



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 1, 2018 – 6:00 p.m.

Public Works Building
7700 Southern Avenue

MINUTES

Present:

Chairman Joe Skelley
Urania Erskine
Andy Foster
Linda Kaplan
Francoise Mireles
Alderman Dean Massey
Scott Schoefernacker
Susan Threlkeld
Jayu Wagh

Staff:

Bo Mills
Kathy Cross
Joe Nunes

Absent:

Jimmy Davis
Kevin Haley

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.

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES:

The approval of the February minutes was postponed until our April meeting due to requested edits.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

We had no guests.

COMMENTS BY CHAIRMAN:

ALDERMAN LIAISON REPORT:

Alderman Massey shared about the Parks Master Plan held on February 28th. The cost is about \$70 million over ten to twenty years. Some things the Environmental Commission would like to know is that there will be some removal of concrete in the form of tennis courts in different locations and relocating them to other locations. For example, the tennis courts at the Germantown Great Hall would be replaced with green



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space and moved to where the soccer complex is currently located off of C.D. Smith Road near Cloyes Park. The goal will be to create one big park from the Germantown Horseshow Park all the way to Cloyes Park; we are trying to create some walk-ability there. Some of the things taking place at the Horseshow Park that might concern the Commission would be the removal of some of the May Woods trees. As part of that process, they are looking to do some renovations to the creek bed, so we could look at how we handle some of the water routes as we make the changes to the parks. We are looking at possibly purchasing some land previously designated as some of the Forest Hill Small Area Plan, where the Watermark Apartments go, just across Crestwyn Hills Drive. It is approximately 45 acres there they are looking to turn into a soccer complex rather than 70 residential homes, 300 apartment units and office space. The entire Master Park Plan is contingent upon the purchase of this land and moving some of the existing soccer fields to this new location, so the acquisition of this land will probably be the first step of the plan. There will also be a water retention basin there to hold some stormwater run-off. Director Mills added that something he found interesting was the Municipal Square concept to make Municipal Park the "City's" park and the City's gathering place. Alderman Massey shared that the Municipal Park area should get greener, possibly with multiple pavilions in the park, an amphitheatre, in addition to the GPAC amphitheatre, are planned to enable multiple stages set up for entertainment that might come to Germantown for events such as Fourth of July. Mrs. Mireles attended the meeting also and added that it was a nice presentation. She shared that it would be a lot of improvement for the City and that one such improvement could possibly be the expansion of the Greenway to create a loop around the whole City. Director Mills shared that this was a long process of talking to citizens, talking to stakeholders that had a part of activities, leagues, Charity Horseshow, Germantown Festival, Oktoberfest, and also emailed surveys to citizens that were used this information to build this plan. The plan is not perfect and it might change, but we need a target. The point that we have not invested our capital money back into our parks as we should have drew the attention of Director Mills. We are behind Brentwood, Collierville and even the National Parks & Recreation standards. If we want to keep our parks and keep them nice, we have to invest back into them. Our biggest challenge is a funding source. The new purchased land would have a ten field across and four fields up above facility that are regulation size. We could possibly link with Mike Rose Soccer Complex to do some overflow with them. Some fields could possibly have artificial turf to make availability better. The desire for adult softball, and "pickle" ball is rising and we have an eighteen hole disc golf course that people come from all over the country to play.

Alderman Massey answered Mrs. Wagh's question about the construction of the new school at Poplar Pike and Forest Hill Irene Road. Alderman Massey replied that the school will be there and they will be widening the road. The property next to it, the Reeves Property, will most likely be a residential development. Director Mills added that the new water tower is still planned to be located at the new school site. A tank out east would have the gravity pressure required to balance the system and enable us to shut down the Southern Avenue tank if necessary and still have enough elevated water to supply the needs of the City.



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STAFF REPORTS:

Joe Nunes:

Mr. Nunes reported on the monthly solid waste volume reports. Our recycling volume year to date is down slightly, about 7%. Our household trash is about even, down about .5% year to date. That is a good thing with the improving economy, that more purchases and more trash. As consumers as we use more home delivery, cardboard waste increases. The cardboard receptacle in front of the Economic and Community Development (ECD) building fills quickly after it is emptied. Yard debris is up 23% over last year.

