

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MEETING
September 2, 2010 6 PM
MUNICIPAL CENTER

MINUTES

Present

Chairman Joe Skelley	Brandy Miller
Susan Threlkeld	Linda Kaplan
Dr. Jimmy Davis	Urania Erskine
Clyde Davidson	David Thorpe
Andy Foster	Sandra Hayne

Staff

Bo Mills
Tim Bierdz
Juanita Bell

Absent: Judith Goden

CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Joe Skelley called the meeting to order at 6:05 PM.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW MEMBERS AND GUESTS:

The Commission welcomes Ken Adams as a recurring visitor.

MINUTES APPROVAL:

The minutes of the August meeting were approved.

STAFF REPORTS:

Bo Mills:

Mr. Mills discussed the new initiatives that are coming into place due to the Malcolm Baldrige assessment. One of the triple bottom line measurements is sustainability, specifically environmental sustainability. Patrick has charged us, as City staff, to look at Greenhouse Gas emissions, Water Quality, Air Quality, Solid Waste and our Stormwater program. We will look for numerical data to support all of these functions. We have hired a consultant to do our carbon footprint. I will focus on water quality and the water process from the time we pull it from the ground until we distribute it to residents. David and I were just discussing air quality. Mr. Lawton desires for us to have a monthly monitoring of the air quality of our City and how we could improve on that. Mr. Mills reported that last Thursday, August 26th, Public Services received a call from a construction company doing some work in the Nottoway Subdivision. The construction company couldn't get the water turned off. An internal pipe associated with their approved well had burst and they needed to make repairs to that line. They turned the well off but the water didn't shut off. After speaking to the original builder, it turns out the one connection to the City water was never severed and the City water was flowing into this subdivision with the water of an unapproved well. There was the possibility of untreated water getting into a treated water system. We contacted the Health Department, Shelby County Well Maintenance and the State Department of Environment and Conservation. Several things worked in our favor. The City's water pressure is 12-15 lbs higher than the water coming from the well. So, even if the well was running, it's very unlikely that it pushed water out into our system. Secondly, that well had been monitored by the Shelby County Health Department for 10 years and they had taken annual samples. The water isn't treated but isn't harmful. We did samples in multiple areas around this site and there was no contamination. It is very likely that there will be fines levied to the builder for allowing that cross connections and we need to estimate and recover costs for those years. The well is shallow at about 125 feet. Most of ours are 350-650 feet deep. The well water was tested and safe although not treated and we feel that even if some well water seeps into our system, we run our chlorine a little high which would've treated the well water as well. Bo announced that he does have concerns about private wells but that is something that is permitted by Shelby County.

Tim Bierdz:

Mr. Bierdz reported that the storm water fee will be on this month's bill. The average amount will be \$3.00-\$3.50 per month. The commercial fee will take place in October/November.

Mr. Bierdz announced that our current stormwater permit with the State has expired. The new permit will take effect on October 1st and will bring new regulations for Germantown to follow.

Mr. Bierdz and Ms. Erskine are working on the 3x5 card advising residents of how to dispose of animal waste.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Urania Erskine – Storms/Wetlands/Sanitary Sewer:

Ms. Erskine presented an article regarding water availability in areas throughout the world and how limited the water supply actually is. Ms. Erskine also announced that it is no longer legal to put yard waste in a Class A landfill.

Andy Foster – Energy Use Resource Management:

Andy Foster commented that he recently took a trip to Montreal, Canada and they had recycle bins in the hotel rooms, along streets and in businesses. The City also runs mainly on bikes with paths throughout the City and cars are considered a nuisance. There is a good subway system. Fuel is an average of \$4.31 per gallon.

Mr. Foster reported on the Gulf Oil Spill where it is reported that there are new microbes showing up to eat the oil which have never been seen before. The spill caused these microbes to show up in mass quantity. It lives in a 41 degree F. environment.

Jimmy Davis – Research:

Dr. Davis reported on the Gulf Oil Spill. The top cap was removed today and hopefully will be removing and replacing the blow out preventer tomorrow. Work is about a month behind the original scheduled date of recovery. Another rig blew up today but no one was killed and no oil leakage. Today's rig produced 14,000 gallons per day in comparison to the Deep Horizon well which produced 64,000 per day.

Brandy Miller – Education:

Ms. Miller reported that the letters are ready to go out to the schools next week.

David Thorpe – Air Quality:

Mr. Thorpe reported that air quality has improved since 1997 even though standards have gotten harder to obtain. This summer is the best we've had since we started keeping records. Humidity helps keep the ozone down, cleaner fuels and cars assist in cleaning the air and the slow economy has also helped. We had nine code orange days this summer. The EPA is looking to lower the standard once again.

Susan Threlkeld – Composting/Xeriscape:

Ms. Threlkeld presented a water conservation flyer and an appliance rebate offer that was in the recent MLGW bill

Linda Kaplan – Think Green:

Ms. Kaplan discussed a solar installation grant program and distributed information. Also, MLGW distributes a newsletter called EnergyEdge. Ms. Kaplan presented a couple articles from this newsletter that discussed an incentive program that would offset the cost for retrofitting commercial facilities and the City of Memphis raising its sewer and storm water fee.

Ms. Kaplan also distributed an online newsletter called, "Earth Policy News", which discussed Geothermal temperatures and energy from the Earth.

UPS is collecting clean Styrofoam to recycle. Ms. Kaplan mentioned that it would be a good idea to add this information to the utility bill.

Ms. Kaplan presented a magazine called River Times to the Commission and discussed the "Gather at the River" event which will take place in late September.

Sandra Hayne – Neighborhood Preservation Commission Liaison:

Ms. Hayne announced the upcoming events. On September 18th, the City of Germantown will host Amnesty Day, Heritage Day, Germantown Cares Day and Pops in the Park. October 28th at 5:30 p.m. at the Great Hall will be the Germantown Summit. There will be a Heritage and History theme. Next Spring will be the Home Tour based around historic homes.

NEW BUSINESS:

Chairman Skelley distributed sign-up sheets for Amnesty Day and the Senior Expo

Ms. Miller inquired as to whether the Commission could do something for the Public Services Division? Mr. Mills will try to find a good time and opportunity to do that.

ADJOURNMENT:

The Commission adjourned at 7:15 p.m.