

Environmental and Advisory and Committee and Minutes

May 19, 2022

Attending: Margaret Johnson, Skip Cox, Maureen Burns, Mike Pratt, Lee Maxwell, Carolina Candelaria, Chris Reigert, Pam Johnson

Staff: Scott Thornall

Guests: Sue Davidson, David, Sonnenfeld, David Merkle

Absent: Kerri McCullough, Linda Seifert

Mike made a motion to accept the agenda. Pam seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

Lee made a motion to approve the April minutes. Mike seconded and the minutes were unanimously approved.

No announcements.

Staff Report: Scott

Scott informed the committee that Rick is out of town so unable to attend.

He announced the current stormwater project is 90% complete. There have been some complications with CAMA, but the project is progressing.

Margaret asked if any Bradford Pears have been replaced. Scott said they have not had contact with any owners at this point.

Margaret mentioned a resident arborist has sent an impassioned plea to the planning board about town ordinances including scathing commentary about Bradford pears. She suggested this person would be a good contact for the committee.

Scott informed the committee that during the recent budget talks, the town approved an outside agency to review the UDO.

Pam mentioned she believed the topic is the only item on the planning board agenda today.

Old Business

The Last Plastic Straw: Lee

Lee read the latest proposal:

To the Oak Island Environmental Advisory Committee:

Be it that the economic health of the Town of Oak Island is greatly associated with and dependent on the health of the environment and ocean wild life, and that the health of our ocean wild life depends on the stewardship of the community it is proposed that:

The Oak Island Environmental Advisory Committee encourage and support a voluntary initiative to eliminate single use plastic straws in the Town of Oak Island, North Carolina.

Further Propose that:

The Oak Island Environmental Advisory Committee adopt as an initiative the following:

A voluntary initiative directed at businesses in the Town of Oak Island that may be using single use plastic straws

- *Develop a “kit” to be sent or delivered to the establishment that would inform and assist a business to discontinue the use of single use plastic straws. Kit to include”*
 - o *One page handout explaining the rationale behind and benefits of elimination of single use plastic straws*
 - o *Pledge form stating that the business is officially participating in The Last Plastic Straw movement as part of an effort to keep the community pollution free and stop plastic pollution at the source.*
 - o *Tent cards (20) that can be place on tables, counters or other areas where customers are served asking customers to refrain from the use of single use plastic straws.*
 - o *One box of paper recyclable straws*
- *Develop a business recognition that can be displayed in the establishment for those businesses that execute the program elements listed above.*
 - o *Announce that business as participating at a Town Council Meeting*
 - o *Develop and distribute a press release recognizing the businesses that participate*

Also included are sample materials and sample ordinances from other towns. (See links)

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>

https://static1.squarespace.com/static/55b29de4e4b088f33db802c6/t/5c1bfc27562fa712cfc08c7b/1545337899706/tLPS_2018_PPCTabletents.pdf

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Plastic Ocean Project - home

About Us - Plastic Ocean Project

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

Outreach Through Art - Plastic Ocean Project

Trees4Trash - Plastic Ocean Project

https://www.jhnewsandguide.com/news/business/restaurants-get-a-shoutout-for-straw-reduction/article_50441ffb-cd16-5e84-a6ee-f1a5cbef0646.html

Lee informed the committee that Skip put him in touch with Cheryl Fulton of the Oceanview Methodist Creation Care Team. He shared an outline of the proposal with her and they are excited to partner, although he made no commitment. Maureen shared that EAC has partnered with Cheryl and the team before and that they are the foundation of the Earthkeepers group who, pre-pandemic, were working on a mission to reduce or eliminate the use of plastic bags, as well as increase the awareness of recycling plastic bags and film by adding drop off locations.

Sue offered input for the proposal. She suggested including information about the breakdown of plastic straws vs other material. Mike also suggested using language such as fiber based, plant based, organic as opposed to paper since paper has a negative connotation. Carolina suggested 'compostable' as another suggestion.

Sue also commented she makes a point to thank waitresses at establishments who do not offer straws. Lee mentioned in the materials are information cards to include with the check.

Lee mentioned a restaurant owner he spoke to who said he is a scuba diver who has seen plastic in the ocean. Sue thought it would be beneficial to share these powerful anecdotes. Lee said he will speak to this contact about EAC vacancies.