Fluctuations in nature, weather and rain, can create more leaves and create more debris; this was a good year for trees and leaves. This poses a challenge in budget estimates as we look forward. ECD has an operational objective to reduce overall the amount of household trash picked up and increasing recycling volume. The target is 1,980 pounds per household per year, which equates to 460 pounds per quarter per household. Currently approximately 18% of our total diverted waste is strictly recycling which is about average. Mr. Nunes provided graphs comparing the first two quarters of this year to the last two fiscal years. The graphs show a slight decrease in household trash volume which is part of the goal and recycling is down year to date. Our goal is 110 pounds on average per quarter but this isn't always reflected because there are fewer days in the third quarter because of less days. We are up significantly from two years ago. One of the challenges in the solid waste world is how to measure recycling. Waste based goals are becoming more of a challenge because of packaging changes, lighter weight packaging, and newsprint is down considerably, so the weight of solid waste is declining. Tennessee Department of Environment Conservation (TDEC) sponsored a conference this week in Chattanooga. They brought people from across the country for this summit called "Measurement Matters". Their goal is to look at how we measure the success of recycling and diversion and other things. It will be interesting to see the outcome of the summit. Part of our effort is applying for a substantial education and outreach grant; we have not received official notification from the State but we anticipate receiving that grant. We have money in the budget to match the grant for education about the proper materials to place in the recycle carts. The crack down on recycling contamination by the Chinese National Sword has brought awareness across the country about contaminates. Mr. Nunes feels confident that we are bringing good material to our recycling facility. Nashville did a waste characterization study to look at their solid waste and recycling to see what materials are coming in and what the number one contaminates are. Mr. Nunes will share more about that next month.

There will be a new electronic waste vendor at our upcoming Amnesty Day from Nashville, S3 Recycling Solutions.

Director Mills:

Director Mills shared that we have been repairing an average of 300 potholes a day. In 33 years of service, this has been the worst year Mr. Mills can remember as far as potholes. If you see a pothole, call Kathy Cross in Public Works to report it.

Director Mills provided handouts summarizing what services are provided by Germantown Public Works. On the handout entitled "Germantown Public Works Department", services we provide are outlined.



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Streets and signs are a large part of Public Works; pothole repair, street paving, utility cut repairs, monthly street sweeping in designated areas, as well as regulatory and road identification signs.

Our stormwater service consists of two crews that strictly work on stormwater appurtenances; the curb inlets and inlets in yards, the pipes that lead from those, the larger pipes that collect those and the concrete lined or urban ditches that the larger pipes empty into are all maintained by those crews. We have to have an extensive stormwater system in our hill and valley city. In order to keep stormwater inlets clear, stormwater crews are responsible for the seasonal removal of leaves that naturally fall into the street. Of the 3500 inlets in the City, we have only had one stoppage this year.

Water distribution to the City, maintenance of the water treatment plants, servicing the fire hydrants, and maintenance of the service lines and meters that supply Germantown homes are all provided by the Public Works Department.

We collect the sanitary sewage, but have a long term Evergreen Agreement with the City of Memphis to process and treat it. We collect the sewage, get it to the outfall lines and then it is taken to Memphis where it is processed and eventually discharged into the Mississippi River after it meets standards. Collection is a big part, but our agreement with Memphis is huge. We don't have sewage treatment facilities in Germantown and we don't have to maintain them. We did the right thing by working with Memphis and paying them annually to take care of our sewage.

Public Works has people on call twenty-four hours a day for emergencies for various services to include tree and debris removal from streets and ditches, water treatment plant repairs, and sanitary sewer.

Examples of services that we don't provide are Vector Control (mosquitoes, rodents, etc.), which is provided by the Shelby County Health Department (901-222-9715); residents pay \$.75 fee per month on their MLGW electric bills for this service. In our City, we fund approximately \$120,000 per year for Vector Control to provide the service.

Solid waste is provided by the Neighborhood Services Department headed by Joe Nunes. Electricity and natural gas are provided by Memphis Light, Gas and Water. Sidewalks in our city belong to the homeowner and homeowners are responsible for repairing and maintaining the sidewalk in front of their home. The City has a right-of-way with the road that might include the sidewalk, but years ago when our city was founded it was decided the sidewalk would be part of the home. Joe Nunes added that Code Compliance will come and make orange x's on sidewalks that are not up to Germantown's code. The homeowner will have 90 days to make repairs before the City moves to make repairs and bill the homeowner.

