



CITY OF GERMANTOWN TENNESSEE

1930 South Germantown Road • Germantown, Tennessee 38138-2815
Phone (901) 757-7200 Fax (901) 757-7292 www.germantown-tn.gov

Environmental Commission Meeting

Thursday, March 2, 2017 – 6:00 p.m.

Public Works Building
7700 Southern Avenue

MINUTES

Present

Chairman Joe Skelley
Jimmy Davis
Urania Erskine
Steve Fleischmann
Andy Foster
Alderman Janda

Linda Kaplan
Paul Mosteller
Scott Schoefnacker
Susan Threlkeld
Jayu Wagh

Staff

Bo Mills
Kathy Cross

Absent

Joe Nunes

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 GUESTS:

No guests were present.

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES:

The minutes of the February meeting were approved.

STAFF REPORTS:

Bo Mills: On behalf of Mr. Nunes, he wants the commission to know that the recycle has gone up again compared to last year. We are about 40% higher than we were comparing month to month. Also, our complaints are significantly lower than last year.

Recently, Mr. Mills invited Scott Schoefnacker to join him to look at Allenby Lakes at the north end of Allenby Road. After some storms several weeks ago, a void was created at the levee end of the lake and the entire lake disappeared. It basically went into the ground. While it was disappearing, an environmentally friendly dye that will trace and stay for days was put into the lake. Public Works staff walked the river and every tributary in the area that feeds to the river and never found any trace of the dye. We believe the lake



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water went subsurface into the shallower aquifers through a sand lens. It was one of the most interesting environmental happenings Mr. Mills has experienced in his career with the City. The neighborhood is formulating a plan to address the lake problem by moving the levee away from that area; rebuilding the levee, rebuilding the overflow structure and filling the area in with dirt. If they move the lake level back over the same area, even if they fill it in with dirt, it will find its way back into that lens. We are encouraging them to move the levee away from that area.

Mr. Mills shared that Budget Season is upon us and part of the budgeting process is to assemble citizen focus groups to come in and look at every operation of the City. Public Works will try to pull in 12-15 residents to review Public Works operations and services. The focus group will meet at the Public Works Complex on April 4th from 6-7 p.m. to go over everything Public Works and receive input to gather information to build our budget and service levels. If commission members have suggestions of neighbors or other affiliations who would like to participate in the focus group, please email those names or have them call Kathy Cross. We want to insure we are meeting the needs of our community.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Alderman Janda: Alderman Janda has no report but is glad to be present. He will be excusing himself early to attend a Lion's Club meeting. Mr. Janda is looking forward to Amnesty Day on April 22nd.

Jayu Wagh: Mrs. Wagh asked Scott Schoefnacker to explain the windows in the clay layer of the aquifer. Mr. Schoefnacker shared a water table survey of the aquifer windows identified by the USGS by Bill Parks in 1990. To the east are unconfined areas or areas unprotected by a clay layer, which include Collierville and parts of Germantown; there is little protection between the deep aquifers and the more shallow aquifers in these areas. In the areas in question where the gas plant will drill and pump, their wells are approximately 550 – 650 feet deep and according to the health department and the project manager for TVA there is a fairly good clay layer there. Physical logs are not available to confirm this information due to pending litigation between TVA and The Sierra Club. The only concern with pumping 3 ½ million gallons a day is other windows, such as the one at President's Island (this window had no boring, but Bill Parks thought it to be there) and at Davis Well Fields by the bluff. There were 5 wells drilled along the bluff, one well they hit no clay layer. They now have water quality issues at Davis due to pumping water from the shallow aquifer and drawing in Mississippi River water. If TVA starts pumping and there is a water quality change, that will have to be addressed. They are drilling their fifth well and USGS asked them to drill all the way to the base of the Memphis sand aquifer, so they are going down approximately 900-1100 feet. They will log all the way down as they drill, so as that area develops with industry, we will have a better idea of the topography of the layers as we move forward. Germantown's wells are 300-650 feet and we have a fairly thick clay layer. Mr. Mills added that historically, Germantown was a gravel pit and gravel was mined here. We do find places where subsurface water does daylight, where it is moving through the shallower gravel levels. We have had many calls recently concerning water showing up in residents' yard due to high water table levels. Residents' are concerned about leaks but for the most part it has been shown to be the migration of water coming through those gravel layers. Subdivisions were built, and soil was moved to



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balance the sites and fill low places; gravel layers were exposed and became conveyances for water to daylight.

Steve Fleischmann: Mr. Fleischmann researched smart meters online but found information to be outdated and very conflicting.

Paul Mosteller: Mr. Mosteller shared that the drought in the west is over! An article Mr. Mosteller read stated that the U.S. Interior Department sent a team out into the mountains to measure snow drifts. The first group had a sixteen foot measuring device which wasn't adequate and the next had a twenty foot measuring device which still wasn't enough.

Mr. Mosteller asked Scott Schoefnacker additional questions about water services to the power plant.

Urania Erskine: Mrs. Erskine has no report.