Carolina asked Lee if he had thought about expanding the proposal to include to go containers, or if that would be too broad.

Lee said he had considered this but wanted to start with small steps. He also considered including plastic bags. For example he said the state of Alaska has banned plastic bags.

Mike shared some of the frustrations the committee has felt in the past about getting things done. He feels until we get the council on board we are but a circle of interested people. He also commented he felt the committee has not been able to make significant changes.

Maureen commented on the importance of small steps. Perhaps when restaurant owners commit to removing straws, most likely they will look at other options for their business. She also suggested the committee be persistent, including different members using the allotted 3 minutes at council meetings to keep reminding members of EAC initiatives.

Scott suggested contacting the Chamber of Commerce.

Lee also commented about making change in small steps and also about approaching the council as being responsible as a town government. Carolina also commented when business owners are already involved, the council will be more likely to make changes.

Margaret commented that there is increasing awareness about climate change and people in general are more amenable. Secondly, although as a committee we have received pushback in the past, there seems to be more support from the current council. She believes we can enact change through our mission of education.

Lee asked if this presentation would be directly to the council.

He reiterated his support of enacting change in steps.

He shared that his daughter is a marine biologist. He shared a comment she made during a discussion that resonated with him, "Dad, if we don't fix the environment, the rest of this doesn't matter."

Mike asked the committee rhetorically, do we really believe the council is not aware of this issue.

Maureen said she felt they are but have been focusing on issues such as sand and future development. So it is important that the committee keep reminding them.

Skip asked if Lee has spoken to Bonnie. Lee has and mentioned they discussed the trash art presentation at the rec center.

Margaret suggested making a motion to approach town council with this proposal.

She asked if there were any additions or changes. Lee asked that members email any changes. Mike suggested including a list of communities who already have taken the steps. Lee agreed and would also like to encourage Oak Island leadership to be on the front end and be a leader with these proposals

Carolina also just suggested listing the businesses that already follow ocean friendly practices

Margaret again suggested seeking council's blessing to educate on these initiatives. Lee asked if the presentation would be at a council meeting. Margaret will approach Lisa about perhaps getting additional time beyond the three minutes.

Mike asked Skip about photos of trash collected during recent beach cleanups. Skip said in the past they have done weekly flash sweeps. He believes Roseanne Fortner has photos. Mike suggested bringing these to the council meeting.

A motion was made for Lee to present the proposal to council after vetting with Lisa. The initial presentation to focus on education. Pam seconded the motion and the motion was passed unanimously.

Margaret thanked Lee. She also commented it is exciting to have a new initiative for the committee. The town appears to be committed to the recycling program. The trees topic is ongoing.

Margaret also mentioned the UNCW recycling depot and the styrofoam recycling program. She saves her recyclable styrofoam and brings it there periodically. She mentioned again perhaps doing a collection. Scott said the town is open to this idea. The details would need to be worked out. Maureen suggested a good time to do a town wide collection would be after Christmas because of all the packaging.

Pam informed the committee another concern is styrofoam in docks. Maureen let the committee know that Carolina Coastal Federation is addressing that issue.

As an FYI, Maureen also let the committee know that more and more companies are using cornstarch which is not recyclable at the UNCW program, however is compostable and dissolves in water.

Trees: Carolina

Carolina shared her intern proposal with a Committee via email. There was one proposal that was to be sent from EAC to council with a recommendation from EAC to hire Davey Resource Group. There was a back up proposal to apply for a grant and hire an intern. The deadline to apply for the grant is August. Carolina was wondering, since we have not heard back from council, where the proposals stand. Margaret will follow up.

Carolina would like to move forward with the intern proposal. She has several students and volunteers that would be interested in assisting with tree canopy mapping.

Maureen asked if the grant required a match from the town. Carolina said no. Maureen said in her experience the town is very favorable for grants not requiring a match. She suggested gathering the information for the grant application for when the town is ready to apply.

Carolina said all the planning department would need to provide would be coordinates. Volunteers will be doing most of the work. She has teaching staff willing to help but needs parameters for the grant.

Margaret asked Carolina to follow up with Steve. Carolina agreed.

