

# AGENDA

## Orange County Commission for the Environment

November 9, 2020

7:30 p.m.

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*Virtual Meeting: GoTo (LINK...)*

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<u>Time</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Title</u>
7:30	I.	<b>Call to Order</b>
7:32	II.	<b>Additions or Changes to Agenda</b>
7:35	III.	<b>Approval of Draft Minutes – October 12<sup>th</sup>, 2020</b> The CFE will consider approval of minutes from the last meeting. <u>Action needed</u> (Attachment 1)
7:37	IV.	<b>CFE Activities - 2020</b> The CFE will discuss current activities.
7:45	V.	<b>Lands Legacy Action Plan 2021-2024 Recommendations</b> CFE will discuss LLAP recommendations drafted by Hirni and Land Resources Committee based on last meeting's discussion. CFE will vote on final list to be submitted for inclusion into LLAP 2021-24. <u>Action needed</u> (Attachment 2)
8:00	VI.	<b>Climate Action Tax &amp; Climate Action Fund</b> Brennan Bouma will provide application materials via email or link to the CFE for the Climate Action Tax/Fund projects for initial review.
8:40	VII.	<b>Annual Report and Work Plan- Discussion</b> The CFE will need to begin planning for the annual report, to be completed in December and January. (Attachment 3)
8:50	VIII.	<b>Updates and Information Items</b> Staff and/or CFE members will provide updates on the following items: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Beaver Crossing project</li><li>• Current CFE vacancies and applicants</li></ul> Any other new information from CFE members and staff
9:00	IX.	<b>Adjournment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>* Next Meeting Date: December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2020; if requested by CFE (Virtual)</b></li></ul>

## CFE Activities – 2020

Item	Committee/Person(s) Responsible	Next Steps
Rights-of-Way Subcommittee	B. Saul	Subcommittee formation approved by CfE at January meeting.
Review and update of Forest Management Policy	Land Resources	Ongoing review by committee and staff.
Climate Action Plan	B. Ward B. Bouma	Initial work has begun to lay out scope and format. With GHG Inventory completion and successful application for LEED for Cities and Communities Grant, planning can begin in earnest. Seeing CFE assistance in climate action generation and community engagement.
Carbon Fee & Dividend / Fossil Fuel Divestment resolution(s)	B. Ward A. Parry	Review again in Fall 2020.
Coordination with Planning Dept.		

### Recent Achievements

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#### **CFE Meeting Ground Rules** (Adopted 9/12/11)

1. Keep to agenda topic under discussion
2. Share relevant information
3. One person speaks at a time after recognition by the Chair
4. Everyone is invited to participate in discussions - no one person should dominate discussions
5. Strive to reach consensus first before voting

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**Orange County Commission for the Environment****DRAFT Meeting Summary****October 12, 2020; 7:30 pm***Virtual GoTo Meeting*

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**Present:** Bradley Saul (Chair), Kim Piracci, Jaya Nair, Elizabeth McWhorter, Frank Binkowski, Kim Livingston, Bill Ward, Jody Eimers, Alan Parry, Jeremy Marzuola, Carrie Fletcher

**Absent:** Lynne Gronback, James Eichel, Laura Doherty

**Staff:** Brennan Bouma, Chris Hirni, Wesley Poole

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**I. Call to Order**

Saul called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm.

**II. Additions or Changes to Agenda**

None.

**III. Approval of Draft Minutes from September 14<sup>th</sup>, 2020**

Motion by Binkowski; seconded by Livingston; none opposed; motion passed.

**IV. CFE Activities – 2020**

CFE discussed current activities with a brief status update for each item.

**V. Lands Legacy Action Plan 2021-2024 Recommendations**

CFE discussed LLAP recommendations drafted by Hirni and Land Resources Committee. CFE revised list according to comments and decided to re-draft and vote on final list to be submitted for inclusion into LLAP 2021-2024 at the November CFE meeting.

**VI. Community Climate Action Grant & Scoring Process**

Bouma presented the application and discussed the Grant evaluation process that the CFE will be using in November & December. Deadline for application submittal will be November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

**VII. Updates and Information Items**

- Bill Ward discussed results from the last NAACP meeting regarding Rogers Road Methane Flaring and expressed the need for better, open channels of communication.
- Bouma presented the Climate Council and Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act, but did not discuss further.
- Poole informed CFE of upcoming December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020 term expirations and stated that he would need confirmation from members interested in being re-appointed, no later than October 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

# Orange County Commission for the Environment

## Meeting Summary October 12, 2020; 7:30 pm *Virtual GoTo Meeting*

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### **VIII. Adjournment**

Binkowski motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:41 pm; seconded by Fletcher; none opposed; motion passed.

