

Environmental Advisory Committee Minutes

January 20, 2022

Present: Margaret Johnson, Kerri McCullough, Pam Johnson, Lee Maxwell, Skip Cox, Chris Riegert, Mark Bloomer, Scott Thornall, Rick Patterson

Guests: Sue Davidson, Lee Butzin

Meeting called to order at 8:30 AM

No additions to the agenda.

Guest Sue Davidson gave an update on the recycling program at The Preserve. The HOA has reversed their decision and recycling services will continue for six months to be revisited at that time. Sue has done extensive research and has been in contact with recycling industry representatives including Micki Bozeman, NCDEQ, Sunoco, and GFL. She has been tracking contamination in her community and approximates 5%. She has concerns with cardboard recycling. Cardboard takes up space in the recycling containers. However, at this time, due to shortages of material, cardboard is especially valuable, trading at around \$200/ton. She informed the committee that cardboard has been banned from several NC landfills. However, to have cardboard recycling containers at The Preserve would cost \$168 a month which is not an expense the HOA will approve. Additionally, her research has found that, in general, recycling rates are increasing due to contamination. The goal for contamination rates would be 8 to 12%.

Sue has been promised 70 labels for beach carts from GFL. However, they have had several staffing changes. Micki Bozeman was awarded a grant for stickers for blue carts in Brunswick County but did not include beach carts in that number.

Scott informed the committee that Oak Island's contamination rate is approximately 20%. He said the greatest contamination occurs in the public recycle carts. He also has looked into OOPs Tags for carts.

Maureen suggested if the town is unable to get stickers from GFL, perhaps the town should consider a label specifically designed for public carts with items usually recycled in public, ie, bottles, cans, paper. In the past, Chris Regeirt has suggested one from the state website at previous meetings.

Rick Patterson is the new Stormwater Director. He retired from government and has extensive experience and has worked in Hawaii and Northern California. He informed the committee that as of January 1st builders can no longer use styrofoam in place of gravel for stormwater mitigation. He likes the filtration effort Oak Island has undertaken. He told the committee his door is open. He has looked at Mike's plans and finds them promising.

Kerri informed the committee of the Goldenleaf grant opportunity. (see attached) Scott has utilized this program before. Kerri announced the award can be up to \$250,000.

Lee Butzin, former chair of EAC, was welcomed back. Lee has moved from EAC to the Planning Board. His goal is to get the two groups working together on a consistent basis. He also pointed out that Mark Bloomer is the bridge between the two groups. Skip asked Lee to briefly explain what the Planning Board's role is. Lee explained development plans and zoning issues come to the planning board first. When a plan is submitted there is an opportunity to negotiate with the developer. This gives a developer a chance to be creative. Another example the planning board is involved with is stormwater.

Lee mentioned plans for the Williamson tract. Rick has seen some plans for that project as well.

Secondly, Lee Butzin would also like to revive the Smart Yard program. Lee has recruited Mr. Merkle, a resident, as well as Carolina Candelaria and Pam Johnson. Mr. Merkle sent an email to Margaret that he was not able to attend this meeting. Scott would like Lee Butzin and Rick to get together to coordinate for the stormwater component of Smart Yards.

Lee Maxwell asked if there is an inspection of the drainage on new construction projects. Rick said there are ordinances and codes in place. But it has been hard to keep up. Lee asked if certificates of occupancy are subject to this approval. This was confirmed.

Sue Davidson asked Rick if the preservation of the marsh area of the intercoastal is a function of his office. Rick says yes. However, he has not time yet to look at that. Sue mentioned the residents of The Preserve are concerned as the marsh level is rising and at times appears to threaten some buildings. Rick commented that post run-off should be equal to or less than pre-run off.

The November minutes were approved.

Announcements:

There will be a wind turbine demonstration in Southport in reference to the offshore windmills. This event is sponsored by the wind turbine company.

Staff Report: Mark, Scott

Mark located the 2014 tree survey. It is quite extensive, approximately 80 to 100 pages, and includes trees, size, and location.

He is looking into getting an intern this summer but there are several things to be done to make this possible.

Kerri mentioned that in November the committee endorsed the Davey proposal. Mark said the Davey proposal has been forwarded to council to vote but the town is also looking at an intern as an option. Kerri asked if that would be redundant. Mark said there is a possibility council may decide not to pay for the Davey proposal, then the intern could be the option they go with. Chris will send his contact information at the county level and UNCW to Mark.

Lee Maxwell asked if the council was aware of EAC's recommendation. This was confirmed by staff.

Kerri asked if the 2014 study was done by a professional. If so, it would be valuable to compare with the current tree canopy.

Mark mentioned the Williamson tract. The town has received plans which included 8500 homes and retail space. The tract is about 3000 acres.

There are also plans for 30 lots in Pine Forest. There is a lot of development and builders are anxious to get started on their projects.

Maureen asked Margaret about the NC Growing Green presentation done for the Planning Board and EAC a few years ago. This is a free service by the state to help developers and towns with developing large tracts of property. Maureen thought the sample presentation for Oak Island was the Williamson tract. Margaret said she would forward that information to town staff.

Old Business:

Margaret commented that the committee owes a debt of gratitude to Carolina and also thanked Mark for his assistance with the tree canopy project.