The Germantown Animal Shelter is here to enforce animal-related ordinances. It is not about wildlife, but about domestic animals, mostly dogs and cats. When we receive reports about loose animals, our goal is to catch and return animals to their owners and we have a great track record. For animals that we can't return to their owners, we get them checked out by a vet and they become adoptable animals. We have about a 93% - 94% adoption rate. Our shelter is one of the best run shelters in the country and really is a success story! The Shelter provides emergency services for bite cases and injured animal pick-up. Large wildlife removal is provided by Shelby County.



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The second handout is just information about various services and frequently asked questions pertaining to Public Works.

Public Works does contract out about half of our services. It is good to have competition and diverse application of our services. We have 70 employees in Public Works and with contracted employees that brings in many more. There is always a City staff member present with contractors. We contract out street sweeping, major paving, mowing and landscaping. We try to do our best to do manage competition review and if the service is better provided by private sector, we will contract private sector.

COMMISSION MEMBER REPORTS:

Urania Erskine:

Mrs. Erskine shared that while visiting a small village in Austria, she discovered that their garbage carts are twice the size of our 96 gallon carts and get picked up only once a month. The cost of that service is \$950 a year. They also have a biological cart that is dumped and worked with tractors. The cost has to be high and they have to do biological recycling with any food waste because there is limited space. If there is anything extra to be collected the cost is exorbitant.

Susan Threlkeld:

Mrs. Threlkeld spoke about two tours she along with other Commission members went on. One was the Republic MRF (Material Recycling Facility) tour. Mrs. Threlkeld and others joined the Tennessee Recycling Coalition for \$25 and lunch was provided. The second tour was a tobacco packaging plant.

The group toured a tobacco facility where tobacco is processed and packaged for chewing tobacco and snuff. The facility was very modern and clean. After putting on hair nets and removing jewelry, they were allowed to walk around and tour the plant. It was fascinating watching the cans and lids spin around to get oriented on the apparatus to package the tobacco. Any parts of the tobacco that can't be used are taken to a facility in Kentucky to be composted.

The recycling facility they toured is now single stream as opposed to dual stream as it was on a previous visit; everything gets mixed together and then has to be separated. Things that won't go up the conveyer because of size or shape eventually have to be manually removed. Tours are available upon request during daytime hours. The tour is limited to ten people because there are only two tour guides and only five people can safely be on each tour. Participants are required to wear hard hats and bright yellow vests. One of the problems they experience is people including blades from lawnmowers with their recyclables. Although metal is recyclable, it isn't good for their machines; there is metal recycling dumpster they put those into. People also include items such as lawnmower batteries that have to be removed from the stream. A magnet attracts metal cans and aluminum cans get blown into another area. Glass gets crushed and drops through the conveyer with air blowing off any leftover paper. When sorting plastics, a laser is used to sort the plastic. Plastic containers that aren't clean, such as peanut butter jars, go into the trash as well as water or juice bottles that still have liquid in them. Tops on bottles don't pose a problem, but tops that aren't attached go into the trash. Inspectors come into the plants to choose bundles to be inspected. If there is too



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much contamination, they will reject the recyclables and not purchase them. There was a vehicle from Marion, Arkansas at the facility bringing their recyclables also. The land and facility is owned by the City of Memphis and operated by Republic. It is an expensive process and if Memphis decided not to provide the service we might not have any recourse. Germantown accepts recyclables 1 – 7, but not 3 and 6. It is actually 1 and 2 that are the most valuable. Germantown has never had a load of recyclables rejected. Andy Foster added that crushed aluminum cans can't be blown from the conveyer and don't get sorted properly.

Scott Schoefernacker:

Mr. Schoefernacker has been looking into the remediation or annual investigation of Collierville's Carrier Plant and Water Treatment Plant #2. The water treatment plant is shut down due to Trichloroethene (TCE) and chromium contamination and has been shut down a while. They have been pumping the well to draw the contaminants to it. Next week they will be drilling three additional wells deep into the Memphis Sand downgrading from the site to see if the contaminants have gone past the water treatment plant production wells. If contaminants have gone past the plant, the next stop is Germantown's Johnson Road well field. Right now it seems that the contaminants have not reached the lower parts of the Memphis Sand. Maybe by this summer the wells will be drilled and samples taken to report on. This information is from Tennessee Department of Environmental & Conservation.