The Orange County Commission for the Environment recommends that the Lands Legacy Action Plan (LLAP) take actions to recognize, protect, and interpret sites vital to the County for preservation of our natural environment, wildlife corridors, stream and creek health, climate resiliency, and prevention of erosion and stormwater run-off. In particular, we propose the following major considerations for determining the future land parcels protection by the County.

### **Commission for the Environment Land Legacy Action Plan Recommended Focus Points**

- Focus on natural area connectivity, connections between protected areas, parks, easements, etc. As a guideline, we recommend that County staff should work to protect wildlife corridors, specifically those outlined in Eno New Hope Landscape Conservation Plan and work to compare those corridors with those outlined in the County's comprehensive plan.
- Continue efforts to protect Natural Areas identified by the NC Natural Heritage Program, specifically those under private ownership. Riparian forests in the County should be considered of the utmost importance for protection.
- Seek projects which will benefit climate resiliency, both in terms of carbon storage and watershed safety due to increased storm strength and drought protection due to likely overall reduction of precipitation over time.
- Aim to preserve Orange County's rural character and cultural heritage through farmland, historically designated areas, and scenic viewsheds.
- Continue efforts to connect the Mountains to Sea Trail through Orange County.

**NAME OF BOARD/COMMISSION** \_\_\_\_\_

**Report Period** \_\_\_\_\_

**ORANGE COUNTY ADVISORY BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS  
ANNUAL REPORT/ WORK PLAN FOR THE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

The Board of Commissioners appreciates the dedication of all the volunteers on their boards and commissions and welcomes input from various advisory boards and commissions throughout the year. Please complete the following information, limited to the front and back of this form. Other background materials may be provided as a supplement to, but not as a substitute for, this form.

Board/Commission Name:

Person to address the BOCC at work session- if applicable- and contact information:

Primary County Staff Contact:

How many times per month does this board/commission meet, including any special meetings and sub-committee meetings?

Brief Statement of Board/Commission's Assigned Charge and Responsibilities.

What are your Board/Commission's most important accomplishments?

List of Specific Tasks, Events, or Functions Performed or Sponsored Annually.

Describe this board/commission's activities/accomplishments in carrying out BOCC goal(s)/priorities, if applicable.

Describe the collaboration relationship(s) this particular board has with other advisory boards and commissions?

If your board/commission played the role of an Element Lead Advisory Board involved in the 2030 Comprehensive Plan preparation process, please indicate your board's activities/accomplishments as they may relate to the Comprehensive Plan's goals or objectives.

*(The Element Lead Advisory Boards include: Planning Board, EDC, OUTBoard, Commission for the Environment, Historic Preservation Commission, Agriculture Preservation Board, Affordable Housing Board, Recreation and Parks Advisory Council)*

Identify any activities this board/commission expects to carry out in 2021 as they relate to established BOCC goals and priorities.

If applicable, is there a fiscal impact (i.e., funding, staff time, other resources) associated with these proposed activities (please list).

What are the concerns or emerging issues your board has identified for the upcoming year that it plans to address, or wishes to bring to the Commissioners' attention?



NAME OF BOARD/COMMISSION: Commission for the Environment

Report Period: 2019

ORANGE COUNTY ADVISORY BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS  
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Board/Commission Name: Commission for the Environment

Person to address the BOCC at work session- if applicable- and contact information: Bradley Saul, Chair [bradleysaul@gmail.com](mailto:bradleysaul@gmail.com)

Primary County Staff Contact: David Stancil, DEAPR Director (Christian Hirni, Wesley Poole, Brennan Bouma)

How many times per month does this board/commission meet, including any special meetings and sub-committee meetings?

The board meets once per month (2nd Monday). No meeting is held during the month of July. Committees meet as needed during regular meetings.

Brief Statement of Board/Commission's Assigned Charge and Responsibilities.

