ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY BOARD

The Environmental Advisory Board of the City of Raleigh held a meeting on Thursday, September 14, 2017 at 5:00 p.m. in Room 303, Raleigh Municipal Building, 222 West Hargett Street, Avery C. Upchurch Government Complex, Raleigh, North Carolina, with the following present:

BOARD MEMBERS
Anya Gordon, Chair
Rob Gelblum, Vice Chair
Beverley Clark
Laurel Passera
Brian Starkey
Todd Kennedy
Larry Larson

STAFF
Megan Anderson, Sustainability Office
Cindy Holmes, Sustainability Office

CITY COUNCIL
David Cox, City Council Liaison

ABSENT
Aranzazu Lascurain
Justin Senkbeil

I. Call to Order

Ms. Anya Gordon called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm.

II. Approval of Meeting Minutes

The minutes from the August meeting were approved.

III. Public Comment

There were no public comments received.

IV. Presentations

a. Environmental Awards Subcommittee Report
The EA Subcommittee of Larry Larson, Justin Senkbeil and Brian Starkey discussed the selection of 214 Martin Street (City Market) as the preferred venue for the 2018 Awards. The board agreed with the venue selection.

b. Urban Agriculture Update

Anya Gordon presented her Urban Agriculture presentation to the board. Anya asked that board members review the presentation and plan on having a discussion on the October meeting.

Brian Starkey discussed the importance of public private partnerships and that the board members should consider urban agriculture as a partnership opportunity. The board members also discussed adding a few other items to the

recommendations. The items to be added are public private partnerships, a list of the environmental advantages to urban agriculture, business advantages to urban agriculture and zoning needs to encourage Urban Agriculture in Raleigh. The board members agreed to continue this discussion at the October meeting. The presentation is attached and included as part of the minutes of the meeting.

c. Comprehensive Plan and UDO comments

The board members asked staff to compile their comments and prepare a draft report for the October meeting.

d. Annual Report review and approval

The board members reviewed and approved the Annual Report with the addition of language about solar on the first page**.**

e. Work Plan review and approval

The board members reviewed and approved the Work Plan with the addition of the language that this is a multi-year work plan and that the name of the awards celebration has remained the same.

Staff will prepare both the Annual Report and the Work Plan for City Council review in October.

V. Staff Reports

a. Urban Agriculture Day

Urban Agriculture Day is scheduled for October 21, 2017 at the Historic Mordecai Gardens Visitor Center.

VI. Other Business/Announcements

a. Next Meeting – October 12, 2017
b. Urban Agriculture Day – October 21, 2017
c. 2018 Environmental Awards – March 22, 2018

With no further business the meeting was adjourned at 7:00 pm.

To: Mayor and City Council Members
From: Environmental Advisory Board Members
Date: 9/14/2017
Re: FY17 Environmental Advisory Board Annual Report

It is with great pleasure that we submit this summary of the work that the Environmental Advisory Board (EAB) has accomplished over the past year.

Our FY2017 work plan included five overarching objectives that have guided our monthly discussions and actions. The following report provides a summary of our work in these areas.

Highlights:

- Celebrated the 10th Annual Environmental Awards
- Added Pollinator Habitat to the Urban Agriculture grants
- Supported a Bee City-USA designation in partnership with the Parks, Recreation and Greenway Advisory Board
- Hosted a community education meeting on Raleigh's Greenhouse Gas Inventory Update
- Received a Solid Waste Services update on operations and initiatives in preparation for discussions on future opportunities in organic waste and composting.
- Made Recommendations on Solar Permitting- see attached report

1. **Continue to host the Raleigh Environmental Awards, implementing changes & modifications to the program as appropriate.** Strategic Plan – Growth & Natural Resources

<u>10th Annual Environmental Awards & Mini-Grants</u>

In April 2017, the EAB hosted another successful Environmental Awards ceremony this year, at the elegant Fletcher Theatre. This was the 10th celebration of the Environment with impressive winners that helped to showcase the innovative people and organizations that tirelessly work to improve the environment in Raleigh. We continue to attract new individuals and businesses each year who come to support their colleagues and friends who receive awards. The Board would like to express our gratitude to the City staff, in particular those in the Sustainability Office, who organize the Awards Ceremony and ensure that it is always a successful event that reflects well on the City of Raleigh. To ensure this is a successful event, the board members raise a significant amount of funding from local individuals and businesses. The EAB is currently one of the few boards that raises funds and provides monetary awards at their event.

