

ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COMMISSION MINUTES
May 5, 2022

CALL TO ORDER

Members of the Environmental Advisory Commission met on the above date at 5:30 p.m. in the Public Works Department conference room. Dr. Robert Shaw, Chairperson, called the meeting to order and welcomed all those present. The following attended the meeting:

1. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS:

Robert Shaw
Ann Maxwell
Jeff McKinnon
Thomas Trevathan

OTHERS PRESENT:

Daryl Norris, City of Greenville
Wanda Martin, City of Greenville

GUEST:

Members, North of the River Association
Members, Sierra Club
Val Gould, ECU Water Resources Center

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. ADDITIONS/DELETIONS/APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Ann Maxwell to approve the agenda as amended. The motion was seconded by Thomas Trevathan and passed unanimously.

4. APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY 3, 2022 MINUTES

A motion was made by Ann Maxwell to approve the April 7, 2022 minutes. The motion was seconded by Thomas Trevathan and passed unanimously.

5. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Norris announced Dallas Clark's resignation.

Mr. Norris also stated that the EAC has three vacancies and four members now.

(Which means all four remaining members have to be present to have quorum for the EAC meetings.)

Mr. Norris listed the three vacancies positions:

1-Builder or Contractor, or someone familiar with construction practices.

2-Attorney or Lawyer, or someone familiar with the legal aspects.

3-A person with Environmental interests

Filling these position are up to the council with nominations from Councilman Meyerhoeffer. Candidates are selected from available talent bank applications. Anyone interested in a position can fill out a talent bank application and submit it to the city clerk's office.

6. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Don Cavallini (co-chair of Coalition Against Racism) spoke on an issue of accountability and transparency with concerns about the public comment period at city council meetings.

7. OLD BUSINESS

A. Update on Duke School of Environment project

Dr. Shaw spoke on “The City of Greenville Greenhouse Gas Accounting Admissions Reduction Plan”.

The percentage of admissions by the city’s operations:

1. 1-55%- Direct Operations-Vehicle Fleet (Trucks and cars that the city operates)
2. 2-Lesser Percentage-Buildings and Facilities
3. 3-Much Less Percentage-Street Lights
4. 4-Employee Commutes

The report’s main recommendations:

- 1- Energy efficiency improvements in vehicle Fleet.
- 2- Disaggregate data to more clearly to know which activity by sector contribute to Greenhouse Gas Admissions.
- 3- Hire a Sustainability Professional.

Dr. McKinnon suggested we follow up on getting the Duke School of Environment project report published in the Daily Reflector. Which includes contacting the city managers office and the public information offices.

Dr. Shaw mentioned he had sent a letter to Mr. Meyerhoeffer, advocating for the city to hire a Sustainability manager. Dr. Shaw said that he needed to send a letter to the city manager, Ann Wall outlining exactly what a sustainability manager would do on a day to day bases. And the reasons why we advocate that the city hire that manager.

B. Social Media post for EAC

Dr. Shaw applauded the city facebook post on Earth Day, drafted by Dr. McKinnon. Dr. Shaw suggested for Dr. McKinnon to post updates about the EAC about every three months.

C. Discuss April Minutes

Mrs. Maxwell mentioned that they discussed bring Chris Baker from N.C. Solar Now to do a presentation in June. Mrs. Maxwell suggested that the EAC meeting in June to be designated just for Mr. Baker’s presentation.

Mr. Maxwell also mentioned that Chad Carwein would do some research around hiring a Sustainability Managers and share with the Commission. Mrs. Maxwell would follow up with Mr. Carwein on any updates.

8. NEW BUSINESS

A. Sierra Club

Lucy Fox stated that the Sierra Club is a big supporter of the Sustainability Coordinator. Mrs. Fox also mentioned that the study completed by the Duke students only covered the city of Greenville and not the county. Durham, Chapel Hill and Raleigh they all have city and county. Mrs. Fox stated that Maggie (one of the duke students) has offered to see if she could get ECU to pick up and expand to the county.

B. Cypto mining presentation

Jalind Lampa spoke about climate change and that Cypto mining is one of the largest contributors to climate change. He suggested the commission to start working with local groups in Greenville, North of the River Association and the Water Resources Center at ECU.

Val Gould from the water resources center at ECU spoke on the Compute North proposal and stated that mining for cryptocurrency requires astronomical energy consumption that is terrible for the health of our environment as well as the residents Greenville, Pitt County and eastern North Carolina region. Val Gould went on to speak on statistics on crypto mining in China and in the U.S. Val stated there is no study or modeling conducted regarding on how much pollution and toxic waste would increase with the addition of the Compute North facility, therefore it's irresponsible to pursue the project because of the potential impact on the environment.

Molly Holderman (Belvoir resident) stated the energy waste and noise pollution from crypto mining should have been enough deny a business partnership with Compute North. She stated concerns that Compute North's submitted report that was substandard and based on atypical conditions. She expressed concerns about the noise pollution and effect constant noise will have on residents and neighboring schools and businesses. She stated residents have requested the council to pause the zoning ordinance passed on January 24, 2022 and get an independent study of the environmental impact of cryptomining in our city and asked the EAC to join their efforts.

Dr. Shaw suggest that the EAC issue a statement to the city council and City Manager asking council to pause the zoning change until an environmental study can be completed. A motion was made by Ann Maxwell to approve the statement to council as presented. The motion was seconded by Jeff McKinnon. During discussion Ms. Maxwell made a motion to amend some of the wording of the statement. Mr. Trevathan seconded the motion to amend. The motion to amend was passed unanimously. Discussion was closed on the original motion and passed unanimously.

"The Environmental Advisory Commission supports the efforts of the Sierra Club Cypress Group and the North of the River Association to prevent the planned development and installation by Compute North or similar activities of a data processing cryptocurrency mining facility in Greenville. We recommend at a minimum that the City pause the January 24, 2022 zoning change with regard to modular data processing until a thorough environmental study can be conducted of the possible consequences of this change."

C. EAC Vacancies

Mr. Shaw stated that there are three vacancies on the EAC Commission. Mrs. Maxwell stated she knew a candidate that has already submitted to the talent bank and that she had been calling attorneys to recruit them. Mrs. Maxwell suggested the commission be more diverse. Val Gould spoke interest in applying for the at-large vacancy. Mrs. Maxwell said she would also be speaking to a builder.

9. OTHER– FYI

None.

10. PROPOSED AGENDA ITEMS – JUNE 2, 2022

A. Chris Baker from North Carolina Solar Now

11. ADJOURNMENT

Dr. McKinnon made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Trevathan and unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned.