

APEX ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY BOARD

MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date:
April 15, 2021
6:00 p.m.



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

ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS:

Katie Schaaf, Chair
Suzanne Mason, Vice Chair
Patrick Adams
John Garrison
Kim Pierson

Mike Rusher
Pranathi Sana
Marilee Szczerbala
Ted Williams

Call to Order & Roll Call

The remote Environmental Advisory Board (EAB) meeting was called to order by Chair Katie Schaaf at 6:03p.m. Members present were Chair Schaaf, Vice Chair Suzanne Mason, and Board members Patrick Adams, John Garrison, Kim Pierson, and Pranathi Sana. Board members Mike Rusher, Marilee Szczerbala, and Ted Williams were absent.

Councilmember Brett Gantt was in attendance and Town staff members present were Planner II Shelly Mayo, Planning Manager Amanda Bunce, Environmental 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 Schaaf asked the Board if there were any comments on the meeting minutes from March 22, 2021. A motion was made by Vice Chair Mason to approve the minutes, seconded by Chair Schaaf, and the motion passed unanimously.

Announcements

Staff member Pendell announced that the Sustainability Program Initiatives Report is complete and available for viewing on the new Sustainability Program webpage that went live this week.

Committee Updates

The Tree Citizens Advisory Panel (CAP) last met on March 24, 2021. The Tree CAP will present a Tree Planting Grant Program and Arbor Day Proclamation to Town Council on April 27th. This year, Tree CAP planted six trees at Clairmont Park in honor of the Town's sixth year as a designated Tree City. The Committee will convene at Clairmont on National Arbor Day, April 30th, for an official tree planting ceremony.

The Bee City Committee last met on March 17, 2021. On April 7th the Committee discussed the layout and design of the future pollinator garden at Apex Nature Park. On April 24th the Committee is hosting a Pollinator Garden Planting Day that will be open to the public for volunteers.

New Member Welcome

Chair Schaaf thanked Staff member Pendell for organizing New Member Orientations and the Board welcomed the three new Board members: Pranathi Sana, Patrick Adams, and Kim Pierson.

Pre-Application Meeting: Jackson Ten Ten

Staff member Pendell admitted four representatives for the rezoning project, Jackson Ten Ten, into the remote meeting. Representatives of Jackson Ten Ten included applicant Bill Daniel, Bill Jackson, Peter Tsikentzoglou, and Hayes Finley. Project attendee Daniel explained that the applicant is proposing to rezone 4.6 acres of a 57.6 acre parcel. The 4.6 acre piece is zoned residential and the remainder of the property is zoned light industrial. The 2045 Land Use Management Plan designates the entire parcel as Industrial Employment. The area of the proposed rezoning is the access to the remainder of the parcel. The rezoning is necessary due to Town regulations that prohibit access through residentially zoned properties to non-residential uses and to allow the planning and design of the overall parcel. Project attendee Daniel reviewed the proposed zoning conditions provided by the developer. Items and questions discussed with the Board include:

- The land use plan will be proposed once environmental evaluations are complete, but will likely take the form of an industrial subdivision and consist of individual parcels with individual plans.
- The types of buffers for site plan will be determined once the whole parcel is planned and specific use is determined. The applicant highlighted that they are proposing 12-foot buffers on eastern and western buffers, as well as aiming for a diverse selection of trees.
- Minimizing stream crossings once stream evaluation is completed. The Board recommended minimizing stream crossing to the greatest extent practicable.
- The extent of preserving tree canopy (instead of replanting) will be determined once a tree survey and other environmental evaluations are complete.

Summary of Recommendations:

- A 12' Type C buffer along the easternmost and westernmost boundaries of the area to be rezoned, with the additional condition that the planting of such buffers will include a minimum of 3 species of native hardwood canopy trees with a size at installation no smaller than 2.5" caliper. The buffer shall not preclude vehicular cross-connections to adjacent properties pursuant to an approved site plan, nor shall it apply to a publicly dedicated street R/W pursuant to a duly approved subdivision plan.
- Minimizing stream crossing to the greatest extent practicable.

