

Environmental Commission Meeting

Thursday, April 7, 2016 – 6:00 p.m.
Public Works Building
7700 Southern Avenue

MINUTES

Present

Chairman Joe Skelley
Urania Erskine
Andy Foster

Paul Mosteller
Susan Threlkeld

Jayu Wagh
Alderman Rocky Janda

Absent: Jimmy Davis, Steve Fleischmann, Linda Kaplan and Scott Schoefnacker

CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Skelley called the meeting to order at 6:12 p.m.

ESTABLISHMENT OF QUORUM:

A quorum for the Environmental Commission meeting was established.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS:

Sandeep Pednekar with Renewable Energies, Inc. attended the meeting. Mr. Pednekar has been meeting with Mayor Palazzolo, Cameron Ross and Joe Nunes about a solution to the City's garbage disposal problem. He has a Waste 2 Energy gasification unit that turns bio-degradable garbage into energy. This energy is then sold. The remaining product (ash) equals approximately 2% of the gasified volume and it is turned into fertilizer, cement or tar. This process involves a \$15 million investment by Mr. Pednekar. He would receive all payments for energy sold; however, the City of Germantown would not have to pay any landfill/disposal fees.

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES:

The minutes of the March meeting were approved.

STAFF REPORTS:

Joe Nunes: Recycling volume for March was up 5% over last March; however, volume is still lower than it has been in the past five years. The City is currently paying \$55 per ton for recycling and \$32 per ton for landfill.

Board of Mayor and Aldermen (BMA) recently approved the new sanitation contract with Waste Pro. The contract begins on July 1. The new contract has significantly higher fees. The Financial Advisory Commission recommended a rate increase. If approved, these rates will be \$36.50 for backdoor, \$29.50 for curbside and \$19 for high density (townhomes/condos). The sanitation rates have not increased in ten years. Cost increases have been offset by the liquidated damages charged to the vendors; therefore, the City has not had to increase the rates. This rate increase should be in effect for ten years. New carts will be provided with the new contract. Commission members are concerned that the fees are increasing with no guarantee of improved service. The State of Tennessee is trying to have sanitation changed to Enterprise Funds.

Mr. Nunes showed a variety of color samples for the new carts and polled the Commission members on their preferred shade for each type of cart. Although household waste carts will be green, recycling carts will be blue and yard waste carts will be brown, the chosen shades have yet to be determined. Mr. Nunes also brought in a new 64 gallon recycling cart.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Andy Foster: FedEx will be hosting an Amnesty Day-type event for their employees. They will be shredding documents and accepting electronics for recycling.

Lake County, Oregon has had several recent fires from wood debris and dead trees. In 2012, they had a 95 acre fire that devastated the community. Now, the community is converting the wood into jet fuel as a cost effective way to use the wood. FedEx is buying a portion of this bio-fuel and encouraging others in the aviation industry to do the same.

Alderman Rocky Janda: Alderman Janda shared the website www.volunteergardener.org. In episode 2412, the Police Department in Franklin, TN presents their half-acre green roof. It is the second largest all-native green roof in the United States. The rain water from the roof and surrounding properties is collected in a 50,000 gallon basin under the building and then recycled to the roof for irrigation.

Jayu Wagh: Mrs. Wagh shared an article about edible spoons made of millet, rice and wheat flour. A researcher/agricultural consultant from India developed them in 2010. Approximately 1.5 million have been sold. They come in a variety of flavors, are biodegradable and have a shelf life of 2-3 years.

OLD BUSINESS:

Amnesty Dumpster Day is scheduled for April 16. Commission members were reminded which location they volunteered to work.

Ms. Acerra shared Go Green in '16 cards and Memphis and Shelby County Household Hazardous Waste Facility information that will be available to hand out on Amnesty Day.

ADJOURNMENT:

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