The 2017 winners included:

- Greg Fishel, chief meteorologist at WRAL-TV (Individual Award)

- Apiopolis, a nonprofit bee sanctuary in Raleigh (Emerging Business Award)
- N.C. State's Zero Waste in the Workplace (Education Award)
- Jean Spooner, Ph.D. (Legacy Award)
- Advocates for Health in Action and Wake County Planning (Organization Award)
- WakeUP Wake County (Raleigh Environmental Stewardship Award)
- Purple Martin Community Farm (Built Environment)

In addition, local gardens, farms and pollinator habitats were awarded cash "mini grants" totaling $7,500 of non-city funds. This was the first year that a pollinator habitat category was added to the mini-grant application. The Urban Agriculture category winners included: A Kind Garden, A Safe Place Child Enrichment Center, Alliance Medical Ministry, Camden Street Learning Center, Health and Nutrition through Urban Gardening at Urban Ministries, Joyner and Wildwood Forest elementary schools, Liberty Community Gardens, Longview FFA Chapter, Pam's School of Raleigh, Timberlake Estates, and Women's Campus Healing Transitions.

The Office of Sustainability partners with several other city departments to plan and host the awards event. The Stormwater Division hosts a Public Service Announcement (PSA) video competition with local high schools, and the Solid Waste Services Department hosts a "trashion" design competition where college students and residents compete to create fashion from recycled and found objects. Three high school students were awarded cash prizes for their stormwater PSA videos, and three young designers were awarded cash prizes for their "trashion" fashion design submissions.

Urban Agriculture Day

The EAB plans to follow up the awards event by partnering with the City of Oaks Foundation in October, 2017 to highlight the efforts of the urban agriculture and pollinator habitat awardees.

In November 2016, during Hurricane Matthew, the EAB hosted a well-attended panel discussion of agricultural leaders in the city to discuss ways in which the City of Raleigh can better facilitate urban farming and gardening among its residents and groups. Steve Cohen of Portland, Oregon was the guest speaker for this event. This event also served as a showcase of the work performed by the EAB's urban gardening mini-grant awardees from the 2016 Environmental Awards Ceremony

2. **Evaluate pollinator issues and opportunities, which may include investigating the effect of pesticides in Raleigh.** Strategic Plan – Growth & Natural Resources and Safe, Vibrant & Healthy Community

Bee City USA & Partnership with Parks Advisory Board

The Environmental Advisory Board collaborated with the Parks, Recreation and Greenway Advisory Board to evaluate the City of Raleigh becoming a Bee City USA Affiliate. Both boards recommended to the City Council that the City of Raleigh pursue that designation, which you approved on June 20, 2017 during National Pollinator Week. A number of key elements are included in our designation which includes an annual celebration of pollinators and pollinator habitat each year. The Office of Sustainability is managing the Bee City USA designation in partnership with several city departments. The Pollinator resource page on the city website provides information about pollinator habitats in Raleigh. The Office of Sustainability will also work with our community members to create an inventory of pollinator habitats in Raleigh and track educational events in the community that educate the public on the importance of pollinator habitat.

The Parks, Recreation & Cultural Resources Department (PRCR) gave a detailed presentation of their Integrated Pesticide Management Plan, and the EAB appreciated the many ways the department goes

above and beyond the laws and requirements, has a very low rate of using pesticides only in areas with special community needs, and provides thorough and extensive training to their employees.

3. **Evaluate the Compact of Mayors Agreement on Climate Change, review the City of Raleigh Greenhouse Gas Emissions (GHG), explore setting a GHG reduction goal and the role of renewable energy in community resiliency**. Strategic Plan – Growth & Natural Resources

Raleigh's Greenhouse Gas Inventory Update & Future Work

The city completed a second Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory (GHG) for both Municipal Operations and Community-wide in 2016, since endorsing the U.S. Conference of Mayors Climate Protection Agreement in 2007. The EAB partnered with the Office of Sustainability to host a community presentation on the GHG update. The report was presented to the community on December 8, 2016 at a public meeting at the Convention Center and the report is available on the city website. The main drivers for both local government and community GHG emissions are stationary energy use (single family homes and commercial facilities and buildings), transportation (especially residents driving in single occupancy vehicles), and waste (generated by the community). The EAB recognizes the importance of continued education and outreach to the community on how an individual's actions impact GHG emissions.

The role of renewable energy in community resilience continues to be an interest of the board members. The EAB members reviewed the comprehensive best practices promoted by national solar organizations, compared them to Raleigh's permitting practices, and prepared a report for the Council's consideration (please find attached). This report provides recommendations for simple ways in which the City could improve its rooftop solar permitting practices and other steps for Raleigh to become a leader in renewal energy.

The Office of Sustainability's AmeriCorps VISTA worker, Grace Levin, presented her project to the EAB. The project goal is to bring energy efficiency resources and programming to low income communities in Raleigh. The EAB looks forward to future reports and updates on this project.

