

**Orange County
Commission for the Environment**

Meeting Summary

April 11, 2016

Richard Whitted Meeting Facility, Hillsborough

PRESENT: Lydia Wegman (Chair), May Becker, Peter Cada, Thomas Eisenhart, Lynne Gronback, Loren Hintz, Bill Kaiser, Bill Newby, Rebecca Ray, Sheila Thomas-Ambat

ABSENT: Jeanette O'Connor, David Welch

STAFF: Rich Shaw, Brennan Bouma

GUEST: Kathleen Smith

- I. **Call to Order** – Wegman called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm.
- II. **Additions or Changes to Agenda** – Shaw handed out a gift (flashlight) to CFE members from the Board of County Commissioners' office as a gesture of appreciation for the citizen volunteers who serve on this and other advisory boards.
- III. **Minutes** – Wegman asked for comments on the February 8 and March 14 meeting summaries. Kaiser noted that he should have been listed as present. Hintz motioned approval with that correction; seconded by Cada. Motion approved unanimously.
- IV. **CFE Outreach Opportunities / News Articles** – Shaw reviewed CFE's March meeting discussion of potential news articles for 2016, including articles on climate change, hydrilla, new parks, and the effects of poverty on the environment. Cada and Kaiser discussed ways of summarizing information from other sources rather than writing new content. CFE members agreed to change the frequency of news articles to quarterly.

Bouma reminded CFE members there are other outreach opportunities, such as the Last Friday events in Hillsborough, the upcoming Earth Evening event (April 29), and radio spots on WCHL radio and the new WHUP radio station in Hillsborough. Gronback, Kaiser, and Hintz agreed to help out at the Earth Evening event in Hillsborough.

CFE members discussed ways of engaging the public using social media, such as Facebook and Twitter. Ray and Cada described how these outlets can be used to provide news, photos, and links to more detailed information. Gronback noted how social media can be much more effective at reaching people than the newspaper. Hintz suggesting including content from some of the update items on CFE meeting agendas.

CFE members recalled that former CFE member Steve Niezgoda developed a CFE Facebook page, but it has not been used since May 2015. Gronback offered to contact Jeanette O'Connor to learn who has access to the Facebook account for providing new content. She noted that the CFE ought to develop some code of conduct for the use of this site. Hintz offered to post information about the Earth Evening event.

Kaiser asked for introductory information on the use of these and other forms of social media. Wegman asked Gronback and Cada to help lead a discussion on the use of social media at the May meeting. Cada will look into whether his source of summaries of peer-reviewed articles on various topics would be suitable for use by the CFE.

- V. **Clean Power Plan** – Bouma briefed the CFE on efforts to persuade state legislatures to follow through on the Obama Administration’s Clean Power Plan put forward by the USEPA. He noted the Town of Chapel Hill is among 50 or so cities and counties taking a stance on this issue. Bouma offered to contact John Richardson (Town of Chapel Hill) for more details on what the Town and other local governments intend to do about this and will monitor activities to consider whether Orange County ought to join the coalition.
- VI. **Committee Meetings** – Wegman asked if CFE members wished to break out into the standing committees to review the revised list of priorities provided by the staff. The CFE chose to review the list individually and the members of each committee to confer with one another about the list and to consider next steps.
- VII. **Updates and Information Items** – Information on the following subjects was provided in the meeting package; selected items were discussed: a) CFE membership roster, b) Eno River hydrilla management project, c) Jordan Lake water allocation, d) tour of forest management activities at OWASA Mitigation Tract, e) wind farmer testimonial, f) the need to modernize water data, g) February’s record heat, h) record low Arctic Sea ice, and i) “The Nature of Orange” photo contest 2016.
- VIII. **Adjournment** – Wegman adjourned the meeting at 9:00 pm.

Summary by Rich Shaw, DEAPR Staff