

## ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MEETING

April 2, 2009 6 PM  
MUNICIPAL CENTER

### MINUTES

#### **Present**

Chairman Joe Skelley  
Jimmy Davis  
Brandy Miller  
Susan Threlkeld

Linda Kaplan  
Andy Foster  
Alderman Palazzolo  
Tim Sauter

#### **Staff**

Bo Mills  
Juanita Bell  
Joe Nunes  
Tim Bierdz

**Absent:** Craig Lazarov, David Thorpe and Clyde Davidson

#### **CALL TO ORDER:**

Chairman Skelley called the meeting to order at 6:05 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 March 5, 2009 meeting of the Environmental Commission were unanimously approved with one correction to Joe Nunes's report.

#### **STAFF REPORTS:**

##### **Bo Mills:**

- Mr. Mills reported that through the American Society of Civil Engineering there has been a media release of a documentary called "Liquid Assets" which discusses water infrastructure across the country. Germantown High School has scheduled a program in which Mr. Mills and City Administrator, Patrick Lawton will discuss the City of Germantown's liquid assets. GHS-TV has not set a date for this program but it will air at some point in May. Mr. Mills stated that this will also give the City a chance to raise awareness of the wonderful quality of water that Germantown has and how precious and in need of conservation that water is.
- Mr. Mills invited the Commission to celebrate National Public Works Week by joining the Public Services Division for a cook-out on May 20<sup>th</sup> at 11:30 a.m.
- Chairman Skelley requested an update on the Johnson Road Water Plant. Mr. Mills reported that the construction is on schedule and the water reservoir is now covered and most of piping is in place. The deadline for the reservoir is June 15, 2009 and for the Plant expansion is September 9, 2009.

##### **Joe Nunes:**

- Mr. Nunes stated that recycling volume is up 1.1% year to date which is lower than the forecasted 5-6% increase expected with the addition of cardboard recycling.
- Mr. Nunes met with Linda Kaplan to discuss the Bottle Bill which has been modified dramatically from previous years and will be coming before the Tennessee Legislature soon.
- Ms. Sandra Hayne of the Neighborhood Preservation Commission requested that Mr. Nunes remind the Commission in her absence of the upcoming Annual Tour of Homes which will be held April 26<sup>th</sup> from 2:00 to 5:00 p.m. Everyone is invited to attend and volunteers are still needed for this event to assist in guiding guests through homes.
- Chairman Skelley inquired about the annual Mulch Give-Away. Mr. Nunes reports that all the mulch was given away with few disruptions other than the delivery of mulch which was discussed with the contractors. This did mean a 15 to 20 minute delay for residents requesting mulch at one point but should not be a problem in the future. The City would also like to receive more mulch to meet demands and will look into being more specific in the next contract of the volume we are given to distribute. There was an estimated 175 vehicles that attended to collect mulch and the event was concluded at 10:30 a.m. Mr. Nunes recognized Public Services employees for their assistance in loading the mulch for residents and stated that the City will look at the addition of another Mulch Day annually to be more accommodating to residents.

##### **Tim Bierdz:**

- Mr. Bierdz updated the Commission on the Storm Water Utility fee which was presented to the FAC subcommittee on March 12, 2009 by Mr. Bierdz and City Engineer, Tim Gwaltney. The subcommittee did pass on the fee for the enterprise fund.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

### **Jimmy Davis – Research:**

- Mr. Davis presented an article from “Chemical Engineering News” entitled “No Second Life” which discussed that polypropylene (recycling code - 5) is not getting recycled as much as other plastics and is used in a mass amount of items. Mr. Davis also submitted an article to the Commission with the description of each accepted plastics recycling code.

