

**Orange County
Commission for the Environment**

Meeting Summary

March 9, 2015

Richard Whitted Meeting Facility, Hillsborough

PRESENT: Jan Sassaman (Chair), May Becker, Peter Cada, Tom Eisenhart, David Neal, Bill Newby, Rebecca Ray, Gary Saunders, and Lydia Wegman

ABSENT: Loren Hintz, Donna Lee Jones, Jeanette O'Connor, Sheila Thomas, David Welch

STAFF: Rich Shaw, Brennan Bouma

GUESTS: Lynne Gronback

- I. **Call to Order** – Sassaman called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm.
- II. **Additions or Changes to Agenda** – None.
- III. **Minutes** – Sassaman asked for comments on the February 9 meeting summary. Wegman motioned to approve; seconded by Ray. Approved unanimously.
- IV. **Reports** – Sassaman introduced Lynn Gronback, noting that she is a candidate for appointment to the CFE. Sassaman reported that he attended the February 13 meeting of the Solid Waste Advisory Group (SWAG) during which the members discussed different options for funding the County's recycling program for the unincorporated areas. He asked Becker whether she had followed-up on her earlier inquiries about the County's food waste collection and composting efforts. Becker said she had not. Sassaman asked Becker to follow the budget deliberations and report back as needed.

Sassaman asked staff if CFE members would be asked to help out at the April 24 Earth Evening event. Wegman and Gronback expressed interest in helping out if needed.

Intergovernmental Parks Work Group – Wegman reported on her recent meeting as a liaison member of the IP Work Group. The group is comprised of representatives from town and county parks and recreation programs, including the City of Mebane. Wegman said at the most recent meeting the members heard about the Hillsborough Riverwalk, Churton Street pedestrian improvements, Cates Creek Greenway, the Cedar Grove Community Center, UNC recreation programming and master facilities plan, Blackwood Farm Park, Hollow Rock Park, and Chapel Hill greenways.

Orange Unified Transportation Board – Saunders reported on his recent meetings as a liaison member of the OUT Board. He described some of the state and local transportation issues addressed by that board, including NCDOT funded projects, opportunities for bicycle rights of way along roadways, the NC Mountains-to-Sea Trail, transit system updates, the Hillsborough circulator bus, the statewide transportation improvement plan, and ADA planning.

NC Clean Tech Summit – Bouma reported on some of the issues discussed at the recent NC Clean Tech Summit at the UNC Institute for the Environment. He noted there were 500 people in attendance to hear about improvements and innovations for solar

energy, water conservation, and energy efficiency. Bouma noted Commissioner Pelissier made a presentation on the development of solar arrays in Orange County and the impact of local ordinances on those projects. He said he intends to work with the Planning and Inspections Department on some potential refinements to the Orange County Unified Development Ordinance (UDO). Bouma responded to questions from CFE members about the use of clear glass versus colored glass in solar panels (Newby), the life cycle production costs of solar panels (Sassaman), and apparent efforts by Duke Energy to lessen the growth of solar energy in its jurisdiction (Wegman).

Sassaman thanked Wegman, Saunders, and Bouma for their presentations.

- V. **County installs new DC Fast Charger stations** – Bouma provided an overview of the County's recent installation of DC Fast Charger stations for electric vehicles at locations in Hillsborough and Chapel Hill. In Chapel Hill the station is at the Skills Development Center; in Hillsborough at the Farmers Market Pavilion on East Margaret Lane.

Bouma said the stations are manufactured by Brightfield Transportation Solutions, and were acquired by Orange County with a grant from the US Department of Energy through its Carolina Blue Skies and Green Jobs Initiative. The new "fast chargers" will charge vehicles in about 20 minutes. Drivers will pay a nominal fee to use the "fast chargers," and the other public charging stations will remain free to use. Bouma said a second phase of the installation will install a solar canopy above each charger to help offset the station's energy use. The ribbon cutting will occur sometime in April 2015.

The CFE thanked Bouma for his presentation.

- VI. **Committee Meetings** – Shaw reviewed a draft calendar for monthly news articles that members will prepare with staff assistance for publishing in the *Chapel Hill News* and *The News of Orange County*. CFE members discussed the calendar and the articles planned for the outreach effort. Sassaman suggested changing the subject of the May article from solar energy projects to the County's new electric vehicle fast charger stations. Other members agreed that such an article would be timely. Bouma said he already had a start of an article. The CFE decided to forego breaking into committees.
- VII. **Updates and Information Items** – Information on the following subjects was provided in the meeting package; selected items were highlighted for discussion: a) commercial food waste recyclers in Orange County, b) Hydrilla-borne bacteria affecting bald eagles, c) County to propose \$125M bond, d) County's proposed legislative agenda, e) criminal charges filed against Duke Energy for coal ash spills, f) House bill would require incineration of sewage sludge, g) 8,000 acres protected at Jordan Lake, h) Tesla battery will power homes, i) planetary boundaries guiding human development, j) 4th graders to receive a one-year pass to national parks, and k) some electric vehicles not so "green."
- VIII. **Adjournment** – Sassaman adjourned at approximately 9:15 pm.

Summary by Rich Shaw, DEAPR Staff