

Environmental Advisory Committee Minutes

3 July 2025

Present: Margaret Johnson (Chairperson), Lee Maxwell (Vice Chairperson), Sue Davidson, Mary Horsman, Bill Bracey, Erin de la Cruz, Doug Sullins, Rosalie Farley

Staff: Taylor Davis (Planning Manager), Justice Herman (Planner I)

Guests: Gigi Donovan

Motion to Approve Agenda: 1. Lee Maxwell 2. Erin de la Cruz -Approved unanimously.

Motion to Approve 5 June 2024 Minutes: 1. Mary Horsman 2. Doug Sullins -Approved unanimously.

Request to Change Monthly Meeting Space: Taylor Davis said she will look into a larger space for EAC monthly meetings. Additionally, she will inquire about using a transcription service for the EAC's meetings.

Taylor Davis went over some of the details for Oak Island's Adopt-A-Tree program. Volunteers commit to watering their adopted tree for two years or making a \$1,000 donation, which funds watering a tree for two years. Volunteers will receive a "Tree Manager" t-shirt and decal/magnet. The town plans to advertise/inform the public about the program on the town website. EAC will present information about the program at community events.

Lee Maxwell reported information from a meeting with town council board chairs and vice chairs:

- 1) The EAC mission statement needs to be less specific.
- 2) There will not be a line item in the budget for the EAC. There will be a line item in the budget for all town committees, not specific for any one committee.
- 3) Henceforth town committees, i.e. the EAC, will have a member of such committees biannually present their ongoing and completed projects to the town council.

Additionally, Lee discussed the hierarchy of communications between the EAC and the town; contact Brady (EAC liaison), who will pass the information to Erin Baker (Assistant Clerk) who presents it to Kathryn Adams (Town Manager).

Gigi Maxwell, made a presentation on the Coastal Guardians Coalition, which is a group representing 12 owners from the 58th Street area on East Beach Dr. The Coalition has an online petition with 700 names calling for a return to common sense sustainable

development, using up to date information on subjects such as beach erosion and turtle habitats, and for the island to remain a family orientated beach. The Coalition is hoping to get on CAMA's agenda with their concerns about construction beach setback requirements, which the Coalition believes favor coastal development too close to the dunes. The EAC requested more information on the subject and what the expectations of the Coalition are in regard to support from the EAC.

Motion to get additional information about coastal erosion and appropriate setbacks for us to present to the council for further consideration (Sue recommends looking at the COE presentation to the council a few months ago.)

Sue reported a wetland disturbance that occurred in the area behind her residence. CAMA representatives consisting of Brady, Taylor and Justice were onsite within hours. They sent a report to David Nuse of COE. Mr. Nuse called Sue twice to discuss the issue. The owners who caused the disturbance were given a warning and warned not to "bush hog" the wetland area again. However, the ecosystem is already disturbed and will most likely not recover to its former state.

It was suggested that the EAC should present better information in our outreach programs about the Clean Water Act 404 designation including how wetland legal protections have been reduced in recent years.

Motion to investigate including wetland 404 designation information in the EAC public programs: 1. Lee Maxwell 2. Mary Horsley -Approved unanimously.

Rain Garden: need more information from Brice to move forward.

Comprehensive Land Use Plan – The CLUP has fulfilled its mission and presented their plan to the Planning Board, where it will now move forward to the Town Council. The plan can be viewed on Oak Island's website and The Current. Environmental issues begin on page 98. The plan outlines what issues fall under EAC and the timeline and priority commitment to each.

Lee reported that 40% of Oak Island businesses have been surveyed regarding the Straw Initiative. It makes sense to wait until after the tourist season before approaching some businesses as this is their busy season.

Need more information from Brice regarding recommendations for native trees for Oak Island habitats.

Motion to present Smart Yard investigation findings next meeting and set up a working group: 1. Erin de la Cruz 2. Mary Horsley -Approved unanimously.

Margaret and Sue have agreed to present at the library on August 14th. The enviroscape is in the box as well as a bag with the accessory parts needed for the presentation. You will need your license to sign for the enviroscape.

A field trip to recycling facilities might be scheduled for EAC members in September.

Motion to Adjourn: 1. Lee Maxwell 2. Sue Davidson -Approved unanimously.

***Working Groups:**

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|-------------------|---|
| Smart Yards/Trees | Bill Bracey, Erin de la Cruz, Mary Horsman |
| Living Shoreline | Erin de la Cruz |
| Adopt-A-Tree | Mary Horsman, Doug Sullins |
| Skip the Straw | Lee Maxwell, Sue Davidson, Suzanne Brown, Erin de la Cruz |
| Arbor Day | Mary Horsman, Rosalie Farley |
| Recycling | Sue Davidson, Bill Bracey, Mary Horsman (styrofoam) |