

COMMISSION ON THE ENVIROMENT MINUTES
Potomac Building
Minutes of August 5, 2009

COE Members present were Barne Wheeler, Chairman; Marta Kelsey, Troy Hansen, Susan Blake, Caroline Miller, Larry Hartwick and Sandy Neville. Bill Shreve and Daryl Calvano were absent. Others present were Sue Veith, David Kelsey, Paul Waxman, and Dennis Roth.

I) **Call to Order:** Mr. Wheeler called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

II) **Discussion & Approval of November Meeting Minutes:** A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of June 3, 2009 as amended.

III) **Continuing Business:**

a. **Environmental Concern Survey Summit**

1. **Confirm Date, Time, Location, Concept:**

The Commission agreed that the concept is fine. The group agreed that November 7, 2009 was the earliest possible date and also agreed that the period from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. would be sufficient to cover both Summit topics. Ms. Neville stated she would contact the Higher Education Center to check on the date and time. Ms. Blake stated she will check other calendars in the County to make sure this date does not conflict with other events.

2. **Participant Update & Advertising:** Mr. Wheeler stated he has only had three persons interested in attending the summit. Mr. Wheeler stated if we are going to make this a well attended event we need to do a lot of advertising.

3. **Facilitator Status:** Mr. Wheeler stated he spoke with Karen Meadows who is willing to offer information to help us with this summit however is unwilling to be the facilitator. Mr. Wheeler stated Ms. Meadows felt there is no reason why we as members cannot facilitate this summit ourselves. Mr. Wheeler stated after speaking with Ms. Meadows it seems 8-10 persons in a group would be suitable. Each group should come up with their top three items. Then, at the end of the morning and afternoon sessions, the moderator would combine information from all groups. As a final step each member of the summit would have an opportunity to again prioritize, but this time with all the groups items present. This final step would allow each member an opportunity to rank order the entire list of items.

Ms. Blake stated it may help to provide each group with criteria for priorities. Mr. Wheeler agreed. Ms. Veith recommended sending a formal invitation to specific groups signed by the County Administrator and/or the County Commissioners. Mr. Wheeler stated he can prepare the draft letter but needs help developing a list of organizations we would like to attend. Ms. Kelsey stated she will draft a list of potential organizations.

b. **SMECO & Tree Cutting Update**

Mr. Wheeler stated SMECO does not have a written policy; however, the following tree removal guidelines are in place: if a tree is located within 30 feet of a minor distribution, 100 feet of a major distribution line and 150 feet from big line SMECO can cut them down. Ms. Blake asked if SMECO is required to replant trees in a different location. Mr. Wheeler stated no they are not. Mr. Wheeler recommended putting this on the inactive list and the group agreed

c. **Special Acknowledgement Letter/Award**

Mr. Wheeler asked for comments on the draft letter. The Commission made appropriate edits to the letter. Mr. Wheeler asked how to present this letter to Mr. King. Mr. Wheeler recommended presenting the letter at the beginning of the summit. Ms. Veith recommended asking Mr. King to be a facilitator at the summit. The Commission agreed.

d. **WPTF Staff**

Mr. Wheeler stated Rebecca Scolfield has been unable to attend several of the meetings due to her job. Mr. Wheeler stated a plumber by the name of Charles Downs has come forward and would like to sit on the Task Force. Mr. Wheeler asked the Commission for permission to replace Ms. Scolfield with Mr. Downs. It was the consensus of the Committee to do so and to send Ms. Scolfield and Mr. Downs a letter notifying each about their membership on the Task Force.

e. Comprehensive Plan Discussion

Mr. Wheeler asked for comments from the Commission regarding the plan. Mr. Wheeler listed some inconsistencies he found when reviewing the draft plan. Mr. Hartwick recommended forwarding these concerns onto the Planning Commission. Ms. Veith stated the comment period for the Planning Commission is closed. Mr. Wheeler stated the comments can be sent in to the County Commissioners.

IV) New Business:

a. Board of Appeals Recent Ruling & Subsequent Fall-Out

Ms. Veith stated Mr. Nicols went to the Board of Appeals asking to build a house inside the Critical Area Buffer. Ms. Veith stated Mr. Nicols had 8,000 square feet outside the buffer to build the house but chose to build 90% of the house inside the buffer. Ms. Veith stated the Board of Appeals approved this variance. Mr. Wheeler stated the Board of Appeals granted the variance despite the fact that LUGM staff and the Critical Area Commission did not support the application. Mr. Dennis Roth submitted the Critical Area Commission letter which recommended denial to the Commission. Mr. Wheeler stated the standards by which the Board of Appeals approves a project should have more "shalls" rather than "shoulds". Mr. Roth stated he had been in contact with the Critical Area Commission and they feel this is a precedence setting case and may take action to appeal the decision. Mr. Wheeler recommended the Commission closely watch this case and if necessary send a strongly worded letter to the County Commissioners regarding the actions and decisions of the Board of Appeals. Mr. Wheeler asked if Mr. Roth can keep the Commission informed of the situation.

b. Gray Water System – Habitat for Humanity Building Project

Mr. David Kelsey, Water Policy Task Force member, briefed the group on his concept for a rainwater collection system. He indicated that for little money there could be sufficient water available to flush toilets, wash clothes & cars and water lawns. Mr. Wheeler stated Habitat for Humanity likes the idea however money is an issue at this time. Mr. Wheeler recommended spicing this up a little so the County Commissioners will help fund this pilot project. Mr. Hartwick stated Habitat for Humanity has plans for five houses on the Fenwick property and another three within the next year. Mr. Hartwick stated they are also in negotiations for an additional 10 lots in Lexington Park. Mr. Hartwick stated the Habitat Board is open to green initiatives however funding is an issue. After discussion it was decided to move forward with a proposal to utilize gray water for watering lawns, washing clothes and cars, and flushing toilets. Mr. Hartwick stated he would work with Ms. Neville to set a meeting date to discuss this in more detail.

c. Green Building Update

Ms. Neville stated she is working on setting up the first meeting which will be held in the morning rather than the evening. Ms. Neville stated the hospital, schools, citizens, etc are all interested in attending.

V) Announcements

None

VI) Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:56 p.m.