ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY BOARD
Amended Minutes

The Environmental Advisory Board of the City of Raleigh held a meeting on May 9, 2019 at 5:00 p.m. at the Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina, Raleigh, NC 27610 with the following present:

BOARD MEMBERS
Graham Smith, Chair
Anya Gordon
Linda Watson
Ben Bobay
Justin Senkbeil
Aranzazu Lascurain
Brian Starkey

STAFF
Cindy Holmes, Sustainability Office
Nicole Goddard, Sustainability Office
Greg Sponseller, Sustainability Office
Jason Jones, Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources
Megan Anderson, Sustainability Office

PUBLIC

ABSENT
Jamie Cole
Beverly Clark

CITY COUNCIL

I. Overview of GardenCorps Program and Tour of Garden Area

Ms. Cindy Holmes, Ms. Megan Anderson, and Mr. Jason Jones provided an overview of the GardenCorps program, a collaborative pilot project between three City departments (Sustainability, Housing & Neighborhoods, and Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources), the Food Bank of Central and Eastern North Carolina, and the Master Gardeners of Wake County. The pilot project includes a 12-week curriculum focused on educating young people/active adults about growing food together in the community garden at the Food Bank, as well as how to prepare and safely cook the food raised in the garden. GardenCorps is part of the City of Raleigh Strategic Plan section Safe, Vibrant, and Healthy Community. This project is an outgrowth of the Board's interest in urban agriculture and the Wake County Food Security Plan. Board members were appreciative of the overview and then had an opportunity to see the youth and active adult participants engaged in a lesson on pollinators and in the garden.

After the garden tour the members returned to the classroom for their meeting.

II. Call to Order

Mr. Graham Smith called the meeting to order at 5:47 p.m.

III. Approval of Meeting Minutes

The minutes from the March meeting were approved as amended. The Board members amended the minutes with the following changes:

1) Amend the Other Business section to include the following statement: The board discussed having their April meeting, which was the next week after the Environmental Awards and decided they wanted to have the meeting.

2) Amend the SWS Section to add the following statement: The board discussed three challenges for recycling and they are:

a) Lack of clarity about what materials can and cannot be recycled.
b) The use of black bags for both waste and recyclables at the Red Hat Amphitheater and other downtown events and that these materials are then thrown away.
c) The recycling glass market has declined in the last few years, and recycled glass may not have a market in the future.

IV. Public Comment

No public comment was offered.

V. Announcements/Member Comments

The board members had a lengthy discussion about how and when they may bring ideas to the City Council. Staff provided an overview about the process for developing the Annual Report and Work Plan which is the established protocol for sharing board items with the City Council. Mr. Smith questioned whether that process is flexible enough to provide other updates to the City Council. Mr. Brian Starkey asked whether the board chair could take anything to city council on behalf of the board. Mr. Smith also pointed out that all board members received the memo that was sent to boards and commissions that asked them to stay on their work plan.

Ms. Linda Watson discussed the meeting minutes being posted online, so the work of the EAB is available on the city website. She also stated that she is asking mayoral candidates if the EAB should be reporting out to the City Council once a quarter. Mr. Ben Bobay said that he had talked to some people at the Environmental Awards Celebration and they were interested in hearing more from the City boards. Mr. Justin Senkbeil asked about the process to get something enacted or changed. Staff reviewed the process of taking topics on their work plan to the City Council with any suggestions or recommendations when they present their annual report to the City Council. Mr. Smith reminded the board that when they recommended an Urban Ag plan that the City Council turned that request down. The board continued to discuss meeting minutes and the need to highlight areas of board interest and concern and how best to share that information with the City Council and the public.

Mr. Smith asked the board members to consider establishing a subcommittee to synthesize what was learned, key challenges, and support of solid waste issues and about Solid Waste Services operations and issues. Mr. Smith made a motion to create a waste subcommittee to work on the report of the solid waste work plan item. Ms. Lascurain discussed whether Sustainability had an office newsletter for sharing information. Ms. Gordon discussed the need for a new glass recycling business in our area. Mr. Smith stated it would be helpful to have small groups synthesize what we are working on and how to communicate that to the City Council. Mr. Senkbeil asked whether the board could provide letters of endorsement or resolutions about groups that the board supports. There was a general board discussion about supporting or endorsing work that is taking place in the community. Members were also reminded that they are only provided a small amount of information from a group and that they are not in a position to fully vet their work. Ms. Lascurain asked that the minutes recognize key take-aways from the meetings. Mr. Senkbeil stated that he thinks the board needs to focus on a few topics and spend more time on fewer topics.

The board members continued their discussion of subcommittees. Ms. Lascurain referred to how a prior board had prepared a solar permitting process report that was included with an earlier Annual Report. The members also discussed the logistics of how the subcommittee would work. Staff agreed to provide some best practice information at the next EAB meeting. Mr. Senkbeil asked that the work of the subcommittee stay focused on the work plan items.

The board members voted in favor of using a solid waste subcommittee to assist in the writing of the solid waste report. Mr. Bobay, Mr. Senkbeil and Ms. Watson volunteered for the subcommittee.

Mr. Smith stated that he wanted to have a download about the environmental awards celebration and have a recap of this year. The subcommittee for the awards (Brian, Graham and Justin) agreed to prepare some survey questions on the event. Ms. Watson stated that she wants to use the awards to inspire environmental action.

VI. Staff Updates

Strategic Plan - Safe, Vibrant, Healthy Community Initiative 4.1

Ms. Megan Anderson provided an overview of the Safe, Vibrant Healthy Community Initiative 4.1 highlights. The Core team and the City Council are very interested in this work and are very supportive of GardenCorps. Highlights of the initiative were reviewed including senior bus expo, summer feed programs, intergenerational gardening, creative aging program, and GardenCorps. Staff also discussed all community gardening updates to city processes and code including the UDO, free mulch and compost for community gardens, and the funding available in the Housing and Neighborhoods Neighborhood Improvement program. Community Gardens are now an option in parks master planning projects. In addition, there is a teaching garden for youths and adults at Mordecai. Staff also talked about the importance of being a Bee City USA city. Ms. Lascurain discussed how healthy is defined in the broadest sense possible and that she would like Citrix and Dix Park to talk about how the communities are healthier. There was a brief discussion of other strategic planning initiatives that cover climate action and many other topics. Ms. Gordon talked about how she was influenced by the whole movement of the agriculture. Mr. Smith discussed the UN report on nature's dangerous decline and how transformative changes are needed. The board thanked staff for all of their work in this area.

VII. Other Business

Ms. Beverly Clark was appointed to the Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources board. She is technically still on the EAB until a replacement is appointed.

VIII. Upcoming Meetings/Events

Next Meeting – June 13, 2019. The Board will meet at 5:00 p.m. in Room 303, Raleigh Municipal Building, 222 West Hargett Street, Avery C. Upchurch Government Complex, Raleigh, North Carolina.

IX. Adjournment

The meeting concluded at 7:12 p.m.

Meeting Takeaways:

- The Board asked that the future minutes contain additional discussion details.
- A Solid Waste Subcommittee will prepare the board report on the solid waste work plan item for the Annual Report.

Attachments:

Staff Presentation on SVHC