

**Environmental Advisory Committee Meeting  
March 17, 2022**

**Attending:** Margaret Johnson, Skip Cox, Maureen Burns, Kerri McCullough, Carolina Candelaria, Pam Johnson, Lee Maxwell, Chris Reigert

**Staff:** Mark Bloomer, Rick Patterson

**Guests:** Eric Falkenhagen, Sue Davidson, Nancy Cray, Gerri Hunt

**Meeting called to order at 8:32AM**

Margaret welcomed guests. Nancy Cray lives in Saint James. She is a member of a group that has just formed. Conserve Green Space is a possible title. Members are attending area environmental meetings to join with other towns in the area to make a difference.

The February 24th minutes were approved.

**Announcements:**

Margaret reminded the committee of the protocols the Environmental Advisory Committee must follow as a group authorized by the town. She recognizes and appreciates the enthusiasm of the committee. Members should not approach town leadership and staff under auspice of the committee. The protocol that must be followed is approval from the committee to Margaret to Mark. She asked members to carefully reply to emails. If there are any corrections for committee communication please bring to Margaret's attention.

Secondly, she asked members to be aware of individual areas of responsibility. If there are any concerns please bring them up with Margaret.

She reiterated it is acceptable to solicit information as a member of the committee but all action needs to be approved by the committee and town.

**Staff Report:** Rick, Mark

Rick announced the stormwater department has 100 frisbees to distribute at the Earth Day Festival. They are located in the office. He also gave an update in preparation for the Oak Island Arbor Day tree planting April 13th.

Mark announced the town council has approved the Pine Forest districts to include horizontal development, including duplexes, apartments, modified setbacks, etc.

The PUD for the Williamson tract includes single-family and multi family homes. Every stage will be reviewed. Plans are available on the website.

Skip asked about the trailers located at the intersection of 211 and Middleton. Mark said they are part of the DOT renovation of that intersection.

The Williamson tract development is at least a year out. The PUD includes 7200 residential units.

Carolina asked if parks, sidewalks, walking paths, and open space were included. Mark confirmed.

Carolina asked if this was part of the statewide Greenway project. Mark said most likely not as it is private property. He said the property boundaries include Sunset Harbour Road and Hwy 211. Carolina let the group know the Greenway is a bike path from the mountains to the sea. Rick also speculated federal money would probably not go to a private neighborhood..

**Old Business:** Kerri and Carolina

Carolina and Kerri presented a draft for Oak Island Arbor Day planting at Veterans Park in April 13th 2022:

AGENDA---Arbor Day Oak Island NC

April 13, 2022 | 9a – 1:30p | Veterans Park, Yacht Drive Oak Island

Attendees and Activities

Mayor Liz White | Oak Island Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC) Members | South Brunswick Middle School Junior National Honor Society Students and Staff | TreePeace OKI Members | Oak Island Public Works Staff (PW) | David Kelley, Town Manager | Town Council Members | Beach Preservation Society (BPS) |

Time

Item

Owner

8:45a

SBMS bus departs for Oak Island

SBMS staff

9:00a

SBMS students arrive at Veterans Park

SMBS staff

9:15a

Welcome & Comments

Introduction of EAC Committee Chair

Carolina Candelaria

9:30a

Public Works Staff Appreciation

Tree City USA Commemoration – 25th Year

Introduction of Mayor White

Margaret Johnson

9:40a

General Comments

Reading of the Proclamation of OKI Arbor Day- April 13, 2022

->Commemorating our 25th year Award as a Tree City USA by the Arbor Day Foundation!

Public Presentation of Tree City USA Flag to Town of OKI (for photos)

Mayor Liz White

10:00a-11:30a

Veterans Park Tree Planting

(4 trees – by ‘Trees for Trash’ by Cape Fear Alliance for Trees)

--Holes Prepped by Town PW staff ahead –

EAC, TreePeace to bring Shovels and Glove--

Dedication and Adoption of (4) Trees by Students

SBMC Students, PW Staff and TreePeace OKI members

Carolina Candelaria

11:30a-12:00p

Students Bag Lunch (Veterans Park)

SBMS staff

12:00p

Students depart for the Point for Trash Pickup Event (bus parking available, \*Reminder for all to Stay Off Dunes\*)

SBMS staff and students

12:00-1:30p

Beach Trash Pick-up Event – SBMS Students and BPS members (The Point)

SBMS students, BPS members

1:30p

Students Depart for SBMS

SBMS staff

After 2p

PW picks up trash collected at the Point

PW staff

Margaret asked if the agenda had been blessed by the town. Carolina said they are still working out the details about picking up the trash at the point after the ceremony. The students will be in groups of 5 to 6 and there will be chaperones. BPS is supportive of the collection. They only ask the students not walk on the dunes. The plan is to pick up trash for one hour. The police have approved parking for the buses. Students will have permission slips.