Board member Garrison made a motion to accept zoning recommendations, seconded by Board member Adams. The motion was approved unanimously.

Pre-Application: Evans Road Assembly

Staff member Pendell admitted three representatives for the rezoning project, Evans Road Assembly, into the remote meeting. Representatives of Evans Road Assembly included Daniel Woods, Nil Ghosh, and Jason Vickers. Project attendee Ghosh explained that the development is located off Evans Road and New Hill Olive Chapel Road and is planned for 110-155 single family homes and townhomes. Project attendee Ghosh reviewed the three proposed zoning conditions provided by the developer. Items discussed with the Board include:

- The goal in regard to RCA is to locate the RCA in the perimeter adjacent to other RCA areas when possible. RCA will be compliant with UDO and will place 50% of RCA off-site as necessary.
- Road in the middle of the property connects to roads surrounding the property on the transportation plan. Providing that alignment of two roads is necessary to provide movement and connectivity, they will obtain the appropriate permit from NCDEQ as necessary.
- On account of not having completed a tree survey yet, there is no percentage of trees to be preserved or replanted. The developer intends to maintain buffer areas and perimeter, but the opportunity to save trees on this project is limited because of the aforementioned street connection that divides the property.

- Due to the requirement that stormwater control measures (SCM) are not located within riparian buffers, the Town will likely request a realignment of the connecting road. The developer will attempt to design the road so that SCMs can be installed outside of any riparian buffer while still meeting road standards.
- There is a strong likelihood that stormwater ponds will be developed as depicted and would need a buffer authorization from the Town to proceed accordingly. Low points of the property serve as good indication for where the stormwater will flow. The Project attendees emphasized that they are looking into providing a 25-year-storm attenuation.
- The applicant cannot guarantee that homeowners will be able to plant trees and shrubs on their individual plots without interference with utility easements.
- The goal is to place at least one pet waste station per SCM, though the Board suggested that there should be more than that due to the volume of homes.
- In an effort to be Dark Sky Compliant, light fixtures on the outside of homes will be a light temperature of 3000 Kelvin at time of build.
- Board members share a desire to increase greenway space and Project attendees highlighted the plan to provide continued pedestrian connectivity, even though the nearby greenway is not on the property.
- Solar conduits will be in all single-family homes and townhomes.
- Applicants expressed uncertainty on whether townhomes will be irrigated or non-irrigated.

Summary of Recommendations:

- Increase design storm for retention basins in flood-prone areas.
 - Option 2: Increase design storm pre- and post-attenuation requirement to the 25-year storm.
- Install signage near environmental sensitive areas in order to:
 - Reduce pet waste near SCM drainage areas.
 - Eliminate fertilizer near SCM drainage areas.
- Preserve tree canopy and prioritize medium to large, healthy, desirable species.
 - Option 1: Preserve existing trees (percentage-based).
- Increase biodiversity.
 - Option 1: Plant pollinator-friendly flora.
 - Option 2: Plant native flora (Refer to the Apex Design & Development Manual for approved native species).
- Include landscaping that requires less irrigation and chemical use.
 - Option 1: Plant warm season grasses for drought-resistance.
- Apply for green building certifications: Energy Star.
- Install pet waste stations in neighborhoods.
- Include solar conduit in building design for all buildings, including townhomes and single-family homes.
- SCMs are placed outside of the riparian buffer.
- Extend greenway access to connect with existing greenways.
- Include International Dark Sky Association compliance standards.
 - Lighting with a color temperature of 3000K or less shall be used at time of the home build.
 - Lighting that minimizes the emission of blue light to reduce glare shall be used at time of the home build.

Board member Pierson made a motion to accept zoning recommendations, seconded by Board member Garrison. The motion was approved unanimously.