4. **Continue to support urban agriculture as part of a healthy food system and evaluate an organics recycling program**.* Strategic Plan –Safe, Vibrant & Healthy Community

The EAB provided comments on the update to the 2030 Comprehensive Plan regarding urban agriculture and a healthy food system. The current draft plan includes Policy EP 9.9 Food Systems Education, Action EP 9.7 Community gardening Grants, and Action EP 9.8 Community Gardening Feasibility Study, which we as a board completely support. We continue to encourage the city to expand opportunities for community gardening, urban agriculture and a healthy food system in Raleigh.

Additionally, the Solid Waste Services department presented updates to the EAB, including updates on waste reduction initiatives, including: Multifamily Recycling Project, Volume Based Systems (PAYT) Update, Fleetmind Update, Textiles Recycling Project and Composting.

5. **Evaluate and report on other important environmental issues and serve as a forum for environmental education.** Strategic Plan – Growth & Natural Resources

The EAB hosted several educational events throughout the year, which not only provided educational opportunities for the community; but provided the foundation for the EAB to further understand the operations, financial considerations and other impacts that will help the EAB to effectively evaluate and consider future recommendations on a broad variety of subjects. Three examples of special community events are listed below:

a) As mentioned previously, the EAB partnered with the Office of Sustainability to host a community presentation on the GHG inventory update.

b) The 10th Annual Environmental Awards is not only an event to celebrate the accomplishments of the community, it also allows the EAB to promote environmental awareness and provide best practice examples of environmental initiatives.

c) The Urban Agriculture Day has now been expanded to include Pollinator Habitat and Raleigh's Bee City USA designation.

6. Other items as directed by City Council.

The EAB is very appreciative of the time that Councilmember David Cox has devoted to the EAB in 2017. He has attended most of our meetings, listening in to the concerns and questions of the board. The EAB is regularly looking for ways to improve the environmental health of Raleigh and we hope to continue to advise the Council in its efforts to make Raleigh a leader in environmental stewardship. We hope that the Council will continue to consider the EAB's input and abilities and we welcome hearing from the Council, should there be opportunities for our input in the future.

Lastly, we sincerely appreciate the leadership and support of the City Council and look forward to serving the City of Raleigh in the coming year.

Sincerely,

Anya Gordon, Chair

Board Members:
Rob Gelblum, Vice-Chair
Laurel Passera
Larry Larson
Brian Starkey
Justin Senkbeil
Aranzazu Lascurain
Beverley Clark
Todd Kennedy
Dave Toms (former member)

Attachment A: Recommendations of the Environmental Advisory Board to Improve Raleigh's Solar Permitting Process

Attachment A:

Recommendations of the Environmental Advisory Board to Improve Raleigh's Solar Permitting Process

On November 3, 2015, the Raleigh City Council approved the FY16 work plan of the Environmental Advisory Board (EAB). This approved work plan contained an item that allowed the EAB review the City's rooftop solar photovoltaic (PV) permitting and inspection policies as they compare to nationally established best practices and to provide recommendations for streamlining and improving Raleigh's permitting process. The EAB specifically requested this work item to help facilitate residents' ability to install onsite solar PV systems and promote a greener economy for the City.[1] The EAB has performed this review and summarizes its findings in the following report.

The EAB appreciates the work of the Office of Sustainability and Robert Hinson, the Office's Renewable Energy Coordinator, as they have communicated and coordinated with Raleigh's Development services office over the past year. In 2016, when we first assessed the City's solar permitting procedures to compare them to national best practices, we made a number of recommendations to improve and streamline the City's procedures. Over the past year, we have learned that Development Services has been working behind the scenes to improve their processes, based on our recommendations and their own work to improve the permitting process for Raleigh residents.

The improvements that have largely already been accomplished include:

- Cross-training inspectors to reduce the number of inspections a project needs
- Allowing same-day permitting for residential solar water heating and next-day permitting for residential solar photovoltaics; and
- Allowing residential solar permits to be applied for online.

We understand that additional work is ongoing to improve the solar permitting process but we want to highlight a few additional areas to ensure that these efforts do not get lost or deprioritized. Development Services is aware of these recommendations and is continuing to work and improve this process.

Recommendations of the EAB

1) Post solar permitting and inspections requirements online

The City of Raleigh currently has no information available online regarding the solar permitting and inspections process. Information on permit fees, application process and inspection requirements should be easily accessible via the City's website so applicants can review and prepare materials in advance. Raleigh should provide this information, along with a submittal checklist of all requirements for rooftop solar PV, in one easily accessible location. This step will

[1] This work plan item corresponds to the Raleigh Strategic Plan (RSP) Growth & Natural Resources Objectives 2, 3 and 4 and RSP Safe, Vibrant & Healthy Community Objective 4.

clearly explain the process for solar installers and reduce the time that City staff must spend explaining the process over the phone or in person.