Andy Foster: Mr. Foster shared questions concerning Smart Meters that arose at the English Meadows Homeowners' Association meeting. John Rosetti, a resident of English Meadows and a former employee of MLGW, set up a meeting with Chris Beber, the vice president of customer care at MLGW. A smart meter was brought in to examine and they offered answers to concerns. The electric meter can remotely be turned on and off from downtown through a network communication telemeter but the gas meter can only be turned on and off manually. The meters will record four times a day and at the end of the day it will report the usage for that day. If the meter exhibits drastic fluctuations, it will alarm MLGW to investigate. Three different frequencies will be used, 900 MHZ and 2.4 GHZ which were both used by cordless phones in the past, and 5 GHZ. In each neighborhood there will be a "gatekeeper" which is a larger device mounted on a light pole. Then, each meter, only transmitting a half watt, will transmit to another meter if it can't find a gatekeeper, creating a mesh. Meters will transmit to each other until a meter is able to transmit to a gatekeeper. If the meter cannot communicate to something, it will keep storing data until it can communicate. One concern was exposure to radio frequencies, but according to the manufacturer, smart meters are much lower than other common sources because of infrequent signal transmission and distance from the source. The advantages of Smart Meters would be fewer estimates and ease in locating problems. Smart meters should by default only send such information to the utility as is necessary for billing and technical operations. Information sharing with other entities including energy management companies and government will require customer consent or be done in accordance with the law. According to MLGW, they only receive information, kilowatt consumption, electric and cubic feet gas as needed for billing and meter status. MLGW, by Tennessee Law, may not release a customer's information under the Freedom of Information Act. MLGW does not have any third party agreements with any energy management companies other than its electric supplier TVA. MLGW will offer the option of varying rates based on peak versus non-peak hours. Customers can save money if they use less electricity in peak hours. The remote servicing control feature can be used to replace MLGW's practice of controlling the service by manually removing or installing the meter at the socket. The meter can be programmed to automatically disconnect power when demand exceeds a programmed threshold, and then restore power at a set number of minutes



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at the end of that interval. Elster is the manufacturer of these smart meters. Mr. Foster will research the UL specifications to find more information about potential fire hazards. If a customer does not want a smart meter installed, they can opt out. A positive of the meter is the ability to monitor usage so the bill doesn't get too high and adjust usage accordingly. Some individuals are concerned about "Big Brother" having more control and the mesh being used to tie into Wi-Fi systems, and others hacking into MLGW's system. English Meadows Homeowner's Association has contacted MLGW about coming to their next meeting; Commission members will be invited to attend when it is scheduled. Mr. Foster will contact Mrs. Cross when this date is scheduled.

Susan Threlkeld: Mrs. Threlkeld has no report.

Linda Kaplan: Mrs. Kaplan shared that she has had a smart meter for years and it has been very useful in watching peak hours usage. She now has the new upgraded meter installed.

Scott Schoefnacker: Mr. Schoefnacker shared the new House Bill 816 which created the Memphis sands aquifer regional management board. It will give the powers, rights and privileges necessary to manage, conserve, preserve, and protect the aquifer, and to increase the recharge of, and prevent the waste or pollution in, the aquifer. The board will consist of nine members: three county mayors under which the Memphis sands aquifer is located, two appointed by the governor representing agricultural interests, two appointed who represent commercial interests, including one from Shelby County and one from outside Shelby County, one appointed who represents environmental interests and one appointed who is an expert on university research on the Memphis sands aquifer. The Bill provides that no one can drill wells to pump more than ten thousand gallons of water per day from the Memphis sands aquifer without approval from the board. The Ground Water Quality Control Board for Shelby County only controls Shelby County; the regional board spans a larger area. East Arkansas and North Mississippi are not represented in this proposed legislation.

Last month, Mr. Schoefnacker along with Tim Bierdz spoke to the English Meadows Homeowner's Association concerning the installation of the stormwater stickers. The presentation went well. There were three people that signed up to assist in the installation. Sign up information will go out in the homeowners' next newsletter.

Shelby County received \$60 million from a national disaster resiliency competition. The funds will be applied to three focus areas: Big Creek located south of the Millington Naval Base, along the Wolf River on the northern part of I-240 and the South Cypress area where a lot of homes were flooded in 2010 and 2011. In the South Cypress area they will buy out property owners and restore the land to allow the river to flow naturally. They will try to place the homeowners in the area as not to displace them. The Wolf River area will be repurposed to create baseball and soccer fields and also continue the Greenline. The largest project is Big Creek that has been disconnected from the flood plain. Soil will be removed to reconnect the creek with the flood plain. They will create a series of parks, wetlands and fishing ponds that can flood at a



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lesser expense. This will be happening over the next few years. More information is available on the web at www.resilientshelby.com.

Jimmy Davis: Dr. Davis shared that a third of his students at one time or another have been out with the flu this semester.

In the news, some of Alexander Fleming's original mold used in the discovery of penicillin was sold today for \$14,000. Apparently, Dr. Fleming retained a lot of the original sample and gave it as gifts. This was one of those original samples.

OLD BUSINESS:

No old business.

NEW BUSINESS:

Commission members were asked to sign up for Amnesty Day that is scheduled for April 22nd.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:11 p.m.