

**Draft
Environmental Advisory Committee Minutes
November 17, 2022**

Attending: Margaret Johnson, Maureen Burns, Lee Maxwell, Carolina Candelaria, David Merkle, David Sonnenfeld, Allen Dearry,

Staff: Scott Thornall, Rick Patterson, Matt Kirkland, Brady Golden

Guests: Sue Davidson, Elise Snavelly, Edward Lovett, Kevin, Gary Rosenthal

Absent: Chris Riegert, Pam Johnson

Meeting called to order at 8:38AM

David Merkle made a motion, Lee Maxwell seconded and the agenda was approved.

Lee Maxwell made a motion to accept the October minutes, David Merkle seconded and the October minutes were approved.

Margaret asked the guests to introduce themselves. Edward Lovett is president of the Davis Canal Marsh cleaners, also known as the Marsh-mellows. He explained after hurricane Isaias all things stored under houses, construction debris, etc. were washed into the marsh and along the tree line of the Davis Canal. So far the group has picked up over 20 tons of trash. They have partnered with the Trees for Trash program. Kevin has been assisting. They are attending today's meeting to learn of the committee's latest initiatives.

Margaret thanked Edward for his participation and collaboration.

Gary Rosenthal is with the Saint James Plantation Conservancy. His special interest is recycling. He would like to see curbside recycling reinstated at SJP so he is gathering facts to bring to the town.

Announcements

Margret reminded the group not to speak on behalf of the EAC or projects unless authorized by the group.

Staff Reports: Matt, Scott, Rick

Matt let the committee know that Council has expressed support for EAC adoption of the living shoreline at Veterans Park.

David Kelly is out of town and Matt will follow up with him next week about the 801 Event Center contract for the lecture series.

Matt acknowledged the Environmental Advisory Committee's desire to have a tree canopy assessment performed. He informed the committee that he became aware that Leland had a

tree canopy assessment performed with grant money from the NC Forestry Service. Matt has contacted the Service and will look into funding for a tree canopy assessment for Oak Island.

Scott inquired about the living shoreline contact at NCCF. Elise's contact is Ted Wilgis. Ted told her that the Federation would fund a new sign and oyster bags. Elise will pass along Scott's contact and once approved Ted will contact Scott.

Rick thanked the tree working group. He plans to submit the draft to the planning board in December and then to Council hopefully the following month. He would like to continue moving forward with the Smart Yard program. Information is available on the town website. The town continues to prep tree sites and are actively cutting down Bradford pears. The trees are mulched and then go to a site at the airport. When that site reaches 30,000 yards it is hauled away to 52nd St. where residents can pick up mulch.

Old Business

Lecture Series: Pam, (in absentia), Maureen

Maureen shared highlights from Pam's email. The speakers for the January lecture series will be Lee Maxwell along with Dr. Samantha Athay from Plastic Ocean Project, based in Wilmington. The lecture will be on January 26, 2023, from 7-9PM. The Committee is researching funding for the \$50 speaking fee, and perhaps for bulk compostable supplies in the event refreshments are served, particularly for this event.

Bonnie Monteleone, founder of POPs gave a presentation in Oak Island about four years ago on microplastics that was well attended.

Maureen shared that the EAC lecture series has been very popular in the past with a loyal following. It is a great opportunity for committee members to interact with residents. She encouraged all members to come and showcase their special interests.

EAC Web Presence: Allen Dearry and David Sonnenfeld

See Power Point

Question and Answer:

Lee asked if there would be a link from the town website to this site. David Sonnenfeld answered that it is not a standalone website, it will work within the town website.

Maureen asked if it would come up under a Google search. Allen answered it would come up under a search of the Oak Island site.

David Sonnenfeld and Allen would like to hear from the committee ideas for content.

Elise asked about content for kids similar to REC Center. Allan said the goal is to increase communication and interaction. David Merkle asked who controls the continent. Allen suggested a group of one or two volunteers, chair, and staff.

Margaret asked about a schedule for submission. Allen said initially sections would be 'under construction.'

Margret suggested prior to the January meeting members submit content suggestions to David Sonnenfeld and Allen.

They will update the committee at next month's meeting.

Last Plastic Straw: Lee

Lee passed out sample straws for members to take home and use. He also passed around a sample of the packet of straws to be delivered to restaurants.

Lee clarified a few points:

- This initiative has no affiliation. It is a standalone project for Oak Island.
- The Pilot news article on the Oak Island Town Council meeting incorrectly stated paper-based straws. He feels it important to correct this point as paper has a negative connotation. He also commented that the resolution does not advocate any particular straws. The resolution is to illuminate the negative aspects of plastic straws and show alternatives.
- He continues to work on materials specific to Oak Island, such as tent cards.
- He asked for a good electronic map of the town of Oak Island to ID potential businesses
- He will need committee participation in contacting the businesses.

Lee asked Margaret about getting the correct information to the newspaper. Margaret said the reporter does have the correct information but she suggested a story on the project may be best.

Carolina asked about the info that would go to the restaurants. Lee said most likely a copy of the resolution, poster, sample straws, tent card, info sheet.

Kevin asked about the price difference. Lee shared that the information is in the official presentation, but to summarize, for 150 customers it is about \$2.10 a day using the aguava straws. But if the establishment does not offer straws there is a potential to actually save money.

Edward asked about possibly transitioning to biodegradable takeout containers. Lee said the initial goal was to start with small changes and then transition to other single use plastics.

Margaret asked Lee to bring a timetable to the next meeting.

Smart Yard: David Merkle

David has quotes to purchase additional brochures. He is disappointed to announce that the NCCF is no longer printing brochures. He feels the brochures were well done and valuable. He has an order for four dozen coming from the Federation but that is all. The Federation is replacing the booklets with a postcard with the QR symbol. But David feels the books are much more effective. He would like to see the town print the books.

Living Shoreline: Elise

Margaret commended Elise on her presentation to the Town Council. She suggested developing a draft resolution to take to a council member. Margaret will assist.

Beach Preservation Society/Adopt a Highway: Skip

Skip shared his written report:

BPSI- 1. Preparing for entering a float in the Christmas parade. 2. Had a presentation this past Tuesday at 801 Event Center. Mary Ellen Rogers gave a nice talk on the Sea Biscuit Wildlife Shelter.

AAH- Our last pickup event of 2022 is scheduled for Friday, December 9. We will meet at the Rec Center at 9:30AM. I have all of the volunteers that I need.

Recycle: Sue, Maureen

Maureen shared that she and Pam attended the Recycle Partnership's recent webinar on plastic recycling data. They will forward the information to anyone interested.

Sue continues to pass out Recycle Right brochures. She was going to inquire of Rose Braam about the electronic signage. Scott informed the committee that since the signs sit on DOT roadways the information has to be related to traffic.

Margret let the committee know that Sue has been the force behind the recycling messaging on the DOT signs this summer, replacing the recycle stickers on the beach carts and also single-handedly convincing The Preserve to reconsider dropping recycling.

New Business

Carolina inquired about the volunteer appreciation statement by former member Kerri McCullough. Margaret asked Brady if there was an official recognition for volunteers. The recognition statement was tabled for later use perhaps at a volunteer appreciation event .

Carolina shared, via email from Thomas Creason, Chair of the Recreation Center Advisory Board, the proposed Davis Canal nature trail. Scott shared that the development is in the very early stages. Margaret suggested inviting him to come to a meeting for an overview.

Lee Maxwell made a motion to adjourn the meeting, David seconded and the meeting was adjourned at 9:59 AM.