Scott announced the town has hired a new planner. This person will be on board and a couple of weeks.

Pam mentioned several councilmembers have supported collecting the data from a consultant group.

Tree education sessions for homeowners/builders/developers tabled until the next meeting.

Recycle: Maureen, Sue

Maureen shared quotes from Seaway:

Pricing for the rack cards:

4color- 1 side on 14 pt card stock, 4x9

with 1/2inch x 12 to 18 inches wide strips for your workers to snip in 3-inch pieces and doubleside tape to the backs of the cards.

2500 cards (with loose magnet material): \$423.00 + tax

5000 cards (with loose magnet material): \$808.00 + tax

8" x 8" round decals: 4-color vinyl decals with laminate

100 qty: \$4.50 each = \$450.00 + tax

Seaway's prices are significantly lower than the company CRA used in Raleigh. There was general concern expressed for the \$4.50 price tags for cart stickers. Maureen said before any purchase was made she would like Public Works to look at the material to make sure it was durable. Skip commented the decals should be big enough to get people's attention. Maureen mentioned NCDEQ has graphic designers on staff to provide free designs. She suggested perhaps using the service to design a recycle away graphic with simple messaging, ie, cans, bottles, papers and the no plastic bag graphic.

Lee made a motion to proceed with contacting NCDEQ. Pam seconded. The motion passed unanimously

Margaret thanked Sue for the signage effort. Sue believes this will help educate residents as well as visitors in town on vacation. Sue will thank Rose in person.

Sue will call Sunoco to inquire if they have plans for either opening plastic bags and/or recycling plastic bags.

She also offered to assist in relabeling public carts if needed.

Sue also purchased some T-shirt transfers and plans to make a few T-shirts with the 'Please Do Not Bag Recyclables' graphic on the back.

Sue ran into Micki Bozeman at the Nature Fest. Micki shared that she received refrigerator magnets with the recycling information as part of a grant.

She also announced that GFL has a plan for relabeling all Oak Island bins in June.

Mike moves to approach Micki about getting the magnets for rental homes. Lee seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Earth Day: Pam

Pam announced they were between 1000 to 4000 visitors. All the trees were adopted. Maureen shared with Scott the tattoos were wildly popular.

Margaret said that EAC does not have a banner identifying our booths. She asked Scott about the possibility of getting one. Scott will talk to Mike Emory.

Beach Preservation Society/Adopt a Highway: Skip

Skip needed to reschedule the May AAH due to weather. The new date is June 3 and he has enough volunteers. He commented it will be after Memorial Day so there should be a lot of trash.

BPS is currently running their Shibumi shade raffle.

The feedback on the mobimats has been positive.

New Business

Ed Lovett it is planning a clean up Sunday, May 31.

Maureen shared that Ed advertises cleanups on Facebook under Davis Canal Cleaners.

Maureen also shared that Councilman Craft had asked Ed what the town could do for his group. Ed suggested T-shirts for the marsh cleaners. She did tell him EAC did not have a budget. Margaret suggested perhaps EAC can donate similar to the tree in front of the library.

Mike has done much research on offshore wind farms. He shared detailed information via email:

<https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&url=https://scitechdaily.com/wind-farms-cause-more-environmental-impact-than-previously-thought/amp/&ved=2ahUKEwjC47X7I-r3AhUjheAKHTX1CxgQtwJ6BAgEEAE&usg=AOvVaw32tUN0psF4XGsvovmS7BvY>

Note that even this whitewashed Harvard study suggests that windfarm average power density is 100 times overstated - 5 to 20 times larger geography is required to achieve promised energy production (think even 20 times is optimistic, with typical operational performance).

And, environmentally, will actually have a negative impact on global warming over the next 10+ years.

The obvious visual pollution is manifestly self-evident, to all but the most indoctrinated.

The effects go beyond the obvious, noise, light, etc. There is an effect on the atmosphere. Sue also mentioned with wind energy there are costs associated with changes in infrastructure. Margaret mentioned there have been rumblings for the committee to perhaps provide information or state a position.

Mike announced he will not be reapplying for the committee. Margaret and the committee thanked him for service on many initiatives over the past years.

Maureen announced her second term is also expiring. Several members asked her to reconsider applying for another term.

Meeting adjourned at 9:48 AM

