

ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COMMISSION MINUTES
September 5, 2024

CALL TO ORDER

Members of the Environmental Advisory Commission met on the above date at 5:30 p.m. Municipal Building 2nd floor conference room, Dr. McKinnon, Chair, called the meeting to order and welcomed all those present. The following attended the meeting:

1. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS:

Jeff McKinnon
Yoshi Newman
Thomas Trevathan
Joshua Gardner
Robert Shaw
Karin Zipf
Khristi Dixon

OTHERS PRESENT:

Daryl Norris, City of Greenville
Wanda Martin, City of Greenville
Marion Blackburn, City Council Liaison

GUEST:

Jeff Monico, Sierra Club
David Edwards, Plug-In NC-Raleigh, NC
Andrea Pike, Carolina Seasons Nursery-Greenville, NC.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. APPROVAL OF AUGUST 1, 2024, MINUTES

A motion was made by Dr. Shaw to approve the August 1, 2024, minutes. The motion was seconded by Ms. Dixon and passed unanimously.

4. ANNOUCEMENTS

Mr. Norris had previously mentioned the city was pursuing a grant from the EPA called the community change grant. The application is in the process to be submitted in the next few weeks. This grant entails:

Component 1:

- A secondary Emergency Operations Center/Engineering Building.
- Every office will have fold down beds for staff.
- In the PSA next door, they have a secondary dispatch center. We will be upgrading the fiber network to that so dispatch can have a backup loop.

Component 2:

- Distribution warehouse/Gymnasium-indoor recreation facility.

Component 3:

- Eight-acre constructive wetlands with walking trails around it.

Component 4:

Upgrades to the Boys and Girls club facility.

- The facility will get upgraded with a HVAC system.
- All LED lighting.
- A Solar Array.
- EV Charging Stations.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Mr. Edwards, a Pitt County Greenville resident, announced the interest the Plug-In NC-Raleigh, NC has in attending and giving any assistance to the EAC. They are interested in the EV charging stations and the grant for school buses.

Mr. Monico mentioned The Sierra Club and Cypress group monthly meeting is September 10, 2024 @ 7pm. The meeting will be at Taft on Fire tower in Winterville, NC. They will have a representative from the Cypress Creek renewables, speaking about the challenges of getting large solar projects going in North Carolina. You can attend this meeting through zoom. The link is on the website.

6. OLD BUSINESS

A. Mr. Gardner and Andrea Pike reviewed the list previously sent out to the EAC on the five priorities that the tree working group is working on.

Tree Working Group: Identified Priorities

- Adjust buffer yards, streetscaping, and parking lot vegetation requirements.
- Sec. 9-4-265. (B) One large tree [canopy tree] may substitute for two small trees or five shrubs. (C) One small tree may substitute for three shrubs.
- Restore canopy lost to development and farming/agriculture.
- Tree Protection Plan should be part of the Preliminary and Final Plat. An Urban Forester should be added to the list of department leaders who must approve or disapprove plats (Sec.9-5-47).
- Advocate for an Urban Forester.

Dr. Zipf summed up the Tree Working Groups suggesting's:

- Ordinance Sec. 9-4-265 and Sec. 9-4-268 needs revising and clarification.
- Ordinance Sec. 9-5-47 add a Tree protection plan section. Which will need a city council vote.
- Advocate for an Urban Forester for the Planning department (Personal Position). To be added to the Budget.

Dr. Zipf suggested the Tree working group create a report of their suggestions and recommendations to present to the EAC.

Ms. Blackburn suggested changing the name to “Tree and Foliage Protection Plan”. We need to keep the under story “Foliage”.

Mr. Monico mentioned the official term is “Forestry Management Plan”.

Mr. Norris suggested the report be presented to the EAC and if the EAC approves this report and would like to pass it along, the EAC would adopt a resolution that says, we make these recommendations to city council. This resolution would be sent to the city clerks office to be presented at council. The representatives on the UDO working group that are representing the EAC to present the report to the UDO.

B. Dr. Shaw mentioned that Rob Doherty from ECU School of Dental Medicine, will be a guest speaker at the EAC November meeting. Mr. Doherty will be commenting on the report Ms. Dixon gave on Fluoride and the effects on IQ.

C. Dr. McKinnon suggested that anyone on the EAC can write a Social Media post.

A motion was made by Dr. McKinnon that social media posts can be prepared by any member of Environmental Advisory Commission. And will require the approval of the commission before sending out. With up to two per month. The motion was seconded by Dr. Zipf and passed unanimously.

D. Dr. McKinnon spoke getting GUC to stop prioritizing the sale of natural gas. Dr. McKinnon gave a summary on the damages of natural gas and its effects on your health and global warming. Dr. McKinnon would like for GUC to stop encouraging the installation of natural gas fixtures. The federal government is producing massive incentives to encourage people to shift away from burning fossil fuels to electric. There is a lot of money out there to convert.

Dr. McKinnon asked, “What can we do?” Dr. McKinnon suggested getting people with a different perspective on the GUC board. The GUC board is appointed by city council and some positions are appointed by the county. Dr. McKinnon wants to be prepared for the next time someone is to be appointed to the GUC board. Dr. McKinnon is suggesting putting Dr. Shaw on the GUC board.

7. NEW BUSINESS-none

8. OTHER– FYI -None

9. PROPOSED AGENDA ITEMS

A. Tree Working Group-October 2024

B. GUC and Natural Gas-November 2024

C. Fluoride Discussion- November 2024

10. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Mr. Trevathan to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Ms. Dixon and passed unanimously.