

Environmental Commission Meeting

Thursday, September 1, 2016 – 6:00 p.m.
Public Works Building
7700 Southern Avenue

MINUTES

Present:

Chairman Joe Skelley
Jimmy Davis
Urania Erskine
Steve Fleischmann

Andy Foster
Alderman Rocky Janda
Linda Kaplan
Paul Mosteller

Scott Schoefnacker
Jayu Wagh

Absent: Joe Nunes and Susan Threlkeld

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.

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES:

The minutes of the August meeting were approved.

STAFF REPORTS:

Joe Skelley welcomed our guests, Fisher Marks, an eighth grade Boy Scout who attends MUS here to work toward earning his Citizenship Merit Badge and his mother Wendy Marks. Also visiting was Lucas Skinner, a Germantown native who works as an intern under Scott Schoefemaker's at CEASAR at University of Memphis.

Bo Mills: Armyworms: what they look like, what they do to your lawn and what their moth looks like. Germantown has had our share of trouble with them as well as everyone else in this area of the country. They were a nemesis to soybean crops even 40 years ago. Our biggest concern is our 29 athletic fields, specifically our football and soccer complexes. It is a cyclical larva, only living a short time and mostly spending their time eating for 2-3 days. They can quickly do a lot of damage to green grass, leaving only brown stems. Armyworms, who don't like a lot of sun, will be out early in the morning when the dew is on the grass, then come out again late in the afternoon when the shadows come over the grass. The City is using a product called Talstar that contains bifenthrin to control the pest. It has about a 30 day residual effect.

Reporting on the City's behalf concerning the conversion of the coal plant over to a natural gas plant for energy production: they desire to use some of our aquifer water to cool the cooling towers instead of using treatment plant water (sewer gray water) as first anticipated because it is not cost effective. Mike Sorensen on Public Works staff sits on the Ground Water Quality Control Board where the discussion has taken place about the effect on the environment. It looks as though it is going to happen and the wells are going to be put in place.

Joe Nunes asked Bo to report that he does not have the current month's numbers to share yet but the collection is going well for solid waste and the recycle numbers continue to be high. We are certain that the previous contractor was not properly processing the recycling material. We are pleased with our new contractor.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Urania Erskine: One should not assume that you cannot draw down an aquifer because it's happening right now in the middle of the United States with the agricultural areas. You may think we have enough flowing in right now but we have other industries trying to get in with the promise of the aquifer and cheap water. We need to say that if you're next to the river or grey water, that's the way to go.

Scott Schoefnacker: USGS Reports on their regional model for the proposed Natural Gas Plant area: The facility is going to pump about 2400 gallons a minute required for the cooling and at maximum will need 5000 gallons per minute. They say they need 3.5 million gallons a day, when about a month out into the year it will be about 7.2 million gallons per day. After running the model, both scenarios, the draw down was only about 7 feet and at the maximum pumping rate was about 11 feet; it covers a wide area. The quantity of the aquifer isn't an issue because there is enough water in the aquifers for what they're pulling. The big question is what happens when they start to develop in Fayette County and intercept the water that flows naturally toward Memphis: How will that impact Collierville, Germantown and ultimately MLGW? The best thing to do is educate and show Fayette County how they can proceed in a responsible manner. The TVA plant's waste water will be sent to the Maxson plant at a maximum rate of 500 gallons per minute. Memphis Public Library held a panel hosted by the Sierra Club where it was proposed to use the Mississippi River alluvial because it would act as an inexpensive filter. At the Ground Water Control Board Meeting it was revealed that three permits have already been approved for the wells even though it did not go before the Board. It raises the question of diminishing water quality with the possibility of windows along the river pulling water into the aquifer. Bo interjected that it is a matter of low cost power and it is a small amount of water in the big picture. The draw down is localized to that area. Germantown has draw down when we have hot summers and lots of draw, but it recovers.

Concerning Stormwater stickers, Tim Bierdz said it would take a couple more weeks to come up with the total numbers due to inventory issues; then we can see about funding.

Traffic between Farmington and Wolf River Blvd is like a parking lot in the afternoon. Scott proposed to University of Memphis Transportation Professor, Dr. Stephanie Ivy, to conduct a traffic light study for her senior research design class next semester. She is going to include the Farmington/Wolf River Blvd area on her list of possibilities. Kimley-Horn, an engineering firm in the City, has done a study recently per Bo that could be of assistance to Ms. Ivy. Tim Gwaltney, our City Engineer, oversees that and would be glad to have someone else look at it. Bo shared that we do have a three part capital project on the books for Germantown Rd paid for by T-DOT dollars, after we meet their requirements. The project includes drop off lanes both directions on Germantown Rd. Bo is passing Stephanie Ivy's name on to Tim Gwaltney.

Paul Mosteller: Results of last week's homework assignment, watching how much runoff into the street occurred after watering: Jayu's sprinkler heads are turned inward so no runoff occurred. Rocky turned his watering down from 8 minutes to 4 minutes and still experienced some runoff. The objective of the exercise is how to communicate to the citizens of Germantown how much water is being wasted. Consider how many homes where runoff is occurring and calculate how much clean aquifer water we are losing. How can

we communicate this? Talk of the Town? High School video for TV? Library create a YouTube video? What other possibilities?

Jimmy Davis: Continuing Zika virus update, three headlines today: The first mosquito carrying the Zika virus was captured in Florida. The first Zika death recorded in Mississippi. And, a rural area in South Carolina went into overdrive spraying for mosquitoes because a person got bitten and killed 48 hives of bees.

The pesticide arsenic used in rice farming can cause danger to babies eating rice.

One reason that recycling is down is the success of fracking. It's cheaper to get the oil from fracking than to recycle.

When you swim in chlorinated water, sweat or urine can react with the chlorine creating carcinogens which can get on your skin.

Steve Fleischmann: No report.

Jayu Wagh: In the United States, each person generates an average of 4 pounds of garbage per day, after recycling the amount is still approximately 3.5 pounds.

To reduce the amount of heavy metals in wastewater, use liquid laundry detergents and liquid bleaches instead of powder.

Two women chemical engineers from the US Department of Agriculture have developed an environmentally friendly film made of the milk protein casein. It just came out in August and is up to 500 times better than plastics at keeping oxygen away from food and because it is derived from milk, is biodegradable, sustainable and edible. Some commercially available packaging varieties are available but are made of starch, which is more porous, allowing oxygen to seep through. The milk-based packaging has smaller pores and can create a tighter network that keeps oxygen out.

Andy Foster: Andy will be looking into rumors that Texas has barred the collection of rainwater. Andy's neighbor has been successful growing their own vegetables and herbs by capturing rainwater from their roof. Every year they put up a green house to protect their plants over the winter. They are open to the Environmental Commission coming for a tour of their gardens, possibly in October. They also created a tonic using herbs and vegetables from the garden to help pull Andy's dog out of kidney failure.

Linda Kaplan: Linda announced National Electric Car Week is observed September 11 – 17. There will be a display of cars at Whole Foods on the 11th at the Germantown location and the 17th at the Poplar/Mendenhall location.

Rocky Janda: Trader Joe's is building in the parking lot of the former Kroger store on Exeter. There are several new businesses interested in locating to Germantown. Hopefully there will be no need for property tax increases with the increased sales tax. Sales tax is not recession proof but if we utilize the sales tax along with commercial property tax we should not have to raise residential property taxes. Municipal Schools are going to cost us more, but they are bringing an increase in the value of our homes.

OLD BUSINESS:

Mark your calendar for Amnesty Dumpster Day September 17th, 7:30 am – 1:00 pm. Pre-event training will be held before the event begins.

NEW BUSINESS:

Possibility of a new water tower.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:02 p.m.