

ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COMMISSION MINUTES
November 7, 2024

CALL TO ORDER

Members of the Environmental Advisory Commission met on the above date at 5:30 p.m. Municipal Building 2nd floor conference room, Dr. McKinnon, Chair, called the meeting to order and welcomed all those present. The following attended the meeting:

1. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS:

Jeff McKinnon
Yoshi Newman
Joshua Gardner
Karin Zipf

OTHERS PRESENT:

Daryl Norris, City of Greenville
Wanda Martin, City of Greenville
Marion Blackburn, City Council Liaison

GUEST:

Jeff Monico, Sierra Club

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. APPROVAL OF OCTOBER 3, 2024, MINUTES

A motion was made by Dr. Zipf to approve the October 3, 2024, minutes. The motion was seconded by Mr. Gardner and passed unanimously.

4. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dr. McKinnon mentioned attending the UDO meeting with Mr. Norris. Dr. McKinnon felt like the tree commentary had a greater impact on the consultants than anything else. Dr. McKinnon mentioned that the message was heard within the reasonable bounds of what they can do, and they expected a decent amount of it.

Dr. Newman wants to go ahead and pursue tree preservation or foliage preservation and have the mechanisms in place where it goes the legislator try to get it an acceptance for it. Ms. Blackburn mentioned it would have to get approved by council first.

Dr. Zipf mentioned speaking with Bill Harper (Executive Director-Pitt-Greenville Airport) about reaching out to NOTRA (North of the River Association-Pitt County) to invite members to a special board meeting of the PGAA (Thursday, November 14, 2024 @ 5pm– Pitt-Greenville Airport Conference Room) on PGAA expansion plans.

Dr. Zipf mentioned the Racetrack gas station has gotten the approval from the board of adjustments to go in across from Welcome Middle School, Greenville, NC.

Mr. Norris discussed the city of Greenville policies and procedures for boards of commissions, how they communicate and open meeting laws. Specifically, communications including emails

among more than 2 EAC members may constitute conducting business and should be limited to advertised public meetings.

Mr. Norris stated when representing the EAC (introducing yourself as a EAC member or any of that), any external communication must be preapproved by city council for you to spread a message on behalf of the EAC. The purpose and mission of the EAC is purely and solely as an advisory commission to the city council. Mr. Norris mentioned a previous discussed draft from an email for a Facebook post from the EAC was rejected by the City of Greenville Public Information Office. Mr. Norris clarified the rejection with the new rule for Social Media post, no more social media posts unless authorized by council. You could recommend to city council that they authorize the EAC to do a public education campaign. And if city council does authorize it, then you have the authority to go out and campaign. Anything representing the EAC is representing the city therefore must be approved by city council.

Mr. Norris also mentioned that all boards and commissions are now being moved into using a software called Peak Agenda. To request an agenda item for a EAC meeting you will have to submit a form based on what your agenda item request is. This does come with a revised deadline. It will be due to Mr. Norris by the Wednesday two weeks before the meeting. Agenda items for the December meeting is due by November 20, 2024. If no one submits an agenda item by the deadline, the meeting will be cancelled due to lack of business.

Dr. Zipf stated that she was understanding that when a Sustainability Coordinator gets hired, they will become the liaison for the EAC. Mr. Norris stated that staffing for the EAC will transition to public works and the Sustainability Coordinator once that position is filled. The EAC meetings will then likely be moved back to Public Works.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Mr. Monico announced that the Sierra Club this Tuesday night (November 12, 2024 @ 7pm-at Tapped in Winterville) will be having Paul Gemperline, ECU Professor Emeritus, talk about at-home solar-generation of electricity.

Mr. Monica announced he could talk about the meeting he attended at the GUC board. Dr. McKinnon mentioned he could talk about them during that discussion.

6. OLD BUSINESS

A. Mr. Gardner mentioned that the Tree Working Group has already submitted their report to the EAC, and their work is done.

Ms. Blackburn mentioned that Ms. Maxwell was concerned about the tree issues being in Public Works and not in the Planning Department. When the UDO comes to council that discussion will probably happen. This will be a good opportunity for the members of the public and members of the tree working group to speak up on why these ordinances are important and why they should be in planning or public works.

Mr. Norris committed that it is in the tree ordinances that the city of Greenville has is in Section 6 under Public Works. Under the trees chapter it establishes the City Arborist and their position and authority which mostly have to do with maintenance of trees within city right away and city

property and why it belongs in public works. The one part that deals with trees on private property is tree protection prior to development. That is related to not development, its prior to development. Protecting the trees when there is no new development specifically excludes it from the UDO that deals with development.

B. Dr. McKinnon mentioned social media posts was previously mentioned in announcements.

C. Dr. McKinnon invited Mr. Monico to speak on GUC.

Mr. Monico stated the Sierra Club has a mandate to go out and influence groups like the GUC. Mr. Monico did attend the last GUC board meeting. It seems the GUC board meetings are more scripted and are a little behind on natural gas.

Dr. Mc Kinnon mentioned recommending appointments to the GUC board in Spring 2025. Dr. Shaw has expressed interest in becoming an appointment on the GUC board. Dr. McKinnon suggest talking one on one with city council members to appoint someone to the GUC board. Question to ask is “Who could be someone who could serve on that board effectively and raise important issues and still be productive”.

7. NEW BUSINESS-none

8. OTHER– FYI -None

9. PROPOSED AGENDA ITEMS

A. GUC and Natural Gas-December 2024

B. Stormwater Annual Report- December 2024

10. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Dr. Newman to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Gardner and passed unanimously.