Purpose: to advise the BOCC on matters affecting the environment, with particular emphasis on environmental protection and enhancement. Other duties include:

- Perform special studies/projects on environmental issues as requested by BOCC
- Recommend environmental initiatives to the BOCC, especially of local importance
- Study changes in environmental science and environmental regulations in the pursuit of the CFE's duties
- Educate the public and local officials on environmental issues

What are your Board/Commission's most important accomplishments?

- Planning the 2019 State of the Environment report and 12/4/19 Environmental Summit (2018, 2019)
- Prepared resolutions for BOCC consideration concerning: Anti-Idling Campaign, Support for Carbon Fee and Dividend legislation, Request for NC to Divest from Fossil Fuel Corporations, Roadside Wildflower Conservation (2018)
- Developed recommendations for the County's Climate Change Program scoring system (2019)
- Created subcommittee for Roadside Wildflower Conservation (2019)
- Requested the BOCC consider joining the Global Covenant of Mayors and Chairs organization concerned with global climate change (2018)
- Wrote a series of climate change articles (2017)
- Developed and posted a Facebook page (2017)
- Edited and recommended a renewable energy resolution to the BOCC (2017)
- Recruited UNC capstone students to assist with the 2019 State of the Environment report (2017)
- Provided input on updates to the Lands Legacy Action Plan (2017)
- Made recommendations to BOCC on UDO amendment to flexible subdivisions (2016)
- Initiated a series of newspaper articles on environmental issues featured previously in the Orange County State of the Environment report (2015-16)
- Made recommendations to BOCC on 2016 bond package, the use of pesticides at County facilities, and incentives for energy efficient construction (2015)
- Commented to Planning Bd. on proposed changes to impervious surface rules (2015)
- Provided ideas for Public Services Announcements for County radio spots (2015)
- Collaborated with others on energy conservation and mgmt. projects (2015-16)
- Published the 2014 Orange County State of the Environment report (reports were previously completed in 2000, 2002, 2004, and 2009)
- Convened Orange County Environmental Summit (2005, 2009, 2014)
- Made recommendations to BOCC on food waste and solid waste tax district (2014)
- Worked with Orange County Schools to introduce local environmental indicators into middle and high school science curricula (2004, 2009, 2014)
- Hosted a Solid Waste Forum with the Chapel Hill Sustainability Committee (2013)
- Co-sponsored The Nature of Orange photography contest (2012 - 2018)
- Advocated for ½ cent sales tax referendum for Triangle Region public

transit (2012)

- Compiled annotated bibliography of the effects of forestry on water quality (2012)
- Developed sustainable landscaping and forest management policies for the administration of County-owned facilities (2010)

List of Specific Tasks, Events, or Functions Performed or Sponsored Annually.

- Co-sponsor “Nature of Orange” Photography Contest
- Liaison to Intergovernmental Parks Work Group
- Review and comment on environmental issues (e.g., anti-idling efforts, fracking, biosolids application, water pollution, air quality, forest mgmt.) and other issues assigned by the BOCC
- Identify priorities for the Lands Legacy Action Plan (natural areas and wildlife habitat)
- Conduct special studies pertaining to Orange County environment (e.g., energy efficiency/sustainability, forestry effects on water quality, herbicides and native flora)
- Conduct environmental education outreach events (e.g., Earth Evening)

Describe this board/commission’s activities/accomplishments in carrying out BOCC goal(s)/priorities, if applicable.

BOCC Goal Five: Create, preserve, and protect a natural environment that includes clean water, clean air, wildlife, important natural lands and sustainable energy for present and future generations.

- Presented findings and recommendations to BOCC on selected environmental issues: 1) roadside wildflower preservation; 2) effects of forest mgmt. on water quality; 3) effects of herbicides on roadside native plant habitat; 4) potential effects of hydraulic fracturing (“fracking”) in Orange County; 5) need for 100% renewable energy in Orange County (BOCC Priorities #1 and #12)
- Stayed abreast of ongoing and developing env. issues of importance to the County, such as Falls & Jordan Lake nutrient mgmt. rules, reducing commercial food waste in solid waste stream, and permitting of biosolids on farmland (Priorities #12 and #16)

Describe the collaboration relationship(s) this particular board has with other advisory boards and commissions?

As needed. Members of this commission are also on the Planning Board and the Intergovernmental Parks Work Group.

If your board/commission played the role of an Element Lead Advisory Board involved in the 2030 Comprehensive Plan preparation process, please indicate your board's activities/accomplishments as they may relate to the Comprehensive Plan's goals or objectives.

