

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MEETING

February 2, 2012 6 PM

7700 Southern Avenue (Public Services Building)

MINUTES

Present

Chairman Joe Skelley
Susan Threlkeld
Urania Erskine
Linda Kaplan

Clyde Davidson
Alderman Palazzolo
Paul Mosteller
Steve Fleischmann

Staff

Bo Mills
Juanita Bell

Absent: Dr. Jimmy Davis, Andy Foster, David Thorpe

CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Skelley called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

MINUTES APPROVAL:

The minutes of the January meeting were approved.

STAFF REPORTS:

Bo Mills:

Mr. Mills reported on behalf of Mr. Joe Nunes that he had nothing to report due to the numbers not coming in yet for the month from the sanitation carriers.

Mr. Mills passed around information from the most recent Environmental Cabinet meeting regarding CO2 emissions. One of the key indicators in our plan is the CO2 emissions. We spoke a little bit about this last month and I showed you the baseline numbers from 2008 which was 31,190 metric tons of carbon dioxide from the City facilities and such. Over the last month, we have provided for a consultant to go over the numbers from the 2009-2011 years. In 2009, we were at 30,093 metric tons, in 2010 we dropped to 30,063 metric tons and in 2011, it was 30,230 metric tons. We are monitoring our electric use and emissions and as on the last pages, we discussed natural gas usage. We have taken actions to lower usage and reduce emissions. Next month, we'll have another key indicator that I will go over.

Mr. Mosteller inquired about adding solar panels to areas such as the Centre to offset the cost. Mr. Mills responded that a project like that would take a grant to complete and we are always looking for grants. On March 9th, Reynold Douglas, the Facilities Services manager, and I will be going to Columbia, TN for an environmental grant opportunity sponsored by TREED (Tennessee Renewable Energy and Economic Development Council), which is a chance for a local grant for environmental upgrades. We are about to build the Vehicle Maintenance Shop and already have multiple energy conserving functions in design and are continuously looking for more.

Mr. Mills updated the Commission on the City school situation. The City has hired a consultant to come in and do a feasibility study to see if Germantown can support its own school system. We will not be allowed to partner with other cities and the School Board will have no taxing or revenue. The School Board will be voted in later this year. And residents are encouraged to voice their opinion at the City's website. Transportation will be a part of the agreement.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Linda Kaplan – Think Green:

Mrs. Kaplan presented an article to the Commission called "Desoto Civic Garden Club hosts presentation on Water Conservation".

Mrs. Kaplan also passed a brochure around about the Eco Expo which got great commercial review and will host Soles4Souls (please bring any pair of shoes if you come), Trash to Treasure exhibit and have Electric, Hybrid and Plug-In vehicles for viewing. The Memphis Botanic Garden Club will be there with programs for the children. Mrs. Susan Threlkeld will be our representative at this event with a Water Conservation and Recycling table.

Mrs. Kaplan also presented an article from the BBC News regarding accumulating microplastics which is creating a threat in our oceans and shores as plastics are being consumed by fish and entering our food chain. These particles are coming from the storm and sewer drains from our washing our own clothes and particles from those clothes being released and passing into the ocean.

Urania Erskine – Storms/Wetlands/Sanitary Sewer:

Mrs. Erskine distributed the MLGW bill add in which had an interesting storm water notification on it. Mrs. Erskine said that, while on vacation in Florida this month, she came across cute stickers on the drains stating not to feed the fish.

Mrs. Erskine discussed sewer mining, which is currently taking place in Sydney, New York City, British Columbia, and Georgia because now there is a new technology called a bioreactor membrane which makes the cost come down.

Mrs. Erskine attended the first planning meeting of the Bobby Lanier Farm Park. There will be an open meeting held by the Park Commission on February 16th and they are looking for a lot of people with a lot of diverse skills to assist in building the Park.

Mr. Mills explained that the Park plan is coming along with sectioning off an area for a community garden and urban farm. We are hoping to eventually have a Farmer's Market there with vegetables raised in the community garden and multiple demonstrations with animals, farming and environmental issues.

Susan Threlkeld – Composting/Xeriscape:

Ms. Threlkeld question Mr. Mills about stickers on fruit and placing them down the garbage disposal. Mr. Mills advised that anything that is not completely biodegradable should not go down the drains.

Clyde Davidson – Storm/Wetlands/Sanitary Sewer:

Mr. Davidson commented on the Board of Education and advised that it would not be wise for Germantown to affiliate with Memphis City Schools if at all possible to avoid.

Mr. Paul Mosteller commented on the new recycling carts which, he said, seemed large at first but have turned out to be the perfect size. Mr. Mills commented that recycling has gone up due to this new contract with almost 80% of households participating.

Mr. Mosteller asked where we were supposed to dispose of batteries and if we could add a drop box in the City. Mr. Mills said that they are not considered hazardous so they can be thrown away but Bo will check with Joe Nunes to see if we can do anything.

Linda Kaplan – Think Green:

Mrs. Kaplan mentioned that she had just attended a meeting regarding radioactive materials in landfills and found out the Tennessee is the only state in the Country that allows radioactive materials. There are four of these facilities in Tennessee and two are in Memphis.

Mr. Mills offered information stating that our clay layer keeps the radioactive material from seeping and it is monitored and handled closely.

NEW BUSINESS:

Chairman Skelley distributed the “Open Meeting In Tennessee: Compliance with the Public Meeting Law” to the Commission.

Chairman Skelley collected money for Brandy Miller's retirement from the Commission.

Chairman Skelley assigned Paul Mosteller to Water Conservation and Steve Fleishmann to Recycling. Mrs. Brandy Miller will still be assisting with Recycling with school programs.

ADJOURNMENT:

The Commission adjourned at 7:00 p.m.