Pre-Application: Holland Road Assembly

Staff member Pendell admitted two representatives for the rezoning project, Holland Road Assembly, into the remote meeting. Representatives of Holland Road Assembly included Daniel Woods and Nil Ghosh. Project attendee Ghosh explained that the development is planned for 100-110 single family homes on 28 acres and 6 parcels with a mix of intended uses. Areas of the property nearest to US Highway 1 will be commercial, with detached homes and single-family homes further out from US 1. The property will ultimately consist of 40,000-70,000 square feet on non-residential square footage, which does not include outparcels. Project attendee Ghosh reviewed the six proposed zoning conditions provided by the developer. Items discussed with the Board include:

- Plans for outparcels are not certain, other than that it would not be built for residential use. The 1.5-acre lot could be a 10,000 square foot building, though it also allows for something smaller. It is likely to be commercial or office space.
- The percentage of RCA that will be off-site ultimately depends on results of environmental evaluations. Stream evaluations are in progress and the site may need to be adjusted due to the buffers. If buffers are maintained, they will count towards RCA. The Board suggested preference to build upon the RCA area to the north and keep that habitat connected, if possible.
- Concern over play lawn being near to the commercial area. Ultimate location will be dictated by topography and the developer will consider making the play lawn area nearer to the residential side.
- Being a fairly dense project, green space area is more of a priority on the residential side. Green corridors are planned for the sections in between townhomes.
- Project attendees discussed the possibility for commercial area to have an underground detention system for stormwater control.
- Planning has not progressed enough to determine whether office buildings will match the architecture of the residential buildings.
- Smart technology and Dark Sky compliant lighting are preferred by the Board. The developer will attempt to limit glare and coloration of exterior lighting on all buildings, though this would be more complicated to coordinate on the residential side. Other details on lighting and solar will depend on the ultimate site plan.

Summary of Recommendations:

- Increase design storm for retention basins in flood-prone areas.
 - Option 2: Increase design storm pre- and post-attenuation requirement to the 25-year storm.
- Install signage near environmental sensitive areas in order to:
 - Reduce pet waste near SCM drainage areas.
 - Eliminate fertilizer near SCM drainage areas.
- Increase biodiversity.
 - Option 1: Plant pollinator-friendly flora.
 - Option 2: Plant native flora (Refer to the Apex Design & Development Manual for approved native species).
- Include landscaping that requires less irrigation and chemical use.
 - Option 1: Plant warm season grasses for drought-resistance.
- Improve soil quality to be amenable for a variety of native and non-invasive plantings.
- Install pet waste stations in neighborhoods.
- Include solar conduit in building design.
- Include energy efficient exterior lighting in building design.
- Install timers or light sensors or smart lighting technology for exterior lighting.
- Include International Dark Sky Association compliance standards.
 - Outdoor lighting shall be shielded in a way that focuses lighting to the ground.
 - Lighting that minimizes the emission of blue light to reduce glare shall be used.

- Incorporate natural lighting techniques into building design whether residential or non-residential.
- Maintain connections between RCAs to preserve habitat if possible.
- Move play area to residential side (north side) for better accessibility of open green space.

Board member Garrison made a motion to accept zoning recommendations, seconded by Board member Adams. The motion was approved unanimously.

Pre-Application: Legacy Apex

Staff member Pendell admitted three representatives for the rezoning project, Legacy Apex, into the remote meeting. Representatives of Legacy Apex included applicant Glenda Toppe, Ed Tang, and Ryan Linker. Project attendee Toppe explained that the development includes 3 parcels, 61 acres, and is located South of Highway 64 West. American Tobacco Trail is adjacent to a portion of the property, which reflects the 2045 Apex Land Use Plan Map. Project attendee Toppe reviewed the eight proposed zoning conditions provided by the developer. Items discussed with the Board include:

- Plans to providing a connection to the greenway that run East to West. The layout of the greenway connection will depend on topography and NCDOT specifications. A greenway connection was added to the list of recommendations by the Board.
- The Board expressed concern with outdoor lighting and interest in lighting efficiency, especially due to proximity to Jordan Lake and potential adverse effects on wildlife. The Board made recommendations to reduce light glare and shield light fixtures to point downward.
- The Project attendees could not guarantee that homeowners will be able to plant trees and shrubs on their individual plots without interference with utility easements.
- No definite number of charging stations yet. The Board recommended that the stations be spread out as much as possible.

