

**Orange County  
Commission for the Environment**

**DRAFT Meeting Summary**

**May 12, 2014**

**Orange County West Campus Office Building, Hillsborough**

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PRESENT: Jan Sassaman (Chair), May Becker, Peter Cada, Donna Lee Jones, Steve Niezgoda, Rebecca Ray, Lydia Wegman, David Welch

ABSENT: Loren Hintz, David Neal, Jeanette O'Connor, Gary Saunders (arrived; had to leave)

STAFF: Rich Shaw, Tom Davis

GUEST: Bill Kaiser

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- I. **Call to Order** – Sassaman called the meeting to order at 7:40 pm. Sassaman introduced Bill Kaiser who is expected to be reappointed to the CFE by the BOCC.
- II. **Additions or Changes to Agenda** – There were no changes or additions.
- III. **Approval of Minutes** – Sassaman asked for comments on the minutes for April 14. Niezgoda motioned to approve as written; Cada seconded. Approved unanimously.
- IV. **Rural Curbside Recycling Program update** – Sassaman reported on what he observed at the May 8 BOCC meeting. He read comments that he had presented in support of the proposed solid waste service tax district. Sassaman said the board of commissioners took no action, but would revisit the issue at a May 13 work session.

CFE members discussed the pros and cons for the tax district. Wegman asked whether the County might consider imposing the fee despite the threat of a possible lawsuit. Nobody knew whether that was likely to happen. Sassaman encouraged members to attend the work session to learn how this matter would be decided.

- V. **State of the Environment 2014** – Shaw reported on the status of the report, and he handed out a list of tasks needed to complete each section (Attachment 3). Sassaman asked for volunteers to take charge of some of the items better suited for CFE member involvement. Ray reported on the additional work she had done to improve the symbols for conveying the status and trend for each environmental indicator. Ray said she would provide the final symbols to the staff for them to incorporate into the document.

Sassaman asked Shaw to send out a link for members to review Draft #9 of the report once he had incorporated recent comments on the Land and Air & Energy sections.

- VI. **Environmental Summit** – Shaw provided a summary of the CFE's planning thus far (Attachment 4) for an Environmental Summit to be held in fall 2014 at the Maple View Farm Agricultural Education Center. He thanked members for agreeing to delay the event from the original May 31 date.

Shaw asked for volunteers to identify potential dates in September/October that would not conflict with a lot of other major events. Wegman offered to help with that, and said she and other summit committee members (O'Connor, Ray, and Hintz) would also help to identify potential panelists. Shaw reminded CFE members that they had 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.

Sassaman suggested Don Francisco (UNC Chapel Hill) to speak on water issues. Cada recommended Avner Vengosh (Duke) be asked to discuss the hydraulic fracturing ("fracking") issues for this area. Kaiser recommended asking Mike Kunz (NC Botanical Garden) to discuss invasive plant species. Someone else suggested that Judd Edeburn be asked to discuss forest management issues.

Shaw reviewed other logistics that had been discussed thus far. Niezgoda recommended using social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter to advertise.

Sassaman asked staff and CFE members to report back at the June meeting.

- VII. **Committee Meetings** – The CFE chose not to hold committee meetings.
- VIII. **Updates and Information Items** – Information on the following subjects was provided and selected items were summarized by staff: a) Orange County Community Giving Fund, b) Nature of Orange photo contest, c) OWASA forest management at Buckhorn Road, d) proposed NC rules for fracking, e) potential changes to UDO allowing clustering in Rural Buffer, f) proposed changes to federal jurisdiction for wetlands, g) Chatham Park (Pittsboro) public hearings, and h) Triangle Land Conservancy receives \$1 million.
- IX. **Adjournment** – Sassaman adjourned the meeting at 8:45 pm.

Summary by Rich Shaw, DEAPR Staff