### **Linda Kaplan – Think Green:**

- Ms. Kaplan discussed the Bottle Bill further and announced to the Commission that she has been invited to speak to the Senate Committee in support of the bottle bill on behalf of a City that already has curbside recycling. One of the goals of this bill is to encourage recycling. This year’s approach will be the least cost to consumers and supporters of the bill hope that this will sway people that have rejected it in the past. Ms. Brandy Miller stated that the Tennessee Federation of Garden Clubs is in support of this bill. Tennessee Beautiful has not supported this bill in the past because it will restructure their funding. Alderman Palazzolo inquired about the house bill number which is 1167 and still in Committee. It will be presented to the Senate Environmental Committee next Tuesday, April 7, 2009. Alderman Palazzolo requested that Bo Mills and Joe Nunes keep the Commission posted on issues that may affect the Commission. Bo Mills announced that Tennessee Municipal League (TML) does not support this bill due to the detail of infrastructure it would take to make this bill happen. There is also a description that it does not allow local governments to collect any assessment or fee on deposit beverage containers. Alderman Palazzolo announced that one of the issues going on right now is that landfill percentages have to be maintained by year 2014 or 2016 meaning a decrease in landfill sizes and this might be something that the Commission would like to know more about. Bo Mills stated that the Environmental Commission is an advisory Commission to the Board of Mayor and Alderman so anything this Commission wants to represent should be voted on here and then sent by our Alderman Liaison to go to the Board for approval or recommendation and then a city plan for that particular action can be formulated by the Board. Ms. Kaplan stated that she will be attending the Senate Committee as an individual and not a member of the Environmental Commission.
- Ms. Kaplan spoke with Purchasing Officer, Lisa Piefer as an individual about the City’s usage of recycled material. Ms. Piefer reported back on everything from light bulbs to sport utility lighting, energy star appliances, HVAC energy efficient systems and having shopped the prices of recycled products. Ms. Piefer voiced her appreciation to Ms. Kaplan for bringing this to her attention.
- Ms. Kaplan informed the Commission that an event was approaching that is especially practiced in Judaism but is an interesting fact for everyone and is being celebrated environmentally this year. Every 28 years, the sun and moon come back to the exact same location at the same time and this will take place next Wednesday, April 8, 2009.

### **Susan Threlkeld – Composting/Xeriscape:**

- Ms. Threlkeld spoke with 54 Master Gardener Interns on April 1, 2009 at Lichterman Nature Center and will be speaking to a similar sized class this coming Saturday, April 4, 2009.

### **Brandy Miller – Education:**

- Ms. Miller confirmed a date with Dogwood Elementary School for April 23, 2009. This will complete the presentations at all Germantown public elementary schools.

### **Tim Sauter – Water Conservation:**

- Mr. Sauter presented an article entitled “NBA Green Week 2009”. This article announced that NBA teams will be involved in Green Week this year by wearing green uniforms and 45% organic socks. Retailers will join in with the sale of 100% organic shirts and recycled basketballs.

### **Andy Foster – Energy Use Resource Management:**

- Mr. Foster announced that he will be attending a training session on April 22 and 23, 2009 on what to do after a disaster and how to recognize the status of buildings. Training will be for both residential and commercial and will be open to anyone who wants to attend. It will be held at the MLGW Training Center on Raleigh LaGrange. The event is free of charge and Mr. Foster will email further information.

- Mr. Foster has been researching tax credits and reports back to the Commission that tax payers can receive as much as a 30% break on their taxes if they buy the correct equipment with the correct energy rating of HVAC, Water Heaters and roofing.
- Mr. Foster reported that there are more and more complaints about compact fluorescents that aren't working for extended periods of time. Mr. Foster presented a New York Times article entitled "Do Bulbs Save Energy If They Don't Work?" This article states that due to the government pushing energy saving bulbs, companies began creating them to meet demands without having done enough testing and bulbs have a huge failure rate. This article stated that 11% of bulbs sold are fluorescent and because of the failure rate, people are beginning to backlash. Energy Star has failed 29 different brands of bulbs because of poor manufacturing. There is also concern that companies are adding more mercury than is being recorded and bulbs are not being disposed of correctly meaning more mercury in landfills.

**Alderman Palazzolo:**

- Alderman Palazzolo discussed a couple of periodicals that he has received called "Nation Cities Weekly" and "American City and County". Both these periodicals had some interesting articles and cover stories focusing on sustainability and clean water. Alderman Palazzolo stated that these issues are gaining momentum.
- Alderman Palazzolo requested that if the Commission members have any local businesses through the Tennessee Economic Development Commission that they look into some of the Tennessee energy grants available to convert to solar power or make lighting more energy efficient. This would be directed more towards local smaller businesses and anyone interested can get more information and a co-sponsor through our Economic Community Development Office.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

- Chairman Skelley suggested a newer version of "The Dirty Rotten Truth". Ms. Miller suggested that the Commission request the Mayor and Alderman to fund the video. Ms. Threlkeld suggested that the video may also be directed towards older children and adults. Mr. Sauter discussed how to divide recyclables and what the process of that was and the option of adding that into the video.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no further business to be brought before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 7:35 p.m.