

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MEETING

May 6, 2010 6 PM
MUNICIPAL CENTER

MINUTES

Present

Chairman Joe Skelley
Susan Threlkeld
Andy Foster
Clyde Davidson

Linda Kaplan
David Thorpe
Urania Erskine

Staff

Bo Mills
Joe Nunes
Juanita Bell
Tim Bierdz
Alderman Palazzolo

Visitor

Ken Adams

Absent: Brandy Miller, Dr. Jimmy Davis, Judith Goden

CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Joe Skelley called the meeting to order at 6:05 PM in the Round Room at City Hall. The meeting was moved due to the BMA Workshop going over.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW MEMBERS AND GUESTS:

The Commission welcomes Ken Adams as a recurring visitor.

MINUTES APPROVAL:

The minutes of the April 1, 2010 meeting were approved.

STAFF REPORTS:

Tim Bierdz:

Mr. Bierdz announced that the stormwater fee was delayed until June.

Mr. Bierdz reported that during recent storms, the Wolf River rose to 24.02 feet. There have been some gauge peaks that have exceeded these in the past few years. On March 14, 1975 the Wolf River rose to 27.9 feet, on March 14, 1984 the River rose to 27 feet and on December 1, 2001 the level rose to 24 feet. There was also one report of damage in a home which proved that Germantown is well ahead of most cities in preparations and building standards.

Bo Mills:

Mr. Mills further explained that development standards require parking lots to be 12', curbs to be 18' and building slabs to be 30' above the 100 year flood plain. These standards prevented major flooding.

Mr. Mills discussed the Malcolm Baldrige Award is America's highest honor for efficiency, innovation, performance, quality, and customer oriented excellence. There is a public sector award which Germantown is applying for. The awards are presented by the President. Part of the work that this Commission does will be involved in this submission over the course of this year. Some past winners have been FedEx, Cadillac Motor Company and Honeywell. The only City that has received this award thus far is Coral Springs, FL. If we don't win it, this will still be a great exercise for the City. Part of this application is looking at our "green initiatives". Beginning tomorrow morning we will be a part of a new committee documenting things that the City is doing or is capable of doing to further those initiatives.

Mr. Mills reported that the Memphis Shelby County Health Department invited local cities to an informational session to hear their plans on this upcoming year on mosquitoes, rodent control, rabies and any other type of vector control activities. This service, furnished by the Health Department, is included in the \$.75 monthly charge you pay to MLGW.

Joe Nunes:

Mr. Nunes reported that there will be a decrease of \$.40 in the monthly sanitation fee in FY11.

Mr. Nunes distributed the report from Amnesty Day which showed an increase in total vehicles, a 90% increase in Shred-It and a 20% increase in scrap metal recycling equaling a 2 ton increase and 29% on electronic recycling.

Mr. Nunes reported that recycle volume is down slightly this year from last year. The volume per day is only down slightly as well.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Alderman Palazzolo:

Alderman Palazzolo apologized for missing recent meetings and also mentioned that Franklin, TN won a similar grant as the Green Council and we may want to gain information from them. Alderman Palazzolo also thanked Joe Skelley for his participation at Mulch Day.

Susan Threlkeld – Composting/Xeriscape:

Ms. Threlkeld had nothing to report

Urania Erskine – Storms/Wetlands/Sanitary Sewer:

Ms. Erskine mentioned the creation of a dog waste brochure and will meet with Tim Bierdz to further discuss. Ms. Erskine brought an article regarding Britain's practice of charging per bag of trash rather than per barrel. Also, National Geographic's April magazine entitled, "Water Our Thirsty World" discusses the shortage of water throughout the world.

Joe Nunes reported that there was a presentation at the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation's Solid Waste Conference which introduced RFID (radio frequency identification) for garbage carts and how some cities are using "Pay as you throw" programs which is equitable and increases recycling. I have spoke with out solid waste collection company and he said one of the main problems is the scales which are very high maintenance and costly. There are some lower cost solutions that we will continue to look into.

Ms. Erskine – There are other nations that use low-cost and low tech systems in which you go to your municipality and purchase specific bags and if your trash is not in the bags, it doesn't get picked up.

Linda Kaplan – Joe, Do you think residents would be willing to take trash out to curb versus the back door?

Joe Nunes – The cost doesn't vary that much in street side pick-up versus back door pick-up. In future contracts, we will do street surveys in coming weeks but we estimate 25-30% residents take trash to curb.

David Thorpe – Air Quality:

Mr. Thorpe reported that the ozone season began on May 1st. We had our first exceedence today. In the past, our ozone layer limit was .006 ppb (parts per billion) and our current ozone limit is .0076. The prediction is that it may continue to lower, making it more difficult to stay in attainment.

Andy Foster – Energy Use Resource Management:

Mr. Foster had nothing to report.

Clyde Davidson:

Mr. Davidson had nothing to report.

Linda Kaplan – Think Green:

Ms. Kaplan discussed "Cycle the Greenway" which will be held June 6, 2010 and is co-sponsored by Germantown.

Bo Mills reported that Poplar Estates Park will re-open tomorrow and the Greenway is scheduled to re-open next week following flood restoration.

Ms. Kaplan presented a document from the Hanleywood Update which discussed propane energy. Propane projects are scheduled to rise in 2010 is has been proposed as cleaner than gasoline.

Ms. Kaplan visited a Los Angeles Farmer's Market recently and received a brochure about a local company selling and leasing solar panels. Leasing panels is a recent and possibly more inviting option.

Ms. Kaplan announced that the EcoExpo went well with 55 exhibitors and 400+ attendees. Ken and Judy assisted with Water Conservation.

OLD BUSINESS:

Chairman Skelley inquired if we can make Amnesty Day any better for next year.

Mr. Nunes is hoping to avoid scheduling of games on the same day as Amnesty Day to avoid back-up and possible order more roll-offs to assist.

Andy Foster questioned if there were an excess of sinkholes due to storms.

Mr. Mills stated that the reports on sinkholes were not excessive.

ADJOURNMENT:

The Commission adjourned at 7:00 p.m.