

APEX ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY BOARD

MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date:
February 18, 2021
6:00 p.m.



Remote Meeting
Details located on the Town website:
<https://www.apexnc.org/calendar.aspx>

ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS:

Hal Langenbach, Chair
Katie Schaaf, Vice Chair
John Garrison
Suzanne Mason

Michael Rusher
Marilee Szczerbala
Ted Williams

Call to Order & Roll Call:

The remote Environmental Advisory Board (EAB) meeting was called to order by Chair Langenbach at 6:21p.m. Members present were Chair Langenbach, Vice-Chair Katie Schaaf, and Board members John Garrison, Suzanne Mason, Mike Rusher, and Ted Williams. Board member Marilee Szczerbala was absent.

Councilmember Brett Gantt was in attendance and Town staff members present were Planner II Shelly Mayo, Stormwater Engineering Manager Jessica Bolin, Sustainability Analyst Valeria Mera, and non-voting staff secretary Sustainability Coordinator Megan Pendell. Members of the public had access to the meeting through the Town of Apex YouTube livestream page.

Approval of Minutes

Chair Langenbach asked the Board if there were any comments on the meeting minutes from January 21, 2021. A motion was made by Vice Chair Schaaf to approve the minutes, seconded by Chair Langenbach and the motion passed unanimously.

Announcements & Committee Updates

No announcements were made. Staff member Pendell introduced Committee Updates, a new Agenda item going forward. She reported that the Bee City Committee met the day prior on February 17th and discussed plans for a future pollinator garden at Apex Nature Park, which will have a grand opening in June. Updates on the garden will be provided on the website. She also reported that the Tree Citizens Advisory Panel is beginning to plan for the annual Arbor Day tree planting.

Town of Apex Trees and Shrubs List: Proposed Changes

Staff member Mayo presented on proposed changes to the Design and Development Manual Trees and Shrubs list. The changes include a new cover sheet and an updated, simplified planting recommendation list. The proposed changes also include prohibiting the planting of invasive species. Staff will refer to the list from the NC Invasive Plant Council for future updates. The next step is to present the proposed changes to Town Council and finalize the updates with approval. Staff will update the website with reference to each planting list and grant access for individual download. Any comments or suggestions from the Board should be sent through email to Staff member Mayo by March 5th.

Pre-Application Meeting: Cary Veterinarian Hospital

Staff member Pendell admitted three representatives for the rezoning project, Cary Vet Hospital, into the remote meeting. Representatives of Cary Vet Hospital included applicant Jeff Roach, Daniel Woods,

and Daniel Shults. Project attendee Roach explained that because it is early on in the rezoning process, the team was more focused on zoning than the site plan. He also stated that their team is still undergoing due diligence on environmental considerations. Items and questions discussed with the Board include:

- The development will include a single building because it is for a very specific use.
- The owner has proposed to keep the existing, non-buffered pond in place. It is a natural pond - man-made but not regulated as a stormwater control measure (SCM) - and is approximately an acre in size. There are no plans to make changes to the pond.
- If pet waste stations are installed and accessible to the public, the developer should ensure there are appropriate buffers to protect surface waters.
- The Board prefers outdoor lighting that is pointed towards the ground and with measures that minimize blue light emissions. The developer will rent light poles from the Town's Electric Department, which will apply LED lights and external shields to reduce glare next to residential property. Ultimately, the Board requested that no acorn style lights are utilized.
- Staff member Mayo confirmed that there will be a future park located nearby the property, which will include the development of regular side walk or multi-use pathway. Project attendee Roach stated that they will adhere to the Town's transportation and land use standards.
- Board member Rusher highlighted the importance of blending the roads and sidewalks for a continuous aesthetic since the project location is surrounded by residential area. Project attendee Roach stated that the Vet Hospital is intended as a mixed-use parcel and is in accordance with the Town's land use standards. The Board agreed that the project location is positive for neighborhood business. Project attendee Roach informed the Board that there is a neighborhood meeting next week.
- Project attendee Roach stated that the SCM approach will be to install a pond on the high point of the property. The developer will follow the Town's standards and state recommendations for guidance on appropriate planting materials.

Chair Langenbach made a motion to accept the Board's recommendations, seconded by Board member Rusher. The motion was approved unanimously.

Summary of Recommendations:

- Maximize the buffer around the pond to prevent pet waste runoff.
- Install a pet waste system near the proposed SCM and also near the natural pond (minimum of 2).

Pre-Application Meeting: Williams Property

Staff member Pendell admitted three representatives for the rezoning project, Williams Property, into the remote meeting. Representatives of Williams Property included applicant Bob Zumalt, Jacob Anderson, and Jessica Hardesty. Project attendee Zumalt highlighted that the proposed rezoning of low-density residential with 2.85 units per acre, concurs with the Town's land use standards. He stated their intention to flatten the curve of road that is perpendicular to the entrance property for enhanced safety measures. Items and questions discussed with the board include:

- There is no opportunity to connect a path from the property to public greenways because there are no greenways near the property.
- Staff member Bolin clarified that the owner of the dam is the owner of the pond, and are therefore responsible for maintaining it.
- In reference to a satellite image of the property, trees appear sparse due to hardwoods and wintertime imagery. The adjacent protected stream buffer is 200 feet and the developer cannot

disturb the protected tree buffer. The developer will identify tree species once a tree survey is conducted.

- Staff member Mayo informed the Board that as a planned unit development (PUD), the project reflects the maximum built open area for the land use designation underlying it. Low density PUDs are required to have 30% designated resource conservation area (RCA) and, therefore, rarely reach above 45% of built upon area. Fully developed, the property would not exceed 30% of impervious surface.
- There are no existing ponds on the east side of the property and it may be a good location for placement of an SCM. If there are significant trees in the area, the developer will leave the area undisturbed to maintain privacy for the adjacent Castleberry neighborhood.