Summary of Recommendations:

- Install signage near environmental sensitive areas in order to:
 - Reduce pet waste near SCM drainage areas.
 - Eliminate fertilizer near SCM drainage areas.
- Plant trees as designed for efficiency.
 - Option 1: Plant deciduous shade trees on southern side of buildings.
- Increase biodiversity.
 - Option 1: Plant pollinator-friendly flora.
- Implement green infrastructure.
 - Option 4: 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.
 - Option 5: Provide and allow for undisturbed spaces (e.g. leaf piles, unmown fields, fallen trees) for nesting and overwintering for native pollinators and wildlife.
- Include landscaping that requires less irrigation and chemical use.
 - Option 1: Plant warm season grasses for drought-resistance.
- Install pet waste stations in neighborhoods.
- Install convenient electric vehicle charging stations.
 - Spread out charging stations as much as possible considering all sides of the property for all potential users.
- Include energy efficient lighting in building design.
 - Option 1: Lower maximum foot-candles outside of buildings.
- Install timers or light sensors or smart lighting technology.
- Incorporate natural lighting techniques into building design.

- Add east to west connections to existing surrounding greenways, including from the American Tobacco Trail.
- Include International Dark Sky Association compliance standards.
 - Outdoor lighting shall be shielded in a way that focuses lighting to the ground.
 - Lighting that minimizes the emission of blue light to reduce glare shall be used.
- Minimize the number of stream crossings, keeping the riparian buffer connected without barriers, as much as possible.
- Provide space for additional tree plantings by single-family residential in planning for above and underground obstructions.

Board member Mason made a motion to accept zoning recommendations, seconded by Board member Pierson. The motion was approved unanimously.

Open Discussion

Councilmember Gantt mentioned that the Board’s recommendations in regard to lighting is helpful and that he is hopeful the Town will install light fixtures that help with monitoring and adjustment of individual street lights. Board member Adams offered to contribute to research on light fixtures so that the Board can discuss potential lighting-related zoning conditions at the next EAB meeting.

Board member Mason introduced a new condition to add to the rezoning checklist: Mark the boundary of RCAs when that RCA is in natural condition. Planning staff expressed approval for education on understanding boundaries, but warned it could be harmful if signage is installed on small trees. Furthermore, signage raises the potential of a visual litter issue. Board member Adams suggested a U-channel post as an alternative to affixing RCA boundary marker signs to trees. Board member Pierson suggested to add RCA awareness to the Board’s Community Education Initiatives document. Board member Garrison made a motion to add the proposed condition to the rezoning checklist, seconded by Chair Schaaf. The motion was approved unanimously.

Staff member Pendell introduced the topic of an EAB tent at the upcoming PeakFest event to be held on September 11, 2021, and discussed design options. Chair Schaaf made a motion to change the color of the tent from blue to green, seconded by Board member Garrison. The motion was approved unanimously.

The Board discussed Community Education Initiatives and expressed the importance of providing resources at their tent at PeakFest. It was agreed that taking advantage of other resources will help stretch out budgets and save time.

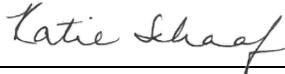
Adjourn

Board member Mason made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Board member Garrison. The motion was approved unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 8:54p.m.



 Megan Pendell, non-voting staff secretary

ATTEST:



 Katie Schaaf, Chair