

# Environmental Commission Meeting

Thursday, June 4, 2015 – 6:00 p.m.  
Public Works Building  
7700 Southern Avenue

## MINUTES

Present		Staff
Chairman Joe Skelley	Linda Kaplan	Bo Mills
Urania Erskine	Paul Mosteller	Leslie Acerra
Steve Fleischmann	Scott Schoefernacker	
Andy Foster	Jayu Wagh	

Absent: Jimmy Davis, Susan Threlkeld, Alderman Dave Klevan and 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 GUESTS:

John Zeanah, Administrator from the Memphis and Shelby County Office of Sustainability Division of Planning and Development, attended the meeting.

### CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES:

The minutes of the May meeting were approved.

### STAFF REPORTS:

Bo Mills: Monday night will be the second reading of the budget at the Board of Mayor and Aldermen meeting. No new tax increases or fees have been included this year. Minor changes have been included for the Germantown Athletic Club.

The FY 16 Business Plan for the Public Works Department has been prepared. It is aggressive and accomplishable. The plan will be finalized next month.

Leslie Acerra: Mr. Mills will celebrate his 30 year anniversary with the city tomorrow.

Ms. Acerra shared a sample of the Go Green in '15 card that Mr. Skelley had requested to be developed to hand out at events or possibly be included in city mailings.

### COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Chairman Skelley: The Horse Show Grounds are in exceptional condition for the Germantown Charity Horse Show that is taking place this week.

Jayu Wagh: Mrs. Wagh read an article titled "Necessity is the Mother of Environmental Solutions" that she wrote for an Indian newspaper. It is a true story about how a farmer in a hick town in India created electricity from biogas for his home and business needs. Traditionally, Indian farmers do not go for higher

education beyond high school; however, this farmer has a master's degree in Agri-Horticulture. His innovative environmental consciousness helped him overcome the lack of modern conveniences, including electricity, to create a successful farming business.

Andy Foster: Mr. Foster shared that the City of Memphis is recommending not using smart meters because the constant signal transmission is suspected of chasing bats and bees away. He will do further research on this for a future meeting.

Paul Mosteller: The July 2015 issue of *Consumer Reports* includes an article titled "How to Cut Your Water Use in Half". Specific product examples are provided including their water consumption and recommendations based on their testing. Ms. Acerra will email a copy of the article to the commission.

Discussion was also made concerning use of gray water in flushing of toilets. Other countries are already doing this. Laws in the United States would have to be changed before this would be permitted here. Areas in the United States are currently using gray water to irrigate lawns.

Scott Schoefnacker: Mr. Schoefnacker shared an article from 2012 about changes in the ground water quality in the shallow aquifer which were attributed to urbanization (i.e. population, gasoline, pesticides, chloroform, nitrate concentration levels, etc.). Nothing goes above the MCL (maximum contaminate levels); but there is a slight rising trend.

#### OLD BUSINESS:

After May's commission meeting, members' questions in regard to the Mid-South Regional Greenprint Plan including the Resolution to Adopt the Greenprint 2015/2040 were combined and sent to Pam Beasley, Director of Germantown Parks & Recreation Department, and to John Zeanah, Administrator from the Memphis and Shelby County Office of Sustainability Division of Planning and Development. Ms. Beasley and Mr. Zeanah responded to these questions via email attachment (See Item #1 below). Mr. Mills paraphrased the answers to each of these questions for discussion during the meeting. Mr. Zeanah also clarified any questions that remained. The commission was still not comfortable with recommending the Greenprint Plan exactly as written. The Plan would only be recommended if it included two modifications. The modifications are: 1 - changing the verbiage in the next to last paragraph of the resolution from "ensure" to "consider" and 2 - language should be added to state that the City of Germantown is not bound to any of the provisions of the agreement. A vote was then taken and five supported the Greenprint Plan with modifications, two still opposed it and one abstained from voting. Chairman Skelley will prepare a letter to the Mayor stating the commission's recommendations for the Plan (See Item #2 below).

Mr. Mills shared that Alderman Klevan was very impressed and appreciative of how seriously and diligently the commission members studied the Greenprint Plan. Mr. Mills also expressed appreciation to Mr. Zeanah for attending the meeting to answer questions about the Plan.

#### NEW BUSINESS:

On Tuesday, June 2, Mr. Mills took three members of the commission on tours of the recently renovated Animal Shelter, the new Fleet Services Building and the Southern Avenue Water Treatment Plant which included the new fan-forced aeration unit. Mrs. Erskine was very appreciative and complementary of the facilities and the services the city provides.

July 2 is the next scheduled commission meeting. With the following day being a holiday, it was unanimously voted to cancel the meeting. The next meeting will be held on August 6.

## ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:17 p.m.

### Item #1 Answers to Commission's Questions about the Greenprint Plan

Below are responses to each of the questions and concerns raised by the Environmental Commission for the City of Germantown. Responses have been compiled by John Zeanah, Administrator for the Memphis-Shelby County Office of Sustainability and program manager of the Greenprint planning initiative, and Pam Beasley, Director of City of Germantown Parks and Recreation.

It is important to note at the outset that the adoption resolution proposed makes only the following commitment: (1) support the plan as the regional green space and sustainability plan; (2) consider the recommendations of the plan as appropriate for each jurisdiction; (3) use concept map as a foundation for connecting communities in the region; and (4) work with neighboring jurisdiction to connect green space. Adoption does not carry a financial or regulatory obligation. It is intended to primarily be a regional show of support.

The following are questions and concerns submitted by members of the Environmental Commission for discussion in regard to the Greenprint 2015/2040:

- The City of Germantown is a consortium member but did not have a representative on the Executive Committee nor the Working Group Staff; therefore, it is probable that some of the guidelines or ramifications of this plan are unknown.

The City of Germantown was represented by Pam Beasley on two working groups: Parks and Greenways and Resource Conservation and Environmental Protection. The plan was created through the contributions of all members of the consortium and working groups. The executive committee and working group staff helped the Office of Sustainability facilitate the regional planning process, particularly since the planning effort involved so many issues, partners, and members of the public. The recommendations of the plan are spelled out in the final document.

The Parks and Recreation Commission and Chairman, Kevin Young have been given updates on the regional greenways plan since the inception of the plan. The Parks and Recreation Commission recommended adoption of the plan based on the intent of using it as guide and supporting regional conversation and collaboration.

- Greenprint is an international approach that emphasizes "A New Approach to Cooperation on Climate Change" with emphasis on the **equitable** distribution of resources and economic growth, a concept promoted by the Center for Global Development.

The Mid-South Greenprint plan was created by individuals and organizations from our tri-state region working together toward a plan for a connected system of green space that provides multiple benefits for the community. The process involved over 80 local organizations, thousands of local residents, and over 100 meetings to ensure the plan was truly reflective of the region's vision. The plan does emphasize equity in terms of how benefits of the plan can accrue to all parts of the region, not just some.

- Greenprint has a multiplicity of goals that may not apply to Germantown's Vision 2020 or the needs of Germantown citizens, some of them are:
  - Equitable Housing – some to be placed on the greenline
  - Equitable Health Choices- healthcare, food choices, life skills
  - Equitable Job Opportunities – job creation, education, life skills
  - Equitable Transportation Choices- mass transit, greenline connections
  - Equitable Recreational Opportunities- parks, greenline, park programs

The plan is regional in nature, thus applies to urban, suburban, and rural contexts. Not all recommendations will or are intended to fit each community. This is the reason why the resolution asks jurisdictions to "consider" recommendations.

The term equitable may not be appropriate to Germantown. A better term for our community may be accessible. But housing, health choices, job opportunities, education, greenway connectors and recreation are all addressed in the Vision 2020 plan at some level. It is my understanding that these topics and others are also being discussed by the 2030 steering committee.

- Greenprint Standards have not been defined and we do not know what individual or group will set the standards for the Consortium. Will Germantown be represented in this decision making body? It is not clear what is meant by "Greenprint Standards," but as stated above, the recommendations of the plan are spelled out in the final document. Germantown does and will always have a seat in the consortium of this effort.

It would be beneficial for additional City staff to be a part of the consortium process to pass information on to the respective Commissions. The Parks and Recreation Commission and City Administration have been in the loop.

- Greenprint grant funding will be distributed **equitably**, going first and foremost to underserved communities.
  - "As stated, there is a regional competition for growth and resources.
  - *Social and economic disparities are reduced or eliminated* in disadvantaged populations, including reduction in poverty levels and a measurable increase in essential goods and services in low-income neighborhoods."

- Greenprint Website 2015

The grant funding supporting the development of the Greenprint plan has been exhausted. It is incumbent on individual communities and organizations to seek funding for projects they wish to pursue related to Greenprint recommendations. The plan does aspire for the full implementation of the plan to reduce social and economic disparities regionally such that benefits of the plan accrue to all, not just some.

- Is staff clear on how this will affect our ability to apply for grants, federal and state funding, or are all grants being applied through the Consortium because we have agreed to this blueprint of equitable distribution of resources. Will individual Consortium member grant applications be unacceptable, since we have signed on to this overall Greenprint plan?  
Adoption of the resolution will not harm a community's ability to apply for grants. In fact, adoption of the regional plan should help a community's ability because it demonstrates a commitment to a regional plan for connected greenspace.
- It is clear to staff that all funding/grants received by the Consortium will be equitably distributed to those communities with the greatest needs.  
This is not accurate. Should the City of Germantown pursue grants related to Greenprint recommendations, it is purely at the city's discretion how to use this funding.
- The Greenplan encompasses many worthy goals, but it needs to be more clearly understood what we are agreeing or have already agreed to. Looking into this proposal beyond "sustainable" may be in order.