Skip commented the students may need to sign a waiver. Every volunteer for the sea oats planting needed a signed waiver to participate. He also suggested areas where there is typically the most trash.

Kerri reminded the group that the school students asked to do the trash pickup.

Margaret said the mayor asked for a draft proclamation with Mark and Lisa to edit for the flag presentation. Pam will present the flag at the council meeting. Carolina and Kerri will present a draft as well.

Carolina asked for questions and concerns. Pam commented that, although she supports the Native American connection, she has concerns about the Native American ritual dances and that perhaps this is not an inappropriate setting. Margaret pointed out this is not on the agenda. Margaret asked what the expectations are of the students. Carolina shared a watering and care chart to be attached to the tree.

Lee asked about the proposed presentation about how much time planned and whether the trees will be planted simultaneously or individually. If individually, that could be lengthy. He suggested planting simultaneously with one ceremony.

Kerri mentioned including the town manager, council, Beautification Club, among other guests. She also mentioned, since it is outdoors, a lectern and speakers would be helpful. She will connect with Mike.

Mark commented that if council members do attend it becomes a public meeting. Margaret suggested sending the invitation and perhaps only one or two will come.

Carolina did share that there is a delay on the delivery of the trees. She would like to have a back up plan and suggested perhaps using the money in the stormwater budget to purchase trees or perhaps three donations. Chris commented on the importance of documenting contributions. Maureen asked Margaret about the live oak the EAC donated in front of the library. Margaret remembered that the committee got around that requirement since the library is county land.

The final recommendation was for approval of the agenda and the trash pick up on the point. A motion was made, seconded and approved to accept the agenda with adjustments and communicate future details by email.

Margaret thanked Kerri and Carolina for their work.

### **Earth Day:** Pam, Eric

Eric, Program Supervisor for the Rec Department, introduced himself and gave a little bit of his background. He has initiated Earth Day activities in several communities prior to coming to Oak Island. The festival was virtual last year and he is excited to have it live again this year. He has invited several environmental groups to exhibit. There will be many activities and he has

arranged for a food truck. The festival will be held on the actual Earth Day 2022. He had looked into setting up field trips, however that is school spring break this year.

Eric would like assistance with advertising, especially in area schools. Also with soliciting sponsors. Maureen asked if volunteers can solicit items for raffle. Margret will look into this.

Pam announced the EAC has three booths.

- 1) Smart Yards
- 2) Enviroscope
- 3) Adopt a tree

Pam passed around a sign up sheet for volunteers and supplies.

Eric mentioned he has a volunteer to man the information booth.

Kerri mentioned alternative energy groups. Maureen mentioned there was a realtor who specialized in green concepts who has attended in the past.

Eric told the committee to let him know what we need.

A motion was made, seconded and approved to adopt plans for Earth Day as they stand right now.

### **Recycling:** Maureen

Maureen reminded the committee of the Sonoco tour on March 22. Pam will not be able to attend; however, guest Nancy Cray expressed interest.

Maureen reminded the committee about the \$2000 Carton Council Grant. She asked staff if there were any plans for the funds. She said the original intention was to have magnets available for those residents who did not receive one and for future residents.

Since plastic bag contamination has been discussed at length in previous meetings, she suggested a possibility of having stickers made for public carts with the NCDEQ graphic of plastic bag and 'Please Do Not Bag Recyclables.' She shared a sample:



She said the grant administrator for the magnets used a printing company in Raleigh. She was able to obtain a contact at that company, as well as the mailing list used to mail the magnets to Oak Island residents last summer. (There were over 9,000 mailed.)

She would also like to get price quotes from local printers for magnets and cart stickers as soon as possible to have them available for the summer season.

Sue had put in a request to have the town's electronic signs post a message 'Please Do Not Bag Recyclables' two days a week during the season. (similar to Caswell Beach) She contacted Rose who referred her to Mike who asked her to contact EAC to make a request. Margaret will follow up.

