

**ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MEETING
February 4, 2010 6 PM
MUNICIPAL CENTER**

MINUTES

Present

Chairman Joe Skelley
Susan Threlkeld
Andy Foster
Clyde Davidson
Dr. Jimmy Davis

Linda Kaplan
Urania Erskine
Judith Goden
David Thorpe

Staff

Bo Mills
Tim Bierdz
Juanita Bell
Joe Nunes
Alderman Palazzolo

Visitor

Ken Adams

Absent: Brandy Miller

CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Joe Skelley called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW MEMBERS AND GUESTS:

The Commission welcomes Judith Goden. Ms. Goden is a retired United States Postal Services Inspector. The Commission welcomes Urania Erskine. Ms. Erskine is an empty nester who enjoys gardening and is interested in environmental issues. The Commission welcomes Ken Adams as a recurring visitor.

MINUTES APPROVAL:

The minutes of the December 3, 2009 meeting of the Environmental Commission were unanimously approved. Note: The January 7, 2010 meeting of the Environmental Commission was cancelled due to icy roadways.

ELECTION OF VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COMMISSION:

Andy Foster was nominated, seconded and approved unanimously.

STAFF REPORTS:

Joe Nunes:

Mr. Nunes reported that during and after the January ice storm, approximately 6,000 to 7,000 cubic yards of yard waste will be collected. This number greatly exceeds the average pick-up for the month. Mr. Nunes reported that recycling for January is down 13% from last January and down 5% fiscal year to date. Our average volume per working day was down 9%. One of the larger reasons for the decline is that paper makes up most of the weight in the recycling volume and newspapers have decreased in size. Mrs. Threlkeld – Is there an increase in regular trash pick-up? Mr. Nunes – There is not. The numbers are pretty close to what they were last year. Mr. Nunes announced that the extension with the solid waste contractors (All-Star and Michael's Tree and Loader) has been approved for one year. Ms. Kaplan – Are there any incentives for recycling? Mr. Nunes – Yes. There is a company called Recycle Bank that partners with Allied Waste to give credits for the amount recycled. Credits can be designated to charities or given as gift cards. That service is not currently available in Tennessee. Ms. Threlkeld – How much more expensive is it to recycle than to dump in a landfill? Mr. Nunes – It varies. Currently the price for landfill is \$31.85 per ton and recycling is \$13.00 per ton. This does not include the additional collection charge on either."

Bo Mills:

Mr. Mills advised the Commission of the responsibilities of Public Services. Public Services divisions includes Grounds Maintenance which maintains all of the public areas, including 26 athletic fields, right-of-ways and 222,000 square feet of flower beds and Parks maintenance. The Street Maintenance division maintains all the curbs and gutters, street signs (both street name signs and regulatory), drainage systems, storm inlets and ditches. The Water Production division consists of two water plants and is responsible for potable drinking water as well as irrigations, fire suppression and sewer collection. Animal Control is the final division and they control and maintain Germantown pets. The Animal Control division reported 226 adoptions last year, returned 119 pets back to their owners and removed 215 dead animals. Many of these functions effect the Environment, specifically the Grounds Maintenance division. Bo Mills reported that the Wolf River Blvd project which will connect Kimbrough over to the old Farmington/Wolf River Blvd interchange will be bid out in the coming months. This project will be a 25 million dollar project and should take about 3 years.

Tim Bierdz:

Mr. Bierdz updated the Commission on the stormwater fee which will be city-wide, based on the gross area and used to fund operations for storm drains, drain repair and street cleaning. The EPA has new federal guidelines and permits which may force us to test the water in streams and rivers for run-off pollutants. We are classified as a Phase II MS4 program which designates what guidelines we must follow. The final and 3rd reading will be Monday, February 8th.

Ms. Erskine – Where will the funds that have been previously spent go?

Mr. Mills – The funds can only be used for stormwater. Our new permit will force us to do more so all monies will be spent on drainage.

Alderman Palazzolo – Joe Skelley has represented and participated in stakeholder meetings going over rate appropriation. On the 3rd reading, all residents can come and speak on any item.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:**Jimmy Davis – Research:**

Dr. Davis reported that the H1N1 pandemic has picked up again and doesn't seem to follow any patterns.

Andy Foster – Energy Use Resource Management:

Mr. Foster announced that Volkswagen has recently produced a vehicle that supposedly gets 258 miles to the gallon. It will be a single person vehicle and priced around \$25,000. The car should be released sometime next year.

David Thorpe – Air Quality:

Mr. Thorpe reported to the Commission that we are back in attainment. They have raised the standards once more which may cause us to drop from attainment next time. Memphis pollution continues to decline over the past 15 years.

Mr. Thorpe informed the Commission of the study performed by TVA on housing efficiency. In this study, 3 homes were built. One of the homes was of standard efficiency, the 2nd was identical to the first except they retrofitted it with the most efficient appliances and the 3rd home was built from the ground up to be as efficient as possible. The utility bills for the standard home were average while the 2nd home were 1/3 less and the 3rd home were 2/3 less.

Susan Threlkeld – Composting/Xeriscape:

Ms. Threlkeld announced that she will be talking to the Bartlett Garden Club about composting next week.

Linda Kaplan – Think Green:

Ms. Kaplan discussed rescheduling the Eco Expo that was cancelled last month due to inclement weather.

Ms. Kaplan advised the Commission of a large conference downtown regarding the Mississippi River. The conference will be multi-focus, much of it green oriented and will be scheduled sometime in September.

Clyde Davidson:

Mr. Davidson reported that there is a proposal to put turbines into the Mississippi River to create electricity.

NEW BUSINESS:

Linda Kaplan discussed "Earth Hour" which will be celebrated on March 27th and encouraged Germantown to promote this event. "Earth Hour" is celebrated world-wide and involves turning off all electric appliances for one hour.

Chairman Skelley filled vacancies on committees by adding Urania Erskine to Stormwater and Judith Goden to Water Conservation.

Susan Threlkeld recommended a Germantown home that was built state of the art 25 years ago for energy conservation. All bathrooms have natural light and there are 4 wells installed. Would the Commission be interested in touring?

Chairman Skelley said we would look to schedule in warmer weather.

Mike Palazzolo discussed with the Commission that the City was awarded an energy block grant for part of the economic recovery plan for about \$166,000. \$130,000 was allotted to placing LED lights into traffic signals. Although premature, \$30,000 has to be earmarked for sustainability as part of the grant and there has been discussion of forming a green counsel as part of this grant which may be something this Commission may be able to be a large part of.

Andy Foster inquired as to what events were coming up?

Amnesty Dumpster Day is April 17th.

ADJOURNMENT:

The Commission adjourned at 7:20 p.m.