

# ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MEETING

April 7, 2011 6 PM  
MUNICIPAL CENTER

## MINUTES

### **Present**

Chairman Skelley  
Susan Threlkeld  
David Thorpe  
Dr. Jimmy Davis  
Brandy Miller

Clyde Davidson  
Moya Fulbright-Dent  
Urania Erskine  
Alderman Palazzolo  
Andy Foster

### **Staff**

Joe Nunes  
Bo Mills  
Juanita Bell

**Absent:** Linda Kaplan

### **CALL TO ORDER:**

Chairman Skelley called the meeting to order at 6:10 PM.

### **INTRODUCTION OF NEW MEMBERS AND GUESTS:**

The Commission welcomes Ashley Cosey, a Germantown High student, to the Commission as a visitor.

### **MINUTES APPROVAL:**

The minutes of the March 2011 meeting were approved.

### **STAFF REPORTS:**

Bo Mills:

Mr. Mills invited the Commission to an upcoming Shelter Event called "Paws 4 a Cause" which will be sponsored by Girl Scout Troop 10843 and the Shelter. It will be held May 7<sup>th</sup> from 1:00 p.m. until 4:00 p.m. Mr. Mills announced that National Public Works Week will be approaching in May and we will have our annual cook-out for all Public Services workers and invited the Commission to attend as well. The date will be announced next month.

Mr. Mills reminded the Commission that we need to start reminding our neighbors and friends about grass cycling and promote no bagging. Also, as spring approaches, residents begin turning their sprinkler systems back on. Quite often there will be leaks when it's initially turned on so please be aware of that.

Mr. Mills discussed the Environmental Quality Cabinet. Next month, April 20<sup>th</sup>, Brown and Caldwell will be producing a report with Germantown's carbon footprint. I will report on that during the next meeting.

### **Joe Nunes:**

Mr. Nunes reported that due to poor weather conditions this past Monday, an extra yard debris truck was brought in. This places pick-up about a half a day behind.

Mulch Day, which was March 26<sup>th</sup>, was successful with a total of 210 cars and all the mulch was used.

Mr. Nunes attended a Residential Recycling Conference in Nashville, TN. Organics are the next wave in residential recycling and need processing facilities which are hard to come by right now. Mr. Nunes also reports that while at the conference, it was confirmed through a company called Rock-Tenn that they will be opening a new recycling facility in Shelby County this summer. FCR, which has been our recycling facility for a number of years, is getting competition and we will be checking into that. With that, comes single stream and FCR has now advised that they will be going single stream as well. As an addendum we have added that to the proposal. Single Stream means less income for us but decline in collection cost as well. Solid Waste Recycling may change from the bin to a 65 gallon roll cart with no need to sort. Three trucks would be reduced to one and one half. The other option is collecting every other week versus collecting weekly. The Commission supported this idea.

Household trash is the next topic with the change of backdoor collection with curbside option at hopefully a discounted fee. This option would also include a reduction in the amount of construction and demo debris without additional fee. The fee will possibly be \$25 to begin and \$8/\$10 per cubic yard thereafter. Andy Foster inquired if this additional fee could lead to dumping? Mr. Nunes said that it is a possibility but there are other options and few places to dump. The monthly fee will probably increase by \$2-\$4 dollars per month. Dr. Davis inquired if there would be a limit on carts? Joe said that in some proposals there is an additional cost per cart but we are looking into that. The price differential between backdoor and curbside was not high enough to change that right now.

Yard debris collection was the last topic and it should remain the same with unlimited amounts and no contractor debris. Michael's is looking at possibly changing his equipment to a rear-loader which could mean carts. Compostable bags were also discussed and researched. Houston does use these bags now but they are double the cost of regular bags. The bags will be tested for strength before decided upon. The rolling containers were approved by seniors in the past and if the company that is chosen has the proper equipment, we should be able to phase in the changes. If we use regular bags, contractors have to un-bag which adds cost. Compostable bags won't need to be unloaded which would save cost but still probably not offset the costs of the bags for residents

with larger yards. During the first year of transition, there will be no increase in fee. We are also looking into a recycling incentive program possibly providing coupons. We should potentially see anywhere from a 15-20% increase in volume with single stream.

Mr. Nunes reported that recycling volume is up 2% for this month and even for this year. He also distributed a chart that shows the diversion rate which is at 17-18% which is a very conservative rate but does not include yard debris, electronics from recycling and things like that.

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

#### **Brandy Miller – Education:**

Ms. Threlkeld reported for Ms. Miller. Their group presented to 164 students and teachers at Farmington Elementary on the Friday before Spring break. Tim is a great addition to the team. Ms. Miller has emailed Dogwood Elementary and will hopefully hear back soon.

#### **Urania Erskine – Storms/Wetlands/Sanitary Sewer:**

Ms. Erskine spoke about Rain Gardens and submitted an article to the Commission for review.

#### **David Thorpe – Air Quality:**

Mr. Thorpe reported about the nuclear accident in Japan. After spending 16 years working at a nuclear power plant so I have a thorough understanding on how the plants work. Through the earthquake, none of the safety systems were damaged. The tsunami flooded generators. The reported radiation was real but a very small amount and easily detectable. This should not be a concern for the United States. All nuclear plants are built to withstand earthquakes. The hydrogen build-up was an issue because there is fuel in the core. The spent fuel goes to a fuel pool which produces heat. One of those pools cracked and water leaked out. When the fuel starts to heat up, it reacts to the water that's left and it splits into hydrogen and oxygen so you get a build-up of hydrogen which can explode. There is a reactor vessel which is located inside primary containment which is surrounded by secondary containment. The spent fuel pool was in the secondary containment which didn't harm the reactor. The primary containment was built to withstand explosion.

#### **Jimmy Davis – Research:**

Dr. Davis mentioned the website that Ms. Kaplan had emailed in her absence (<http://www.wimp.com/solarhighways/>). It was an interesting article on solar celled highways

#### **Andy Foster – Energy Use Resource Management:**

Andy Foster announced that FedEx has received the "Green Hat" award for LEED certification on a 1.25 million square foot building which is the largest LEED structure in Memphis and enables Memphis to be one of the globe's premiere hub cities. All FedEx buildings will be built LEED certifiable. FedEx uses alternative energy and 777 big engine aircrafts that use less energy than smaller engines on other aircrafts. There is also one employee within FedEx responsible solely finding the best use for the hybrid and electric vehicles.

#### **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.waterfootprint.org](http://www.waterfootprint.org) which offers a calculator to figure out your water footprint. One cup of coffee equals 36 gallons of water. 2.2 lbs of beef equals 4,227 gallons. Mr. Mills announced that the City is actually doing a study now on water usage within the City offices.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

Amnesty Day will be held Saturday, April 16<sup>th</sup> and sign-up sheet was distributed.

### **ADJOURNMENT:**

The Commission adjourned at 7:25 p.m.