(The Element Lead Advisory Boards include: Planning Board, EDC, OUTBoard, Commission for the Environment, Historic Preservation Commission, Agriculture Preservation Board, Affordable Housing Board, Recreation and Parks Advisory Council)

The CFE provided extensive input into DEAPR staff development of the Natural and Cultural Systems Element of the Comprehensive Plan—specifically the chapters on Air and Energy Resources, Water Resources, and Natural Areas and Wildlife Habitat.

Objective AE-1:

Assess and implement the current countywide greenhouse gas emissions inventory and action plan target reductions.

- The CFE helped to initiate a countywide inventory of greenhouse gas emissions (2005), and continues to advise on ways to reduce the County's "carbon footprint."

Objective AE-15:

Foster participation in green energy programs such as installation incentives for solar hot water/solar generation/solar tempering in residential or commercial construction. The County should develop programs that will link citizens and businesses with options for alternative and sustainable energy sources.

- The CFE's Energy Resources Committee has developed proposals that address energy efficiency and renewable power issues, and will pursue further in collaboration with other advisory boards and stakeholders.

Objective NA-3:

Develop a more detailed and consistent methodology for monitoring changes in forest cover throughout the County, and specifically the extent of mature hardwood forest.

- The CFE's State of the Environment report documented significant reductions in mature hardwood forest that occurred from 2003-2008 and since 1988.

Objective NA-11:

Develop a comprehensive conservation plan for achieving a network of protected open space throughout Orange County, which addresses 1) threats to important natural areas; 2) connectivity between protected areas; 3) coordination with neighboring counties; and 4) sustainable management of critical natural resources.

- The CFE's Land Resources Committee is participating in a County effort to identify and preserve important landscape corridors that connect significant natural areas.

Objective NA-16:

Create a system of public and private open space and conservation areas, including parks, nature preserves, and scenic vistas representative of Orange County landscape.

- The CFE advises County's Lands Legacy program in its efforts to protect the most important natural and cultural resource lands through a variety of means.
- The CFE's Land Resources Committee is participating in a County effort to identify and preserve important landscape corridors that connect significant natural areas.

Objective WR-5:

Promote and participate in regional efforts to plan for use of water supplies in the region in an equitable manner, including contingency planning for water supplies during droughts. [Also Objectives WR-9, WR-10, and WR-15]

- CFE advocates for full implementation of the Water Resources Initiative to ensure planning for an adequate water supply for current and anticipated future needs

Objective WR-11:

Provide incentives and educational information to landowners to increase protection of watersheds and ground water supplies and their inter-relationships.

- The CFE distributes groundwater and surface water educational materials at Earth Evening and as part of its State of the Environment reports

NOTE: The newly-produced Orange County State of the Environment 2019 identifies specific recommendations on ways to help maintain and improve Orange County's environmental quality, many of which address objectives stated in the Orange County Comprehensive Plan.

Identify any activities this board/commission expects to carry out in 2020 as they relate to established BOCC goals and priorities.

If applicable, is there a fiscal impact (i.e., funding, staff time, other resources) associated with these proposed activities (please list).

- Create and distribute to County residents a series of brief compelling facts with a call to action and a link to more information.
- Assist in plans to update the Inventory of Natural Areas and Wildlife Habitat, in conjunction with a possible regional initiative.
- Complete work on tree policy for all County-owned lands.
- Continue to monitor OWASA planned forest management on its lands in rural Orange County, using the plan to inform the County's forest management plan, and providing feedback where needed.
- Support the creation of the Climate Action Plan.

- Review and consider action items from the Eno-New Hope Landscape Connectivity Plan.
- Continue to work on collaboration with Planning Board on matters of mutual or related interest.

What are the concerns or emerging issues your board has identified for the upcoming year that it plans to address, or wishes to bring to the Commissioners' attention?

- Closely monitor recent findings downstream in the Haw River of PFAS and Dioxane 1,4. On a related note, look into wastewater biosolids from upstream Haw jurisdictions being applied in Orange County.
- Work to ensure that the Upper Neuse River Basin Association and the NC Division of Water Resources include a broad toolbox of potential nutrient reduction activities for Falls Lake – including land conservation, an area Orange County has invested significantly.
- Long-term water supply resilience (for drinking water, agriculture and other needs) in light of future land use change and climate change impacts. Having a food and water plan for times of economic or climactic stress.