Please see the draft resolution, specifically resolved clauses in order to read what the City of Germantown is agreeing to. As stated above: (1) support the plan as the regional green space and sustainability plan; (2) consider the recommendations of the plan as appropriate for each jurisdiction; (3) use concept map as a foundation for connecting communities in the region; and (4) work with neighboring jurisdiction to connect green space. Adoption does not carry a financial or regulatory obligation.

The Parks and Recreation Commission has viewed this plan as a means to establish a coordinated plan of regional green space connectivity – trails, bike paths, parks...this has been the primary focus of Germantown's involvement. Members of the Parks and Greenways Working Group have collaborated to develop an emergency 911 signage plan which is in the process of being implemented. The overall Greenprint plan evolved into additional sustainable standards. They are available for use and consideration, if they make sense for Germantown.

- Greenprint projects adhere to all Germantown ordinances (i.e., zoning, planning, wellhead protection, etc.) within the city limits.  
Greenprint projects in the City of Germantown should adhere to Germantown regulations. Local control should not be impeded by virtue of plan adoption.
- Germantown reserves the right to deny any project that does not conform to future development plans of the City.  
This is correct. Adoption carries no regulatory obligation nor should impede on local control.
- Is there data available on the feasibility studies for the various issues addressed in the manual especially proposed mass transportation?  
Data available is included in the appendices, as applicable, though not all recommendations have accompanying feasibility studies.
- Request information added to the Greenprint from the Shelby County Sheriff and Municipal Police Chiefs on law enforcement plans for the additional miles of "off-street" greenways.  
Law enforcement issues on off-street greenways are recommended to be considered on a project by project basis per recommendations 4.3.1 and 4.3.2.
- Request clarification from Shelby County administration that details outlined in the Greenprint are recommendations only, and that failure to adopt certain guidelines will not prevent the City of Germantown from securing available grants from the Greenprint authority.  
Yes, these are recommendations only. Adoption carries no obligation beyond consideration of recommendations and how they apply to each local jurisdiction. To clarify, there is no Greenprint authority. The City of Germantown maintains local control to incorporate any recommendations from the plan they deem appropriate for their jurisdiction.
- Ensure by signing said agreement all parties acknowledge that while Germantown staff members "consider" recommendations the city is not waiving it's autonomy to manage parks, trails, greenways or connections within it's jurisdiction.  
The city would not waive any autonomy, authority, or local control.
- Why was there not a Germantown representative on the board?  
Germantown was represented on two working groups and additional staff was invited to join other working groups. Over 300 individuals served on the consortium, and only 25 spots were

available on the Executive Committee. Most of the work of the planning effort took place at the working group level for which Germantown was involved.

The Director of Parks and Recreation for the City of Germantown was appointed by the Mayor's office at the beginning of the planning process to serve on the consortium as much of the work was focused on green space and trails planning. The Director attended monthly meetings; community input meetings; public hearings; and hosted one of the consortium meetings in Germantown. Germantown has much experience in trail and parks development, so our experience and expertise was shared with the consortium.

- These are just a few of my questions for the Greenprint. There seem to be too many questions about the lack of benefit and too many mixed messages for Germantown to approve. Sustainable is a great concept but this Greenprint completely misses the mark especially for Germantown.

**Germantown:**

- The Foundation Trails bypass Germantown.  
Two of the major foundation trails – Wolf River and Nonconnah Creek – connect to Germantown.
- Germantown is not mentioned in the plan Why do they need approval?  
All jurisdictions in the region are included in the plan.
- The bike plan bypasses Old Town and schools which is the core of the plan.  
It does, but connections were focused on available routes and a series of inputs, including population density. This is likely why recommended routes in Germantown focused on the Wolf River and Nonconnah Creek.

Additional bike routes will be considered by the City of Germantown as identified in the City's bike path plan.

We will be the last to have trails but the first to pay?

No. Each community or organization will pursue implementation of projects at their discretion and given their capacity to fund projects within their jurisdictions.

**Plan:**

- Traffic in the Memphis area runs east/west. Why is the plan run north/south?  
The network runs east-west and north-south to create a looping pattern that includes as much of the region as possible.
- If the plan is for increased use and work traffic, a simple 5 mile trip from Gemantown to Collierville is about 10-15 miles. Not very efficient for transportation.  
The network design seeks to connect green space, population, employment, and transportation for the purpose of creating transportation options. Some trips may not be as efficient, but others may be dependent on the location of the origin and destination.
- What does fair housing have to do with bike trails?  
The fair housing study was a requirement of HUD in conducting the plan, but this element was quite helpful in helping the housing working group frame and improve the connection between where people live, primarily residents of lesser means, and areas of opportunity, such as employment centers.

