

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MEETING

May 5, 2011 6 PM

MUNICIPAL CENTER

MINUTES

Present

Chairman Skelley
Susan Threlkeld
Brandy Miller
Linda Kaplan

Clyde Davidson
Moya Fulbright-Dent
Urania Erskine
Alderman Palazzolo

Staff

Joe Nunes
Bo Mills
Juanita Bell

Absent: Dr. Jimmy Davis, Andy Foster, David Thorpe

CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Skelley called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW MEMBERS AND GUESTS:

The Commission welcomes Wade Morgan, Chief Planner and Jonathan Smith, Traffic Engineer for their presentation. The Commission also welcomes our regular guest, Ken Adams.

MINUTES APPROVAL:

The minutes of the April 2011 meeting were approved with one correction to Joe's report.

BICYCLE FACILITIES PLAN PRESENTED BY WADE MORGAN AND JONATHAN SMITH:

Mr. Morgan and Mr. Smith came before the Commission for a recommendation for approval of the Germantown Bicycle Facilities Plan. Mr. Morgan passed around a map of the existing bike routes throughout Germantown and the proposed bike routes to be implemented throughout the next few years. The original trails were created in the 70's to connect parks, schools and neighborhoods and are approximately 25 miles in length. In the 90's and 00' the Greenway was developed, providing more open space for recreation and exercise. The newly proposed bike route will connect Germantown to Memphis and Collierville. The Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) includes our facilities into their planning. Also, we will be updating design standards, widening lanes, painting symbols in lanes to notify drivers and updating new and existing paths. In 2011, we have proposed the Wolf River Boulevard extension, Greenway (east to Collierville), segments along Nonconnah Creek and areas along Germantown Road and Wolf River Boulevard (leading into Memphis).

Mr. Smith reported that safety, at this point, is key as well as educating residents. The goal is within 5-10 years to promote recreational and commuter transportation. Regionally, more people are using bicycles, taking buses or carpooling. MATA has even gone as far as to add bike racks to their buses. There are still some issues with the larger intersections and we are trying to avoid major roadways like Poplar Avenue. We are currently installing an intersection for bicyclers at Poplar and Oakleigh. There are places that we will be able to widen the lanes to 5 feet. Educating the drivers will be a large job and a subcommittee may be appointed to educate both the cyclist and motor vehicle drivers. We will be trying to change the perceptions of cyclists and ensure they obey the same laws as motor vehicle drivers. Detection cameras will be put into place at intersections that will pick up cyclists. We are able to add space to the bike lane along Exeter but there are areas where the 5 foot bike lane isn't yet available. Restriping will be in conjunction to Public Services. The addition of lanes will be a Capital Program Project to connect to the Memphis bike lane.

Ms. Erskine – Will we be encouraging businesses to have bike racks?

Mr. Morgan – Yes, we will be adding to City facilities and promoting with businesses.

Ms. Threlkeld – If a bike lane is in front of your house, does it restrict parking?

Mr. Smith – There are no regulations restricting parking.

Ms. Miller – Will there be community bikes?

Mr. Morgan – Possibly in the future, as demands rise

Alderman Palazzolo – Is adding a bike path considered roadwork or will it be a different CIP project?

Mr. Mills – It's a slow process but eventually funds will be designated specifically for bike paths.

Alderman Palazzolo – We may want to look at a "pay in lieu of" for bike purposes

Chairman Skelley – What is the timetable on this?

Mr. Morgan – We will be going before the BMA in August or September and will hopefully approved by Fall or end of the year. Once a plan is in place, we can apply federal funds. This will be a long range plan to begin immediately.

Chairman Skelley – There is currently a good loop around Germantown Middle and Elementary but Germantown High and Houston High is lacking.

Mr. Smith – We are working towards that but traffic and road limits make it difficult. We are working with areas around Germantown High currently but are just unsure.

Ms. Kaplan – Are existing bike routes on website?

Mr. Morgan – Yes, bike routes are available online but we need to update. The color coordinating type plan is still in progress with a few preliminary routes.

Ms. Erskine made the motion to approve and Ms. Fulbright-Dent made the second motion. Commission approved unanimously.

STAFF REPORTS:

Bo Mills:

Mr. Mills reported on the flooding last week. The Greenway was affected and parts of it are still closed with hopes of being opened by the weekend. All City parks are open. There was no property structure flooding. Wolf River Boulevard was closed for 15 hours.

Mr. Mills invited the Commission to the annual Public Services Cookout which will be held Wednesday, May 18th at 11:30 at the Tanner Pavilion to celebrate National Public Works Week.

Joe Nunes:

Mr. Nunes reported that the BMA approved the Solid Waste Agreement. Residents will receive a mailer with information on a new program in the coming week. Please fill out this information and get it back as soon as possible. Residents will be able to reply via mail-in card, call or online.

Mr. Nunes reported that recycle volume is holding steady.

Mr. Nunes reported on Amnesty Dumpster Day. There were in excess of 700 cars and trucks at Johnson and we recycled nine tons of televisions. Shred-It had a large volume but some of that was due to non Germantown residents being able to use it. We had two full roll-off containers full of scrap metal and are looking into offering curbside scrap metal recycling.

Alderman Palazzolo:

Alderman Palazzolo announced a Mover Program that 8th graders are holding tonight. Also, there is a Sustainable Communities Conference being held. Anyone can attend and sign up online for the newsletter at www.sustainabledubuque.org.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Brandy Miller – Education:

Ms. Miller had nothing to report. Ms. Miller did announce that she is not having much luck getting into Dogwood.

Linda Kaplan – Think Green:

Ms. Kaplan reported that there is a new store opening up on Winchester called ReStore which will come pick up reusable items.

Ms. Kaplan reported that the annual Cycle the Greenway will be held June 5th and will be sponsored by Temple Israel and City of Germantown.

Ms. Kaplan reported that a new iPhone app debuted that allows easy access to site specific outages and account information for MLGW. Also, MLGW invested 81 million dollars into strengthening its system against potential earthquake damage.

Ms. Kaplan announced that an Eco Fair will be held at the Agri Center for 4th and 5th graders from Charter School and Sunnyville Elementary School of Brownsville.

Susan Threlkeld – Composting/Xeriscape:

Ms. Threlkeld reported that she will be giving a presentation at the Garden Club on April 21st. Twenty-one members are scheduled to attend.

Urania Erskine – Storms/Wetlands/Sanitary Sewer:

Ms. Erskine had nothing to report

Clyde Davidson – Storm/Wetlands/Sanitary Sewer:

Mr. Davidson had nothing to report

Moya Fulbright-Dent – Water Conservation:

Ms. Fulbright-Dent introduced a website called www.naturesvoice-ourchoice.org which is a website giving information on water conservation.

OLD BUSINESS:

Chairman Skelley thanked everyone who attended and worked Amnesty Day.

NEW BUSINESS:

Mr. Mills reminded the Commission about the May 18th Public Works cook-out.

ADJOURNMENT:

The Commission adjourned at 7:05 p.m.