

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MEETING

August 4, 2011 6 PM
MUNICIPAL CENTER

MINUTES

Present

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

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

Staff

Bo Mills
Juanita Bell

Absent:

CALL TO ORDER:

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

MINUTES APPROVAL:

The minutes of the June meeting were approved with one correction to Dr. Jimmy Davis' attendance. The minutes for July were approved.

STAFF REPORTS:

Bo Mills:

Mr. Mills reported that this summer, consumption has only reached 16,000,000 gallon peak. The economy surely has something to do with that.

The Southern Avenue Water Treatment Plant renovation is going well and continues to progress as scheduled. Fire Station 4, which will be LEED certified, will have its grand opening in the coming weeks. Invitations will be sent out to Commission members by Bo.

Due to extreme heat conditions, some Public Services crews are beginning work at 6:00 a.m. depending on projects.

Mr. Mills announced that Patrick Lawton has organized a team that Bo is a part of to help locate EV recharging stations. The possibilities for these locations are: Germantown Performing Arts Center, Germantown Athletic Club, City Hall and Parks and Recreation. Also, some business will participate. Baptist Rehabilitation and Independent Bank are among some of the companies expected to install these chargers. Grants are being administered for the installation of these devices.

The Commission discussed the new garbage pick-up system and the few kinks that need to be worked out.

Alderman Palazzolo:

Alderman Palazzolo will be attending a retreat on Tuesday to see the development of our Vision 2020. With a new consultant on staff, there will now be two retreats a year to better track development of the City as a whole and its projects. The Mayor's car is nearing 10 years old and there is talk of a possible Nissan Leaf replacement.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

David Thorpe – Air Quality:

Mr. Thorpe reported that the EPA has delayed setting the new ozone standard for the 3rd time. It is 75 ppb (parts per billion) now and they are looking to lowering it to between 60-70 ppb. There are already many ozone exceedences (14 so far this year and the year goes through October) so this number will make it even more difficult to obtain. Last year, we had a total of 13 exceedences all season. This year's jump in numbers is being blamed on stagnant air masses and is a wide spread problem. The new monitor at Shelby Farms is the most active and giving the highest numbers, probably due to vehicle emissions.

Moya Fulbright-Dent – Water Conservation:

Ms. Fulbright-Dent reminded the Commission of the invitation to "Living Lands and Water" on August 13th.

Mr. Mills and the Mayor are set to attend breakfast. The website is also interesting with many articles on cleaning up lakes and waters and an especially interesting article describing the first time the speaker came to clean up the lake and how many washing machines and other odd things he found when skimming the waters.

Urania Erskine – Storms/Wetlands/Sanitary Sewer:

Ms. Erskine and Bo presented a video describing how to create rain gardens and how to get the most out of a rain barrel. The video was created by a local municipality (City of Athens, TN). Discussion ensued on whether the City could or did offer classes on Water-wise gardening and rain gardens. The Master Gardeners of Germantown do offer some classes and classes can also be found at Shelby Farms.

Susan Threlkeld – Composting/Xeriscape:

Ms. Threlkeld reported that California had a unique way of dealing with limited landfill capacity and that was Craigslist and ads in which people just give away furniture in order to get rid of it because there is really nothing else to do with it. It's a unique way of recycling and benefits everyone involved.

Brandy Miller – Education:

Ms. Miller will be sending school letters out this month. Juanita was to prepare 40 letters and envelopes.

Linda Kaplan – Think Green:

Ms. Kaplan mentioned that the City might be interested in sending some employees to Southwest Tennessee Community College because they are offering many "green" classes in the coming semesters that might aid in teaching or certifying employees in "green" practices.

There was recently a Project Green Fork article in the Commercial Appeal listing some of the restaurants that are certified "green". Ms. Kaplan has requested that all restaurant reviews have PGF if they are certified so that the reader has more information.

Ms. Kaplan commented that the "new car" and "fresh paint" smells were not healthy because it contains unhealthy levels of volatile organic compounds (VOC). We should all be looking for paint with low or no VOC in them.

Ms. Kaplan presented an article to the Commission that she had read on whether or not you should turn your fluorescent lights off when leaving a room. The general answer was if you are going to be gone for more than 15 minutes, turn the light off to save energy.

Ms. Kaplan reported on her new Nissan Leaf and offered the Commission these statistics: It costs an average of \$.10/per kilowatt hour and the Leaf gets an average of 3.9 miles per kilowatt hour which is an average of \$2.5 cents per mile.

ECE Solar, a business run out of Memphis, TN, was a former electrical only company that has now begun adding solar products.

Andy Foster – Energy Use Resource Management:

Andy Foster presented an article announcing that FedEx will be adding 4,000 fuel efficient vehicles to their fleet. The article shared information on how the new fleet will affect several FedEx sites. FedEx is also looking into building new facilities with electric stations to power their vehicles. Mr. Foster attended a Webinar on how to charge the vehicles, how many watts per station and charge and register cost. Electric vehicle cost is questioned with businesses and individuals and whether charging units will be available. GE is estimating that by 2015, the United States will be 54% electric.

Dr. Davis reported that according to paper, recharging sites will be free at first and will charge after a couple of years.

Jimmy Davis – Research:

Dr. Davis reported that Haywood County is building their solar panels and it has been interesting to watch the progress. Dr. Davis also described his cardiac death on June 7th. He was taken to Methodist Germantown and packed in Ice to paralyze him and forced him into a coma. Dr. Davis was transported to Methodist University and his family was told that there was a 50/50 chance he would wake up. Dr. Davis did indeed wake-up and is, in his own words, "feeling better than ever". He has a built in chest defibrillator and advised the Commission the same thing that the doctors advised him. If you're going to be out in the heat, drink water and keep your potassium up.

OLD BUSINESS:

No old business.

NEW BUSINESS:

Chairman Skelley reminded the Commission of the upcoming mid September Amnesty Day. The sign-up sheet will be passed around at the September meeting.

ADJOURNMENT:

The Commission adjourned at 7:15 p.m.