Linda Kaplan:

Mrs. Kaplan shared an article from the Washington Post concerning Fitzgerald Glider Kits – new truck bodies, called gliders, which house refurbished engines; they have created some controversy. Experts now are questioning "the methodology and accuracy" of the industry-funded test. Phillip Oldham, Tennessee Tech's president along with the head of the school's Center for Intelligent Mobility supported the petition to withdraw a 2016 rule requiring that gliders comply with the same pollution limits as new heavy-duty trucks. Oldham wrote in a recent letter to the EPA stating that "knowledgeable experts within the University have questioned the methodology and accuracy of the report" on the trucks' performance. The school "is investigating an allegation of research misconduct related to the study," he added. They found that the old truck engines installed in these trucks emit anywhere from 20-40 times as much nitrogen oxides and soot than trucks with new engines. You are getting a new truck with an old engine, and some companies are laying claim to their money. The University president has conceded the point to the EPA that the gliders sold in a single year would generate pollution over their lifetime that could result in between 350 and 1,600 deaths and could generate between \$1.5 billion and \$11 billion in related public health situations. The glider study was sponsored by Fitzgerald, the nation's biggest glider manufacturer, and was conducted at a Fitzgerald facility. The company's connection to the university also extended to that research center, which soon will be housed in a new facility built by Fitzgerald.

Francoise Mireles:

Mrs. Mireles shared about a new trend in Europe and starting in the United States in pesticides. Pesticides are usually chemicals created to get rid of pests. There are two different types, pesticides used for sanitation and public health, such as killing mosquitoes which can transmit diseases such as West Nile



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Virus or Zika, and killing roaches in restaurants and hospitals for sanitation purposes. There are pesticides used mostly in agriculture to help plants grow and be healthy to promote the food supply chain. Second, there are pesticides for more agricultural uses such as park and recreation and public spaces around cities. In France, a law was passed in 2014 banning the use of any chemical pesticides in public spaces. The law actually took effect on January 1, 2018. All the park and recreation departments in France, for the past four years, have been working on substitutions to keep public parks and public spaces looking nice without the use of chemicals. Interestingly enough, they have been doing a great job! They have been using biological pesticides and integrated pest management. Integrated pest management is looking at the overall eco system and using bio-control, for example, using lady bug larvae which eat aphids to control aphids on many flowers and plants. There are ways to control pests in nature by using some of the means nature came gave us. For managing weeds on sidewalks or walkways, France is using steamers or torch blowers to burn the weeds instead of herbicides. The trend of using alternatives to pesticides is expanding all over Europe and is in review in the whole European Union to pass laws similar to the law passed in France. The U.S. seems to be catching up somewhat. There are many cities, such as the District of Columbia, where they have passed ordinances restricting the use of toxic pesticides around schools and public parks. Other cities, such as Portland, Seattle, Anchorage, San Juan Capistrano, Carlsbad, and Malibu restrict the use of pesticides or prohibit them completely. These cities are trying to be environmentally responsible and really trying to use sustainable policies banning the use of pesticides. At the Park Master Plan meeting, they were speaking about the National Recreation and Park Association's (NRPA) survey published in October 2017 concerning park and recreation departments trying to move to more organic management of their parks. One example was Durango, Colorado, where following public pressure, they decided to go organic in most of their public parks. They basically went "cold turkey", and this really isn't the way to go. The citizens of Durango weren't educated as to what this would really mean, and suddenly the soccer fields were filled with dandelions and had very little grass. This was a realization for the people that "cold turkey" wasn't the way to go. NRPA surveyed 400 park and recreation agencies; 76% of them indicated controlling invasive plants with less toxic means than in the past, 67% indicated following sustainable turf management practices, and 66% said they were following integrated pest management practices by reducing the use of pesticides and trying to use more biological means to control pests.

Jayu Wagh:

Mrs. Wagh shared that she read about plastic bags made from roots that dissolve in water. They are even safe for areas with fish. She feels that it would be smarter to go back to cloth or paper sacks and glass bottles to create less waste.

OLD BUSINESS

No old business.

NEW BUSINESS

Commission members were asked to sign up for the upcoming Amnesty Day to take place on April 21, 2018.



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ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:33 p.m.