Margaret also told the committee that David Kelly had asked for a summary of the Environmental Advisory Committee projects and that was forwarded.

Scott said the new contract with GFL was approved. There was a price increase but it was approved with no changes .

He let the committee know the rep from GFL said tours for Sunoco are available again and that Sunoco plant has made improvements.

Scott is getting Christmas trees from Southport to grind for trails. He will be receiving the trees shortly.

Margaret mentioned Charlotte is doing a tree canopy assessment. Lee Maxwell said they have strict ordinances for any tree removal.

Trees:

Maureen read Carolina's emailed report:

I have good news for the committee about our tree grant and wanted to email you my report for the minutes as I don't know if I will get permission to attend by Zoom.

I just got word from the director of the Plastic Ocean Project that the donation of 25 native trees we earned from our Trees for Trash marsh cleanup last year will be coming

available for us soon. Our committee/Town will be able to take delivery of the trees sometime after February. We will not know the caliper size or number of each species until then. They are saplings grown by the NC forest service which are healthy trees native to our coastal area. I know we have volunteers from Tree Peace and a group of middle schoolers who have expressed interest in helping with town tree planting, and we can hopefully coordinate with them to plan our 2022 Arbor Day Tree planting and celebration. NC Arbor Day is Fri March 18th, National Arbor Day is Fri April 29th, But the Mayor can declare any day we plant as Oak Island Arbor Day if we choose to plant in fall.

Would like to suggest we start working with Mark and Steve, Scott and Richard Patterson on thinking about some priority planting sites.

Earth Day

I hope to participate with the stormwater booth or the Adopt a Tree program booth at Earth Day as I did in 2019. Not sure if The Garden Center can donate the Live Oak seedlings again but I will ask.

Scott mentioned the Public Works offer to remove and replace Bradford pears. However, the care and maintenance of the new trees must be done by homeowners or volunteers. Rick mentioned there would be a better chance of tree survival with larger caliber trees. The town purchased 4 inch caliber for the recent grant project and most are doing well.

Pam said Tree Peace is willing to recruit individuals to adopt trees.

Scott said he would like to see the areas before the trees are planted.

Margaret asked Scott if he could identify areas that most need trees. Scott said wherever there are Bradford pear trees in bad shape.

Mark suggested the area near the pickle ball courts that is flooding. However, Scott mentioned there may be some expansion of the pickle ball courts so best to wait and see.

Recycle: Maureen

Skip asked Sue about the labels for the beach carts. He suggested perhaps the Adopt a Beach access program could be assistance. Sue asked if the volunteers would be willing to track metrics. Skip will consult with BPS.

Maureen announced the town was recently awarded a cash grant of \$2000 from Carton Council Community Education. The goal of the program is to promote carton recycling. (Ie, Food and beverage cartons) The town first became aware of the grant last summer. Sherry Yarkosky from RRS reached out to the town in December to complete the application. Maureen thanked town staff, Steve, Mark, Michael and Scott for acting quickly to complete the requirements which

included making an adjustment to the town website and posting a carton container recycling graphic via social media.

Maureen will contact Gus Wiley from Sonoco to arrange a tour of the New Hanover MRF.

Stormwater: Kerri

Kerri will forward the information from the Goldenleaf grant for flood mitigation to town staff. Applications open February 1 and towns can qualify for up to \$250,000.

<https://www.goldenleaf.org/mitigation/?fbclid=IwAR13h2447JKvo93lbyjqcOh3baj90MMdj02RKv9esoSs6PrrGjIEnSaBsRo>

Tree City:

Scott said the Tree City application has been completed and approved.

There was discussion about Arbor Day activities. Maureen said in the past Arbor Day was celebrated in conjunction with other organizations, ie Beautification, Earth Day.

Smart Yard: Pam

Pam will be working with Lee Butzin and Carolina. The program is being revamped. Pam would like to advertise the program at Town Hall, in the State Port Pilot. Chris suggested the Marketplace. There was discussion about incentives for businesses and builders to incorporate a Smart Yard designation. Scott suggested town recognition.

Kerri suggested inviting builders to a forum to share information.

Beach Preservation

Society/Adopt A Highway: Skip

Skip announced the BPS annual fundraiser will again be an online auction.

Skip gave an update on the trees for the dunes project last year. There were 400 trees. They have received concerns from the turtle group. If agreed, the plan this year is to go from 63rd St. to the pier. Last year's dunes are about 90% intact. He recently pulled 63 steaks because the trees are now covered.

Adopt A Highway cleanup will be January 28 at 10AM.

Earth Day: Margaret

Eric Falkenhagen has contacted the committee regarding Earth Day Festival 2022. The date is April 22 from 10 to 2. Maureen informed the new members of the committee that the EAC takes an active role in both planning and supporting on the day of the festival.

Lee made a motion to form an Earth Day subcommittee and was seconded by Pam. The motion was approved. Volunteers for the subcommittee include Lee, Pam, Scott, Maureen, Carolina, and Rick.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:45.

Goldenleaf Grant Information

<https://www.goldenleaf.org/mitigation/?fbclid=IwAR13h2447JKvo93lbyjqcOh3baj90MMdj02RKv9esoSs6PrrGjIEnSaBsRo>