

**Orange County
Commission for the Environment**

Meeting Summary

December 9, 2013

Orange County Environment and Agricultural Center, Hillsborough

PRESENT: David Neal (Chair), Lucy Adams, May Becker, Peter Cada, Loren Hintz, Donna Lee Jones, Steve Niezgoda, Jeanette O'Connor, Tom O'Dwyer, Jan Sassaman

ABSENT: Terri Buckner, Susie Enoch, Gary Saunders, David Welch

STAFF: Rich Shaw, Tom Davis

GUEST: Brian Belting

- I. **Call to Order** – Neal called the meeting to order at 7:34 pm.
- II. **Additions or Changes to Agenda** – There were no changes or additions.
- III. **Approval of Minutes** – Neal asked for comments on draft minutes for November 11. Sassaman motioned to approve as written; Niezgoda seconded. Approved unanimously.
- IV. **Community Garden Proposal** – Sassaman provided an overview a plan by the University United Methodist Church to establish an urban community garden on the former Umstead Farm property along Bolin Creek. He referred to a handout with a site plan of the proposed garden. Sassaman introduced Brian Belting, assistant pastor.

Belting said he and his colleague, Matt Ballard, are working with others to create the community garden and reach out to low-income residents of the community to help support and improve healthy living. He noted Chapel Hill Parks and Recreation Department is interested in partnering with the Church since the property is located adjacent to Umstead Park. They are also receiving guidance from Anathoth Garden in Cedar Grove. Belting said there is a demand for more community gardens in Chapel Hill. He asked the CFE for feedback and support of this initiative.

- O'Connor asked if this would be an organic garden. Belting said yes, it would be.
- Hintz asked for how long would they operate garden before constructing building on the site. Belting said it would be a minimum of five years.
- O'Connor asked about the long-term plan for the site. Belting said they intend to relocate, rather than eliminate, the garden when the building is constructed.
- Adams asked if there is access to water and compost. Belting said yes to both
- Hintz asked if trees needed to be cleared for sunshine. Belting was uncertain.
- Niezgoda said this seems to be a good use of this land.
- O'Connor asked if there would be individual plots or rows shared by all. Belting said there would be areas for both, similar to Carrboro community garden.
- Adams asked who would be in charge of the garden. Belting said Matt Ballard would be their "farmer." Ballard has experienced; worked for a CSA in Pittsboro.
- Hintz recommended they have temporary shed while they await the building.
- Becker recommended they collect rainwater. Belting said they would have cisterns, but that town water will also be available.
- Becker asked if they have a source of compost. Belting said they do.

- Neal asked if residents could drop off their compost. Sassaman said they would be allowed to receive one cubic yard/week from outside sources of compost without having to obtain a food waste and manure permit from NCDENR

Belting thanked the CFE. Neal invited Belting to return if he needed an endorsement.

- V. **State of the Environment 2014** – Shaw provided a status report on the progress made since the September meeting. He described the changes to the Land Resources chapter including contributions from Welch, Hintz, O'Connor and Sassaman. He noted that DEAPR is awaiting data necessary for the environmental indicators that pertain to Present Value Taxation, Forest Cover, and Land Application of Biosolids. Davis and Cada described their work on the Water Resources section, including their development a new environmental indicator for assessing surface water quality in streams. Shaw reported that he had still not received edits to the Air and Energy section.

Shaw asked CFE members to provide critical feedback on the contents, and to help staff assess the current trends and identify what the County can do to improve in the different subject areas. He also asked members to identify what they would findings they would like to highlight from the report.

CFE members said they would review the document and provide input. Shaw invited members to request specific sections of the document in Word format to facilitate their review and comment using the “track changes” approach.

- VI. **Committee Reports** – The committees did not meet so there were no reports.
- VII. **Election of Officers** – Neal opened the floor for officer nominations. Sassaman was nominated for the Chair, and the motion was seconded by Cada. There were no further nominations. The motion was approved unanimously. Loren Hintz was nominated for Vice Chair; seconded by Niezgoda. The motion was approved unanimously. Sassaman was elected chair and Hintz was elected to be the Vice-Chair.
- VIII. **Updates and Information Items** – Information on the following subjects was included in the meeting materials and selected items were summarized by staff: a) 2014 meeting calendar, b) CFE appointments, c) CFE annual report and work plan 2013-14, d) CFE resolution about diverting food waste from landfill, e) proposed screening of an industrial hemp film, f) seismic testing for fracking in NC, g) fracking in the US, h) Jordan Lake rules update, i) OWASA forest management at Cane Creek Mitigation Tract, j) Duke Forest news, and k) Triangle Land Conservancy news.
- IX. **Adjournment** – Neal adjourned the meeting at 8:53 pm.

Summary by Rich Shaw, DEAPR Staff