Board member Garrison made a motion to accept the proposed environmental conditions by the developer, seconded by Chair Langenbach. The motion was approved unanimously.

Summary of Recommendations:

- Preservation of champion trees.
- Preservation of stacked stone walls.
- Tree canopy preservation and replacement rates.
- Minimum amount of open space/pocket parks.
- Minimum length of trails.
- Educational signage about wetlands.
- Pet waste stations and educational signage outside of sensitive areas.
- Increased stormwater quantity/quality control measures above ordinance requirement (commitment to attenuate the 25-year storm).
- Increased perimeter buffer to the east.
- Retention of existing farm pond and exploration of water re-use if possible.
- Increased bio-diversity in perimeter buffers and open space areas.
- Use of plant pollinator-friendly flora and native plant species.
- Solar conduit in homes.
- Full cut-off street lighting per apex UDO standards.

Pre-Application Meeting: Friendship Storage

Staff member Pendell admitted two representatives for the rezoning project, Friendship Storage, into the remote meeting. Representatives of Friendship Storage included applicant Brian Nichols and Bill Daniel. Project attendee Nichols clarified that there is an existing house on the property, as well as two wells on site that will be decommissioned. The Town requires a water connection from US Route 1 to the property. Items and questions discussed with the Board include:

- Parking as seen on schematic plan submitted to the Board is excess parking, a high estimate if the property is zoned for retail. The developer is interested to be zoned for storage building.
- The developer is open to installing solar, but the extent will not be known until they can do more research and obtain a final layout of the buildings. The Board requested that the developer commits to rooftop solar on both buildings.
- The area is fairly rural and will require a 40-foot type A buffer. The developer will try to add additional buffers, though the shape of the land is not conducive for more development and will remain undisturbed to an extent regardless. The perimeter landscape buffers cannot be graded, so they will be undisturbed as much as possible.
- The stream on the west side of the property may not be buffered for the full length; thus, there is a potential to add the required entrance to that area without disturbing any riparian buffers. The stream will be delineated to confirm.

- There is no official lighting layout, only a schematic based on early assumptions. The developer is obtaining surveys from which a layout for lighting will be produced. The Board requested efforts to mitigate lighting that may escape from the storage building and the project attendees expressed willingness to explore lighting efficiency options.

Chair Langenbach made a motion to accept the Board’s recommendations, seconded by Board member Rusher. The motion was approved unanimously.

Summary of Recommendations:

- Maintain undisturbed vegetative buffers.
- Add shielded light options to reduce light pollution.
- Install rooftop solar on both buildings.

Pre-Application Meeting: Chapel Ridge Towns

Staff member Pendell admitted four representatives for the rezoning project, Chapel Ridge Towns, into the remote meeting. Representatives of Chapel Ridge Towns included applicant Brendie Vega, Jason Barron, Ed Tang, and Dan Rossi. Project attendee Vega informed the Board that their team is more behind compared to some of the other pre-application meeting teams seen at this EAB meeting. She stated that the existing natural pond was already drained. Items and questions discussed with the Board include:

- Beaver Creek Greenway is nearby the property and the developer will work with staff to discuss building a connecting path to the greenway. The Board recommended that the developer builds a pedestrian-friendly connection from the property to the greenway.
- It is required for sidewalks to be placed on the southern end of the property.
- The developer stated that they are willing to commit to solar conduits in the buildings.
- The pond on the property was drained approximately three years ago and is not considered a wetland area.
- Stormwater will be treated with SCMs as required by the Town.

Chair Langenbach made a motion to accept the Board’s recommendations and proposed environmental conditions by the developer, seconded by Board member Garrison. The motion was approved unanimously.

Summary of Recommendations:

- Provide pedestrian-friendly connections to the future Beaver Creek greenway expansion and surrounding neighborhoods.
- Install signage near environmentally sensitive areas in order:
 - Reduce pet waste near SCM drainage areas.
 - Eliminate fertilizer near SCM drainage areas.
- Increase biodiversity.
 - Plant pollinator-friendly flora.
 - Plant native flora (Refer to the Apex Design and Development Manual for approved native species).
- Implement green infrastructure.
 - Provide diverse and abundant pollinator and bird food sources (e.g. nectar, pollen, and berries from blooming plants) that bloom in succession from spring to fall.
- Include landscaping that requires less irrigation and chemical use.
 - Plant warm season grasses for drought-resistance.
 - Increase the number of native hardwood tree species planted to 3, preferably 4.
- Include solar conduit in building design.

- The homebuilder will provide EV charging outlets as an upgrade option to individual units.
- Install pet waste stations in neighborhoods.
- Include energy efficient lighting in building design.
 - Lower maximum foot-candles outside of buildings.

Open Discussion

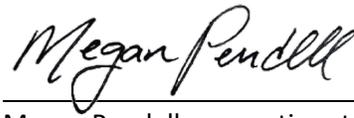
Chair Langenbach moved to Open Discussion. He reminded the Board to expect a new member to be joining the next meeting.

Board member Mason asked for an update on Conservation Subdivisions. Staff member Mayo disclosed that the report will go to the Planning Committee of Town Council because there is not a mechanism to go to the Planning Board, and there is no estimated timeframe.

Board member Rusher asked what to do when considering a property with multiple range of uses. Staff member Mayo stated that the Board may suggest conditions specifically for each proposed use and staff can inform the Board with details about specific uses ahead of the meeting.

Adjourn

Chair Langenbach made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:41p.m. and the motion was seconded by Board member Rusher. The motion was approved unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 8:41p.m.



Megan Pendell, non-voting staff secretary

ATTEST:

Hal Langenbach, Chair



Katie Schaaf, Vice Chair