Attachment 1

Orange County
Commission for the Environment

DRAFT Meeting Summary

April 14, 2014
Orange County Solid Waste Management Administration Building, Chapel Hill

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PRESENT: Jan Sassaman (Chair), Loren Hintz, Donna Lee Jones, Steve Niezgoda, Jeanette O'Connor, Rebecca Ray, Gary Saunders

ABSENT: May Becker, Peter Cada, David Neal, Lydia Wegman, David Welch

STAFF: Rich Shaw, David Stancil GUESTS: Bill Kaiser, Marc Marcoplos

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I. **Call to Order** – Sassaman called the meeting to order at 7:45 pm.

II. **Additions or Changes to Agenda** – There were no changes or additions.

III. **Approval of Minutes** – Sassaman asked for comments on the minutes for March 10. Saunders motioned to approve as written; Niezgoda seconded. Approved unanimously.

IV. **Orange County Recycling Program update** – Hintz reported on what he heard and observed at the March 18 public hearings on the County's proposed solid waste service tax district. He noted that the majority of speakers preferred the status quo rather than the proposed new tax district. Marcoplos remarked on what he observed at the April 1 public hearing in Hillsborough. Hintz said county residents might be willing to accept a one cent increase rather than one and one half cent increase for curbside recycling.

Sassaman remarked that neither of the two options being considered was ideal, but the County needs to make a decision on how to pay for curbside recycling after July 1. He reminded CFE members they were welcome to attend the April 15 BOCC meeting and reference the CFE resolution in support of the proposed tax district.

V. **Proposed Renewable Energy and Efficiency Work Group** – Shaw reported on the BOCC's response to the CFE's proposal of establishing a work group to discuss renewable energy and efficiency issues and to develop changes to County policies and perhaps also some recommendation for legislative changes.

David Neal presented the proposal during an April 8 commissioners' work session, and he and Shaw responded to questions from BOCC members. Shaw reported that most commissioners expressed enthusiasm for the project and thanked the CFE for bringing this idea forward. The BOCC asked for more specifics on the format and staffing of the meetings. Neal said the full CFE would participate rather than just members of the Air and Energy Resources Committee. Shaw said he had suggested that the CFE devote every second or third meeting toward this program rather than holding separate meetings outside of the monthly CFE meetings.

Shaw reported that the BOCC urged the CFE to identify a topic to serve as a "trial run" and report back to the BOCC on the outcome and experience. Commissioner Jacobs suggested the resulting recommendations from the CFE be brought forward as part of DEAPR's annual budget request.

Shaw reported that BOCC members also suggested the following:

- Look for other funding opportunities
- Explore using programs that were created using stimulus funds (in Chapel Hill?)
- Focus some attention on the energy conservation needs of low-income residents
- See if you can engage the Economic Development Commission and staff because these energy-savings initiatives may be helpful to local businesses

Stancil noted that it would be helpful for the CFE to develop more a more detailed approach to how it plans to carry out this effort and provide to the BOCC as an information item for their consideration.

Sassaman asked the Air & Energy Committee to identify a topic for the trial run of this work group and to report back to the full CFE for approval. He asked all members to re-read the proposal and consider how best to proceed with this work group.

VI. **Environmental Summit** – The CFE discussed plans for the Environmental Summit to be held on May 31 at the Maple View Farm Agricultural Education Center.

Sassaman reported that he had spoken with Dr. Norm Christensen (keynote speaker) who is prepared to talk about historical changes in North Carolina's environment and their lessons for a sustainable future. He noted that Dr. Christensen is welcome to ideas and would like to adapt his comments to the State of the Environment document. CFE members agreed to allow about 20 minutes for the presentation and another 15-20 minutes for questions and answers.

O'Connor and Ray reported on their recent meeting with Wegman to identify potential topics for the panel speakers: invasive species/native species, climate change, loss of prime forests, groundwater contamination/depletion, and local renewable energy options (which might also delve into fracking issue). Jones recommended adding to this list the effects of state reductions on the monitoring of surface and ground water, which could also include fracking and coal ash issues. Saunders noted that climate change also affects species diversity and water supply.

CFE members agreed on invasive species and water resources as general panel topics, which will be refined depending on who can be lined up to make presentations. These talks would complement an overarching subject of climate change presented by Dr. Christensen. The CFE also agreed to ask each panelist to end their remarks with specifics on what people can do locally, and to give Orange County examples.

O'Connor reported that Maple View is willing to provide farm tour, but we will need to ask people to sign up at the beginning of the program so they will have numbers.

The CFE discussed how best to publicize the summit, including a "save the date" flier, news release, calendars, and advertising at the upcoming Earth Evening event. Ray and O'Connor will also discuss potential refreshments and report back to staff on that.

VII. **State of the Environment 2014** – Shaw reported on the status of the report, including a list of things that still needed to complete each section of the report. He thanked those who had provided comments on the various sections since the March meeting.

Ray reported on the work she had done to develop better symbols to convey the status and trend for each environmental indicator. She showed her proposed final symbols to

CFE members and all agreed with what she had come up with. Ray said she would provide the final symbols to the staff for them to incorporate into the document.

Sassaman asked CFE members to provide final comments and input to Shaw by April 21 so that the staff could make final edits by April 30 and print out paper copies of the penultimate draft for review by Sassaman and Bill Kaiser. Sassaman and Kaiser said they would complete their review and edits by May 9.

VIII. **Committee Meetings** – The CFE broke into its standing committees (Air and Energy, Land, Water) to discuss final revisions to the State of the Environment report.

IX. **Updates and Information Items** – Information on the following subjects was provided and selected items were summarized by staff: a) Nature of Orange photo contest, b) Intergovernmental Parks Work Group report, c) free-roaming cat task force meetings, d) environmental finance public forum, e) a solar array project in Efland, f) potential changes to Rural Buffer would allow clustering, and g) Haw River on endangered list.

X. **Adjournment** – Sassaman adjourned the meeting at 9:30 pm.

Summary by Rich Shaw, DEAPR Staff