- **What does fresh food for schools and bike paths have in common?**  
The intent of the plan was to improve access, connectivity, and use of green space throughout the region, not just bike lanes and trails. Bike lanes and trails are a core component, but green space for growing food is also included.
- **Local farm fresh is summer harvested after school lets out. Why is that included?**  
Fresh food can also be grown in off months using hoop houses and other growing techniques, but the intent of local food is not only for schools, but to improve access for the entire community.
- **Who will maintain the trails and increased use on the parks?**  
Maintenance is the responsibility of individual jurisdictions and organizations creating new spaces.

**Budget:**

- **How are they planning on funding the \$450 million? Who will plan the funds and be keeper of the funds?**  
Over time, it is recommended that funding come from a variety of sources, including federal, state, local, and private sources. There is no central keeper of funds.
- **Why does the plan book mention grants but the plan disc mentions property taxes? What would be approving?**  
Both the book and the disc mention grants and tax revenue as possible funding sources for plan implementation. However, this is intended to be informational about implementation strategies. Adoption of the plan carries no financial obligation.
- **Why are there so many other projects added to the Bike plan? (Islam Park \$18 million)**  
First, the intent of the Greenprint is to connect a system of green space across the tri-state area, not just bike trails. Connecting to existing and new parks is part of the plan recommendations. A portion of the planning grant budget was used to develop demonstration plans to illustrate how the regional concepts connected at the local level, and many of these resulted in new “projects” involved with the regional plan.

A limited number of small planning and demonstration grants were given to cities, agencies and organizations that needed planning and technical assistance money. Germantown has a greenway master plan and construction plans for our next planned section. We are seeking money for development and construction. We will apply for state and federal funding for the Greenway Phase VI connector in FY16.

Item #2 Chairman Skelley's Recommendation Letter to the Mayor about the Greenprint Plan

**MEMORANDUM**

DATE: June 5, 2015  
TO: Mike Palazzolo, Mayor  
FROM: Joe Skelley, Environmental Commission Chairman  
RE: GREENPRINT 2015/2040 Plan Review and Approval

For: *Joe Skelley*  
By: *Bo Mills*

Mayor,

At the April 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Environmental Commission, Mr. John Zeanah, Administrator – Office of Sustainability for the Memphis and Shelby County Division of Planning and Development, came and presented the basics of the GREENPRINT 2015/2040 Plan. He informed that the 25 year plan is designed to enhance regional sustainability by establishing a unified vision for a region-wide network of green space areas, or a GREENPRINT, which serves to address long-term housing and land use, resource conservation, environmental protection, accessibility, community health and wellness, transportation alternatives, economic development, neighborhood engagement and social equity in the Greater Memphis Area. We learned that a broad consortium of 82 organizations, of which Germantown was represented by Parks and Recreation Director, Pam Beasley, worked for over three years to frame up this plan for the Region.

The Commission was not prepared to vote on recommending the GREENPRINT Plan at the April meeting. The Commission revisited the Plan on May 7<sup>th</sup> at their regularly scheduled meeting. At this meeting several questions arose concerning the plan. Without answers to these questions, the Commission decided to defer the vote on the Plan until the June meeting. In the mean time, all Commission members were asked to send their questions in writing to Leslie Acerra for compilation and redistribution to all Commission members. Director Mills forwarded these questions to Pam Beasley and John Zeanah. Each responded accordingly to the questions.

At the June 4<sup>th</sup> meeting, the Commission revisited the Plan where Director Mills summarized the questions responses and where John Zeanah, who was present at the meeting, responded to further questions. After much discussion, a vote was called for to approve the plan with two modifications to the resolution as presented:

- 1) In the last “BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED” statement, the Commission recommends dropping the word “ensure” and substitute the word “consider” in place of it.

- 2) The Commission strongly suggests that the Board of Mayor and Aldermen insert language to state that the City of Germantown is not bound to any of the provisions of this agreement.

The vote was 5 for, 2 against and 1 abstained regarding recommendation of approval of the GREENPRINT 2015/2040 to the Board of Mayor and Aldermen with the two modifications listed above.

Mayor, I want you to know that the Environmental Commission took this assignment seriously. All studied the plan thoroughly and, as you can see, there was dissention within the Commission as to whether this GREENPRINT Plan is good for our City. The Environmental Commission is available for further discussion if you need.

Joe Skelley, Environmental Commission Chairman

cc: Dave Klevan, Alderman Liaison  
Patrick Lawton, City Administrator