Sue also described a green community webinar being sponsored at The Preserve. She would like to open the program to other condo communities.

She is also encouraging the Beautification Club and Newcomers Club to avoid using styrofoam cups.

A motion was made, seconded and approved to table recycling initiatives until the next meeting.

### **Tree City: Pam**

Pam announced a new recipient of the Smart Yards certification: Mr. Harkley. She would like to submit the designation for publication to the Current and the State Port Pilot.

There was a question as to what organization provides certification and training. The Carolina Coastal Federation provides the guidelines. In addition to Lee Butzin; Pam, Carolina and Mr Merkle have either completed or plan to complete training.

Chris asked about the designation for builders and businesses. Pam has contacted builders but has only heard back from one as yet.

At this time Kerri thanked those who participated in the Mardi Gras parade. Many people on the parade route gave a shout out for the tree city designation.

### **New Business:**

Lee presented his research on The Last Plastic Straw initiative, reducing/banning single use plastic: (See email for links)

#### *EAC Members*

*At our last meeting I said I would do some research on reducing plastic straw usage. At the end of this email I have attached several links to information on the topic. If you have time please visit the links before our next meeting.*

*The links are from two websites:*

*Plastic Pollution Coalition*

*Plastic Ocean Project*

*The Plastic Pollution Coalition links provide some “tools” to communicate the problem with plastic straws and ways to reduce the use of plastic straws. The “tools” include:*

*Printable tent cards for restaurants*

*Printable information cards that individuals can leave at restaurants – Handouts at Earth Day?*

*A business specific pledge form for restaurants*

*A pledge form for individuals – Handouts at Earth Day?*

*A source for alternatives to plastic straws. I will research other sources.*

*(I will bring examples of the printables to our next meeting)*

*The Plastic Ocean Project is located in Wilmington, NC. The links provide information regarding some of their initiatives:*

*Outreach Through Art – Information on Hosting an exhibit*

*Trees for Trash Project*

*Ocean Friendly Businesses Project – This one I like a lot*

*I would like the committee to discuss whether we could execute any of these initiatives on Oak Island and if so which we would want to pursue.*

*Thank you*

*Lee*

*Plastic Pollution Coalition*

*Plastic Pollution Coalition*

*4401A Connecticut Avenue NW #143*

*Washington, DC 20008*

*General Inquiries*

*(323) 936-3010*

*The Last Plastic Straw — Plastic Pollution Coalition*

*How To Be a Last Plastic Straw Agent for Change — Plastic Pollution Coalition*

*2017infoCard\_English (squarespace.com)*

*Pledge form PPC gen (squarespace.com)*

*<https://aardvarkstraws.com/collections>*

*Plastic Ocean Project*

*Plastic Ocean Project, Inc.*

*4709-1 College Acres*

*Wilmington, NC 28403*

*910-444-1832 (O)*

*910-616-6766 (C)*

*Plastic Ocean Project - home <https://www.plasticoceanproject.org/>*

*About Us - Plastic Ocean Project*

*<https://www.plasticoceanproject.org/ocean-friendly-establishments.html>*

*Outreach Through Art - Plastic Ocean Project*

*Trees4Trash - Plastic Ocean Project*



Margret asked Lee to draft a formal proposal with items for the committee to take on for action.

A motion was made, seconded and approved to table this topic for further discussion at the next meeting.

### **Beach Preservation Society/Adopt a Highway: Skip**

The BPS online auction continues. The auction to date has earned \$9,000 which has exceeded the goal of \$7500.

Skip will be planning a AAH pickup for spring.

There was a question about the bags of collected trash on the side of Middleton Road. It was a general consensus that College Hunks collects that section of road. The DOT needs to come and pick up the bags and debris collected.

### **New Business**

Margaret asked visitor Gerri Hunt to introduce herself. She is with the same group just getting started with Nancy Cray. She has a special interest in wildlife corridors. She is also interested in preserving green space.

Margaret again thanked the guests for coming as it helps expand our influence throughout the community.

Pam mentioned a North Carolina state tree bounty program. This program advocates and facilitates removing Bradford pears and replacing them with native trees. Perhaps this is an initiative EAC should sponsor. However, applications are due March 31st. She will send the information to Margaret.

Tree Peace would be a great resource to help identify trees and make homeowners aware of the program.

Eric asked if anyone knew of a local beekeeper to present at the Earth Day festival, please let him now

**Meeting adjourned at 10:14am**