2) ***Train permitting staff in solar***

We recommend that Raleigh facilitate periodic workshops with relevant staff or require staff to complete comparable online training. Trainings should be available to both planning review staff and inspectors. Periodic training will allow permitting staff and inspectors to keep up to date with changing technology and codes related to solar generating systems and further ensure the safety of these systems for residents. The Department of Energy has partnered with a number of national organizations to provide a free and well-respected online training course for code officials.[2]

3) ***Require applicants to list the total generating capacity of the system in kW_{AC} on the permitting application.***

This simple addition to permitting applications will allow the city to more easily track solar installations and assess the City's progress on sustainability metrics.

The EAB believes these three steps will improve the overall efficiency of the process, bring down solar PV costs for residents and ensure the safety and longevity of these systems.

Further Options for Incentivizing Renewable Energy in Raleigh

In addition to the permitting recommendations outlined above, the EAB would also like to draw the City's attention to several additional considerations that could help Raleigh be a leader in solar development.

1. ***Incorporate a mandatory renewable energy evaluation into the City's existing LEED Certification for New and Existing Municipal Buildings Policy***. While all new City-owned buildings over 10,000 square feet must achieve LEED certification, there is no requirement that they be evaluated for their renewable energy potential both in terms of energy reduction and cost savings. Solar energy prices have fallen dramatically since the City Council adopted the LEED Standard, so from a purely economic perspective, we think all new and renovated City buildings should incorporate a total cost of ownership analysis of adding renewable energy to the building. These analyses should include all building projects, renovations and new builds; and can extend beyond solar photovoltaics and water heating to include geothermal, landfill gas, energy storage, combined heat and power and other distributed energy resources.

2. ***Consider providing incentives for "solar ready" characteristics in new housing and buildings, such as reduced permitting fees.*** The working draft of Raleigh's Comprehensive Plan (Action EP 1.8) includes consideration of incentives to install solar energy devices. Allowing, for example, a reduction in permitting or other fees for

[2] Online Code Official training available at http://www.pvonlinetraining.org.

building plans that include "Solar Ready" design guidelines may help bring down the costs and barriers of solar for people who would like to add it to their property at a later date.[3]

3. ***Explore PACE financing.*** Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) financing allows homeowners to reduce the upfront costs of renewable energy by allowing them to pay these costs over time as an add-on to their property tax bill. PACE financing was approved for use in 2009 but has not been implemented by any jurisdiction in North Carolina. While this option is not without its administrative, financing and legal challenges, it should be considered for future use.[4]

The EAB respectfully submits these recommendations for the City Council's review and consideration. Please contact us if you have any questions regarding this report.

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[3] There are many resources available from cities that have implemented solar ready requirements and the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) has produced a Solar Ready Buildings Planning Guide that has been a useful resource for cities, available at http://www.nrel.gov/docs/fy10osti/46078.pdf.

[4] For more information on PACE, see http://efc.web.unc.edu/2015/10/16/pace-nc/ and http://www.greentechmedia.com/articles/read/White-House-Announcement-Means-Today-is-a-Very-Big-Day-For-PACE.

Environmental Advisory Board FY18 and FY19 Work Plan

(Initiate, Educate, Monitor)

1. Continue to host Raleigh's Environmental Awards Celebration with awards and recognition - Strategic Plan – Growth & Natural Resources
   i. Topics- Air, Water, Land, Energy and Waste
2. Continue to host Raleigh's Annual Urban Agriculture Day and include education and outreach on Raleigh as a Bee City USA - Strategic Plan – Growth & Natural Resources and Safe, Vibrant and Healthy

3. Review the Strategic Plan initiatives, the 2030 Comprehensive Plan and other policy documents for environmental stewardship and education and outreach opportunities, including:
   - Growth and Natural Resources
     i. Climate and Energy Action Plan Update (CEAP) and CEAP phase 2
     ii. Energy for Buildings, Fuel and Fleet, and strategic initiatives
     iii. AmeriCorps VISTA energy efficiency project
   - Organizational Excellence, Growth and Natural Resources
     i. Regional Resiliency Partnership Project Update
     ii. NCDEQ MS4 Sustainability Strategy Stormwater Program updates
   - Safe, Vibrant & Healthy Community
     i. Initiative- 4.1 Urban Agriculture and a Healthy Food System
   - 2030 Comprehensive Plan Update
     i. Environmental Protection and other relevant sections
4. Evaluate an organics recycling program*- Strategic Plan –Safe, Vibrant & Healthy Community
   - Consider broadening the scope to include waste, demolition debris and composting

5. Other items as directed by City Council.

*Organics Recycling - The Solid Waste Reduction Task Force referred assessing the development of an organics/food waste diversion strategy or strategies to the Environmental Advisory Board.

9/20/2017