

Mr. Foster has a concern about the smart meters. He has heard that bees and bats are leaving the areas where smart meters are located. He will do further research to find out if this is fact or urban legend.

Linda Kaplan: Mrs. Kaplan shared an advertisement from *Beyond the Bean* magazine regarding CommonGround, a group of women farmers, and food and farming myths.

NEW BUSINESS:

Mr. Skelley explained that each commission member can choose an environmental topic that they would like to report on monthly during the year. Mr. Mills also suggested that the members can bring any environmental topic to the meetings.

Mr. Skelley reminded the members that Amnesty Day is Saturday, April 18. We will have signup opportunities at the upcoming meetings.

Mr. Davidson has retired from the commission after approximately 15 years. Money was collected so that books can be donated to the library in Mr. Davidson's honor. Ms. Acerra will work with the library staff to get an appropriate book list. Mr. Foster asked if Mr. Davidson's military service could also be recognized.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:06 p.m.