

Environmental Commission Meeting

Thursday, June 2, 2016 – 6:00 p.m.
Public Works Building
7700 Southern Avenue

MINUTES

Present

Chairman Joe Skelley	Andy Foster	Scott Schoefernacker
Jimmy Davis	Linda Kaplan	Susan Threlkeld
Steve Fleischmann	Paul Mosteller	Jayu Wagh

Absent: Urania Erskine and 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.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW EMPLOYEE:

Kathy Cross has recently become the new Administrative Assistant for Public Works. She has been with the City of Germantown for 19 years, most recently as the Utility Billing Specialist.

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES:

The minutes of the April meeting were approved, as the May meeting was cancelled.

STAFF REPORTS:

Bo Mills: Mr. Mills shared information regarding the Memphis Light Gas & Water Smart Meter Program. The City of Memphis City Council approved the installation of smart meters county wide. Installation has begun and is being done by a contractor. Cards will be sent to notify residents in advance as to when their meter will be changed out. MLGW plans to have all of the electric meters changed out by 2018. Gas and water meters will be changed out by 2020. Meters will all have Wi-Fi connections.

The City of Germantown will continue to supply your water. Mr. Mills plans to do a pilot program with automated reader meters on the commercial water routes. Our meter reading accuracy rating is 96-97% and according to Mr. Mills' research, the accuracy of the smart meters is around 70%. Accurate billing is more important than having a couple less employees working for the City.

The new sanitation service provider, Waste Pro, started June 1. Early reports are very good. Public Works crews assisted with the yard waste pickup during Inland Waste's last several days of the contract. The Board of Mayor and Aldermen will be recognizing the Public Works employees for their efforts to make everything work better.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Jimmy Davis: Dr. Davis gave a detailed report on the Zika Virus. The Zika Virus was first isolated in Uganda in 1947. Until the early 2000s, there were only fourteen confirmed human cases of Zika infection.

In the years since, the virus has mutated and spread throughout other countries, now reaching pandemic status. Symptoms only occur in about 20% of the cases. For the United States, the Gulf Coast should be the hardest hit this summer, with their steamy climate, abundant mosquito population and international airports. The 472 diagnosed Zika cases in the continental United States are travelers who got the virus abroad. Commission members discussed details from the report. Dr. Davis' report is attached.

Scott Schoefernacker: Mr. Schoefernacker has been working with Tim Bierdz and the English Meadows Neighborhood Association on a stormwater management pilot project to label stormwater drains in the neighborhood. Mr. Bierdz is purchasing stickers that will be distributed to the neighborhood association for installation on the stormwater inlets to discourage anything other than stormwater being put in the drains.

Susan Threlkeld: Mrs. Threlkeld passed around a substitute Styrofoam packaging that is completely recyclable.

Linda Kaplan: Mrs. Kaplan shared an article about dry farming. This means growing crops without watering. Dry farming yields smaller but more intensely flavored crops to include grapes, tomatoes, potatoes, squash, corn, apples and even marijuana. California's coastal region is perfectly suited for this type of farming. Irrigated roots live in the top 20" to 30" of soil, where dry farm root systems go as deep as 20' to 30'. The roots go deeper looking for water.

Paul Mosteller: Mr. Mosteller reminded everyone to change the washers on outdoor water tools, including nozzles and hoses. Not only will you save water, but you will have better water pressure. Also, change washing machine hoses to prevent leaks.

Mr. Mosteller also asked if it is possible to get "Volunteer" shirts for Amnesty Days. Mr. Mills will talk with Mr. Nunes about paying for this. Commission members would be willing to purchase the shirts themselves, if the City does not purchase them.

Jayu Wagh: Mrs. Wagh previously reported on biodegradable edible cutlery. She recently found them locally at Sprouts Market. This particular version was made of cornstarch.

Mrs. Wagh requested to do something as a Thank You for Ms. Acerra, who recently transferred from Public Works.

Andy Foster: Mr. Foster reported that car manufacturers are now using biodegradable wiring insulation. Rats are attacking the new cars and eating this product. Companies have developed a tape to wrap around car wires that has a hot, spicy taste to deter the rats.

OLD BUSINESS:

Commission members like the Go Green in '16 cards and the Hazardous Waste flyers that were used for the Amnesty Dumpster Day. They would like to update yearly and continue to use them.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:20 p.m.