

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MEETING

May 7, 2009 6 PM
MUNICIPAL CENTER

MINUTES

Present

Chairman Joe Skelley
Jimmy Davis
David Thorpe
Susan Threlkeld

Linda Kaplan
Andy Foster
Clyde Davidson
Craig Lazarov

Staff

Bo Mills
Juanita Bell
Joe Nunes

Absent: Brandy Miller, Tim Sauter and Alderman Palazzolo

CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Skelley called the meeting to order at 6:04 PM. A quorum was declared present.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW MEMBERS AND GUESTS:

The Commission welcomes Mr. Ken Adams as a regular visitor.

MINUTES APPROVAL:

The minutes of the April 2, 2009 meeting of the Environmental Commission were unanimously approved.

STAFF REPORTS:

Joe Nunes:

- Mr. Nunes thanked the Commission for their assistance in Amnesty Day. Due to weather conditions, numbers were slightly down for vehicles and volume but Shred-It reported volume up 250% due to their invitation to the community outside of Germantown.
- Mr. Nunes reported that household recycling is down 5% year to date per average working day but this is partially due to newsprint volume being down 3%. Comingled recycling is up 7.2% from last year.
- Recycling prices are up this month by 150% with pricing going from \$5/per ton to \$12.50/per ton. That is about a \$2500 price increase per month.
- City of Memphis and Shelby County has forwarded the Shelby County Municipal Solid Waste Planning Region Annual Progress Report. This is information for all the communities in Shelby County under solid waste recycling programs. The report will be available at the library.
- We have ordered the recycled tote bags with new logo of "Rethink-Reduce-Reuse-Recycle by Germantown Environmental Commission" for Commission give-aways and presentations.
- University of Memphis and Apple are sponsoring an event on May 14th and 15th to collect electronics from businesses and residences. This event is open to anyone.
Andy Foster – RadioShack also accepts electronics
Susan Threlkeld – Office Depot sells boxes that can be filled with electronics and shipped for a flat fee.
Linda Kaplan– There are non-profit organizations that will also accept older electronics.
- The Neighborhood Preservation Tour of Homes was a success with more than 400 visitors. Mr. Nunes thanked Linda Kaplan for allowing her home to be included the tour this year.

Bo Mills:

- Mr. Mills reported that well #5 which is located at the Southern Avenue Water Plant and is a 1600 gallon per minute well has started pulling sand and after investigation there will be 3 problems to address before we can save the well which is one of the larger wells at this Plant. We are hoping that the cost will be less than \$150,000 for repairs. The sands that were being pulled in were 625 feet deep and were really fine with pieces of seashell. We have to replace liner in casing, pump out sand in bottom and put a new plug in the bottom, place a new gravel media bed on the exterior of the well into it and lastly we will have to rebuild the pump itself. We currently have no problems with the other well but this problem happened very rapidly so we are a little concerned. The cost for drilling a new well comparable to this one is around \$400,000 so we are hoping to save this one.
- The Water Division will be competing in a water tasting contest. Tennessee Association of Utility Districts is conducting a Region 11 Best Tasting Water Contest. If anyone has any suggestions or tips on how to keep the water fresh for transport, we would love to hear it.

- Mr. Mills reported on the City's budget process: Last night we had the City's first run through on the budget with the Board of Mayor and Alderman. There will be no property tax increase for seventh consecutive year. That trend cannot continue for much longer. We have a \$71 million budget with Public Services being \$10.4 million with a \$2 million capital budget. The sanitation budget remained the same.
- Public Services is celebrating National Public Services Week on May 20th with a cookout and we would like to invite the Commission to attend at 11:30 a.m.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Andy Foster – Energy Use Resource Management:

- Nothing to report

David Thorpe – Air Quality:

- Memphis Shelby County Health Department has not been funded yet and may cut Pollution Control Division. This would turn the division back over to the State of Tennessee which they don't want.
- EPA has had a lot of changes. EPA has determined that CO2 presents a danger to the public health and welfare, going back to a court case from last year where the judge ordered the EPA to determine whether greenhouse gas should be regulated or not. The previous administration didn't want to be involved with that but the new administration determined a proposed rule to require reporting of gases. It is estimated that the new "Cap and Trade Act" would generate \$650 billion dollars to government. Hopefully there will be a gradual ease into a system like this.
- Every year industry reports toxic release inventory. This includes trace metal of mercury and metals. Several years ago there was a "Burden Reduction Rule" which stated that if you emitted below a certain amount, you didn't have to report it. EPA just overturned that rule meaning you would have to report everything.

Susan Threlkeld – Composting/Xeriscape:

- Ms. Threlkeld reported a presentation to 56 Master Gardener Interns on Water Wise Gardening.
- On March 23rd Tim Sauter and Ms. Threlkeld presented "Dirty Rotten Truth" to Dogwood Elementary School.
- Ms. Threlkeld presented to 12 members of Collierville Garden Club about composting and spoke to Kiwanis Club members about Water Wise Gardening

Craig Lazarov – Storm/Wetlands/Sanitary Sewer:

- Mr. Lazarov discussed an article on green roofs in Chicago entitled "Park's Lurie Garden" which discussed ambient temperatures and the decrease of city emissions due to these roofs.

Linda Kaplan – Think Green:

- Ms. Kaplan announced that the Bottle Bill has been delayed until next year.
- The Tour of Homes was a very positive experience
- Ms. Kaplan announced her recent research with waterless water heaters and requested that Commission members strongly consider waterless water heaters when they replaced original units.
- BRIDGES which is the first green commercial building in Memphis is now providing a program for students and the community which provides a guided tour with interactive displays and an example of a green roof. O2E Challenge is also supported by BRIDGES and is meant to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 10 million lbs annually by 10 simple daily acts of sustainability.

Jimmy Davis – Research:

- Dr. Davis reported on the Swine Flu (H1N1). The C.D.C. (Center for Disease Control) offers daily updates on viruses via Twitter. On May 2, 2009 there were 160 cases of H1N1 in 20 states. Today there are 896 cases H1N1 in 41 states. The speed that it's moving through the population is what classified it as a pandemic. The normal victims of this particular strain are the younger healthy women rather than elder people and children which are the normal victims of illnesses like this.
- Dr. Davis reported his research on whether there are sustainability plans for cities. There is an organization called I.C.L.E.I. which provides a blueprint for cities to develop sustainability plans. Most of the plans online are overseas.

Sandra Hayne – Neighborhood Preservation Commission:

- Ms. Hayne announced that the Tour of Homes was very successful.

Ken Adams:

- Nothing to report

OLD BUSINESS:

- Andy Foster updated the Commission on compact fluorescents. The MLGW bulbs that were in question last month have worked fine so far.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Chairman Skelley updated the Commission on the “Dirty Rotten Truth”. We are making progress on the creation of the new DVD. It will need to be 20 minutes in length. Susan Threlkeld requested that the Commission discuss the science aspect with the teachers in the area. David Thorpe questioned who will produce the video and Chairman Skelley announced that GHS TV will produce this DVD.
- Chairman Skelley mentioned that residents are planting more vegetable gardens due to economic conditions and suggested a backyard vegetation seminar for Spring.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to be brought before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 7:05 p.m.