



# 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, November 2, 2017 – 6:00 p.m.

Public Works Building  
7700 Southern Avenue

### MINUTES

#### Present

Chairman Joe Skelley  
Jimmy Davis  
Urania Erskine  
Linda Kaplan

Paul Mosteller  
Scott Schoefnacker  
Susan Threlkeld  
Jayu Wagh

#### Staff

Joe Nunes

#### Absent

Director Bo Mills  
Kathy Cross  
Steve Fleischmann  
Andy Foster  
Alderman Rocky Janda

#### CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Skelley called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

#### ESTABLISHMENT OF QUORUM:

A quorum for the Environmental Commission meeting was established.

#### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS:

No guest present.

#### CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES:

The minutes of the October meeting were approved.

#### STAFF REPORTS:

Joe Nunes: Mr. Nunes presented the monthly volume reports; recycle volume is down slightly but the volume for the year is within 2% of last year's volume. Household trash is midrange of what the last few years' volumes were. Yard debris is up 50% this year over last year with no real explanation. The storms had some effect, but volume has been up every month in comparison to last year's. We are now in our second year with Waste Pro as our contractor, so we are now comparing "apples to apples". Comparing the pounds of trash per household, we seem to be in a slight downward trend compared to past years.



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In addition, Mr. Nunes shared what impact the Chinese program “National Sword” is having on the recycle markets. National Sword announced their ban on certain recyclable materials in May, the market started reacting in July, and since July there has been a 156% increase in cost of recycling. Our recycle costs went from \$19 a ton in July to \$43 per ton in October. The volatility in the market is expected to continue for some time. We have to clean up the contamination of what is in the recycle bins. We are going to potentially hire some college students to walk the streets on collection day and give praise tags for bins with good recyclable material or an “Oops” tag if there are prohibited items in the bin; this would be one way to educate our recycle participants. The processing facilities have put in stricter penalties for contaminated loads; Memphis has been penalized but Germantown has yet to be penalized. An example of contamination is putting recyclables in plastic bags, then putting those in the recycle bins.

## COMMISSION REPORTS

Paul Mosteller: Mr. Mosteller shared a Facebook post about a Canadian fisherman who caught a fish whose midsection had been strangulated by a “Powerade” wrapper. The fish had been permanently scarred by trash thrown carelessly into its habitat.

Mr. Mosteller also shared a “teaser” from Amazon; a book that can be loaded onto a Kindle called “An Inconvenient Deception: How Al Gore Distorts Climate Science and Energy Policy” by Roy Spencer. Roy Spencer is a scientist that takes issue with Al Gore. The author doesn’t castigate Al Gore but instead refutes Mr. Gore’s opinions; he does take issue with Al Gore being a “climate hypocrite”. It is an 85 page book that is very logically written, a quick read and does basically refute. One example is Mr. Gore’s opinion of the sea levels increasing in Miami Beach. Mr. Spencer points out that where that has occurred, there have been buildings built in the swamps; the buildings are basically sinking into the swamp. Mr. Spencer has written other books that are available on Amazon.

Linda Kaplan: Mrs. Kaplan shared an article from the magazine “Beyond the Bean”, which is a farming magazine. The article is named “Where the Rubber Meets the Row Crop” and is about Goodyear Tires increasing their demand for soy bean. Goodyear tested the use of soy bean oil in their tires and it has now become very competitive. The summary of the article states that replacing petroleum oil with soy bean oil in tires can enhance traction in wet and winter conditions, potentially reduce overall usage of petroleum, increase manufacturing efficiency, reduce energy consumption and introduce a renewable resource.

Urania Erskine: Mrs. Erskine shared about the September issue of National Geographic; there is a large section about sustainability. The Netherlands produces huge amounts of foods very scientifically; one example is potatoes. The Dutch out produced the U.S. using less land, less water, less fertilizer and fewer pesticides. The farmers get together to exchange ideas, then take their ideas to the universities where 50% of the students are from India, Africa and other areas. The students can take some of the technology home to use. The article was very uplifting and showed how remarkable the Dutch are to come together as a community, produce food to feed themselves and help third world countries.



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Mrs. Erskine raised some concerns about the Farm Park and its practices. Mr. Mosteller offered to help her voice her concerns to Administration.

Susan Threlkeld: Mrs. Threlkeld brought a plastic dry cleaner bag from her son-in-law's store, Zips Dry Cleaner, which is labeled "This plastic bag is made with a biodegradable additive. Under proper environmental conditions it may begin to degrade after 12 months." The bag does not specify what "conditions" it will degrade but it is considered 100% recyclable. Mrs. Threlkeld also added that the dry cleaner recycles hangers if the paper is still in good condition or they can replace the paper; the store provides a rack for the recycled hangers. In California, they do not use plastic bags at the grocery stores but instead have paper sacks for purchase; it is encouraged for people to bring their own sacks. There is a bit of a learning curve and people are hesitant to comply at first, but people come around eventually to the new practice.

Jayu Wagh: No report.

Scott Schoefnacker: Mr. Schoefnacker shared an article from the Commercial Appeal concerning the City of Memphis starting a two year project to disinfect wastewater that is dumped into the Mississippi River; this includes Germantown's wastewater. Memphis will be retrofitting the wastewater plant and building an infrastructure to accomplish this. Mr. Skelley added that the use of Peracetic Acid, a mixture of peroxide and vinegar, could possibly be used in this disinfecting process. Approximately two hundred million gallons of wastewater are produced daily.

Dr. Jimmy Davis: Dr. Davis shared about a flu test that is now available at doctors' offices. A probe is inserted in your nose and a specimen is taken. Once the sample is collected, it is placed into a receptacle that contains fluid and indicator paper for approximately ten minutes. The results will indicate if you have the flu and what strain you have. Dr. Davis reminded the commission that the flu season is ending in the Southern Hemisphere and beginning in the Northern Hemisphere; the Southern Hemisphere had a very severe flu season and that is an indicator how severe our season will be. Mrs. Wagh added that some of her co-workers have found that taking a spoonful of local honey per day is helpful with seasonal allergies.

## OLD BUSINESS:

The Commission banquet will be held November 9<sup>th</sup>, at 6 p.m. at the Great Hall.

Commission applications are due November 30<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Acerra will email Commission members tomorrow if their applications have not been received.

## NEW BUSINESS:

The Commission Holiday Meeting will be held at 6 p.m., December 7<sup>th</sup> at Susan Threlkeld's home. The potluck sign-up sheet has been passed around.

## ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:25 p.m.