

Environmental Commission Meeting

Thursday, March 3, 2016 – 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 Schoefernacker

Susan Threlkeld

Jayu Wagh

Alderman Rocky Janda

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.

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES:

The minutes of the February meeting were approved.

PAY AS YOU THROW SANITATION:

Last month, Pay As You Throw Sanitation was discussed. The commission concluded that this is not a good time to go to this type service, but would like to continue discussing the subject.

Items that were brought out in this month's discussion include:

- Extensive education will be needed for residents, including how the new process would work, how to compost yard waste to lower the disposal volume and how to increase recycling volume without contamination.
- Does Sustainable Shelby have options for lawn/leaf debris to be dropped off somewhere at no cost?
- Composting is taught at the Farm Park. This should be advertised. Also, speakers could go to neighborhood associations to promote composting.
- A determination will have to be made as to how many bags will be given per household and how much additional bags will cost.
- Will this increase illegal dumping?
- Increased research will be needed to find cities to model Germantown's program.

It remains the consensus of commission to delay this type of service.

STAFF REPORTS:

Joe Nunes: Sealed bids for the sanitation service contract have been received and are being evaluated. Next week, these bids will be reviewed with the Board of Mayor and Aldermen (BMA). An agenda item will be taken to the BMA on March 14 for approval of the new contract.

Complaint volume for missed service has slowed but is still high. Inland Waste's new supervisor has let some employees go. They are currently having problems finishing some recycling routes. Service is expected to decline during the last few months of the existing contract which expires June 30. In February, a supplemental contractor was required for two days to collect yard waste misses and for one day to collect household waste misses. Recycling volume was down 6.8% this February as compared to last February and is down approximately 15% year-to-date.

The new sanitation contract will include new recycling and household waste carts. Size options for recycling carts will be 64 and 96 gallon.

ReCommunity started a load quality inspection program effective March 1. They are looking for contamination. If load is deemed contaminated, a fee of \$250 will be charged. Also, a processing and disposal fee will be added if ReCommunity has to dispose of the load. The only way to know if it is contaminated is to dump the load. Once it is dumped, the additional fees will be added, but the load has to be dumped to see if it is contaminated. A load is considered contaminated if 8% or more of the load is non-recyclable material. Discussion was made as to what is deemed acceptable versus contamination.

ReCommunity pays very high fees to process glass since glass has a negative value. The city considered discontinuing glass collection and talked to TDEC. However, Memphis does not want to stop so Germantown cannot. The question was raised as to why it costs so much to recycle glass here when some markets are begging for it. This is simply supply and demand. There is no local market for the material so it would have to be shipped.

In preparing the FY 17 budget, in excess of \$100,000 is being budgeted to pay to process recyclables. Currently the cost to recycle is more than the cost to take it to a landfill. We are being faced with economic vs social vs environmental concerns.

Bo Mills: Mr. Mills prepared an in-house garbage proposal which will also go before the BMA next week. Operational costs are comparable to the bids received; however, the start-up cost would be substantial.

Budget proposals are being prepared. Resources are limited.

The Germantown Forward 2030 Strategic Plan has been approved by the BMA. Administration is working on a document to release to the public. Mr. Mills encouraged commission members to study the document when it is released.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Andy Foster: Allen Steam Plant is shifting from coal to natural gas. Natural gas is popular, clean and inexpensive because of fracking. The coal scrubbers were problematic. TVA decided to replace the coal plant from the 1950's. TVA uses 40% nuclear, 20% coal, 20% gas and 20% hydro/renewable energy. Coal and gas are only used when needed Renewable energy does not include hydro. They have some solar and/or wind energy. The fracking industry is trying to clean up to prevent EPA regulations. Natural gas prices are expected to stay low for up to 20 years, so plant investment is solid. TVA will still have coal plants in their arsenal. Air quality will be better.

Urania Erskine: Mrs. Erskine appreciates the work done to promote the pension changes for Public Works. Mr. Mills thanked her for her support and expressed appreciation that the aldermen supported this change.

Susan Threlkeld: Mrs. Threlkeld recently changed to LED light bulbs. Discussion was made on the life span of various bulbs and usage of fluorescent vs LED.

Chairman Skelley asked Dr. Davis to monitor and report on the Zika virus next month since it has been detected in east Tennessee.

Paul Mosteller: One country in Europe has banned use of K-cups used by Keurig coffee makers because of the impact on solid waste. He asked if Germantown accepts these. Although the containers say that they are recyclable, Mr. Nunes does not believe that ReCommunity accepts them because they are so small.

Jayu Wagh: Sunshine/solar energy has been used for cooking for years. People put food to cook in solar cooker and put solar cooker in the sun in the morning and by evening certain foods get cooked using solar energy. Mrs. Wagh recently read about Wonderbag, which is a portable, non-electric slow cooker. Food is brought to a boil and then the pot is put in the Wonderbag. The bag is filled with non-biodegradable, repurposed foam chips. Food gets cooked because the bag maintains the high temperature. This was developed by a lady from Africa. Recipes come with the product. For each Wonderbag that is purchased, a portion of the proceeds go towards donating a Wonderbag to a family in need in a designated country.

NEW BUSINESS:

Amnesty Dumpster Day is scheduled for April 16. Commission members signed up to volunteer to work the event.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:04 p.m.