

APEX ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY BOARD

MEETING MINUTES

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



Hybrid 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
Bill Jensen

Kim Pierson
Mike Rusher
Pranathi Sana
Marilee Szczerbala

Call to Order & Roll Call

The remote Environmental Advisory Board (EAB) meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Suzanne Mason at 6:01p.m. Members present in-person at Town Hall Room 3A were Vice Chair Mason, and Board members John Garrison and Marilee Szczerbala. Members present remotely on Microsoft Teams were Mike Rusher and Pranathi Sana. Chair Katie Schaaf and Board members Patrick Adams, Bill Jensen, and Kim Pierson were absent.

Councilmember Brett Gantt was in attendance and Town staff members present were Planner II Shelly Mayo, Senior Engineer Stan Fortier, Deputy Town Clerk Tesa Silver, Sustainability Specialist 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 and in-person at Town Hall.

Approval of Minutes

Vice Chair Mason asked the Board if there were any comments on the amended meeting minutes from June 17, 2021. Board member Garrison made a motion to change a clerical error under announcements and approve the minutes, seconded by Board member Szczerbala, and the motion passed unanimously.

Oath of Office

Staff member Silver administered the Oath of Office for Board members physically present. An Oath of Office is now required by the Town for committee members to serve. Board members who attended virtually or were absent will coordinate a time to visit Town Hall and take the Oath.

Announcements

Staff member Mayo provided rezoning updates. The Williams Property went before Town Council on June 22nd. Town Council decided to continue the vote on the rezoning to the July 27th meeting. Councilmember Gantt mentioned that the proposal includes all of the conditions that were recommended by the Board. The developers have assisted Wake County Public School System staff with finding a potential school site in western Apex. The Board of Education will vote on the possible school site on July 20th and Town Council decided to wait until after that to approve or deny the Williams Property rezoning. The Williams Property development team has submitted a subdivision plan in effort for approval, which is currently under review by the Apex Planning Department.

Staff member Pendell announced that Senior Engineer Stan Fortier is present to answer any stormwater questions in place of Environmental Engineering Manager Jessica Bolin. Also present at the meeting

were Matt Taylor, rising senior at Apex High School and new Intern for the Planning Department, and Kaitlin Hartman, Chair of the Bee City Committee.

Committee Updates

The Bee City Committee last met on June 23rd. The Committee focused on the potential Neighborhood Recognition Program and stated the intent to ask the Board to include the Program as a potential condition on the EAB Suggested Environmental Zoning Conditions list.

The next Tree Citizens Advisory Panel (CAP) meeting is on August 5th. The meeting will focus on planning for PeakFest and promoting the newly adopted Tree Planting Program, which will launch in October.

Board member Szczerbala commented that Tulip Poplar trees are an important species for bees, which provides a project opportunity for the Board to collaborate with both Bee City and Tree CAP. Staff member Pendell added that a meeting for this collaboration is being planned for a future time in August.

Pre-Application Meeting: Beauregard Place at Weddington

Staff member Pendell admitted one representative for the rezoning project, Beauregard Place, into the remote meeting access. The representative for Beauregard Place was John Woodlief. Project representative Woodlief explained that the applicant is proposing to rezone a 3.3-acre site for a cul-de-sac at the end of Beauregard Place, west of the Weddington Subdivision and east of the American Tobacco Trail. Roughly half of the site is taken up by stream buffer and floodplain. The proposal shows a total of five lots, averaging ten thousand square feet per lot. He underlined the proposed conditions to save existing vegetation on site and highlighted the floodplain and riparian buffer on the property that cannot be developed. Items and questions discussed with the Board include:

- Pet waste. Pet waste stations and educational signage will be installed in order to ensure water quality.
- Stormwater facility. Due to the limited developable land on the property, the project team is considering an underground stormwater control measure (SCM) device, which will be modified for a 25-year-storm attenuation.
- Preservation. The project area is currently 100% wooded and roughly 50% of the tree canopy will be preserved. Project representative Woodlief explained the difficulty in committing to preserving particular trees, specifically large diameter trees, due to the grading required to keep the lots out of the 100-year floodplain. In addition, a sewer easement will be installed, and trees will have to be removed to accommodate.
- Sewer line. An existing sewer manhole is located offsite and a sewer line connection will be installed between the property lines of lots 4 and 5. A stream delineation has been completed and existing creeks and streams will not be disturbed by sewer easement installation because the applicant is proposing an aerial crossing.
- Floodplain boundary. In order to build lots 2-4, the grade of the lots will have to be raised in order to stay out of the flood plain to the greatest extent. The floodplain itself follows the proposed retaining wall, which does push back the floodplain. The site would not be able to be developed otherwise.
- Trail access. Vice Chair Mason asked if any steps had been considered to prevent informal access to the American Tobacco Trail. Project representative Woodlief expressed that he fully anticipates that most residents would go to the formal entrance at White Oak to access the American Tobacco Trail. The retaining wall will be 5-6 feet tall, making it difficult for this property to be an access point.
- Resource conservation area (RCA) protection. The project will include silt fencing and additional forms of added environmental protection to prevent run off in RCA areas. Per suggestion by the Board, signage will be added to inform residents of the preserved RCA.

Summary of Recommendations:

- Increase design storm pre- and post-attenuation requirement to the 25-year storm.
- Install signage near environmentally sensitive areas in order to:
 - Reduce pet waste near SCM drainage areas.
- Preserve tree canopy and prioritize medium to large, healthy, desirable species.
 - Preserve existing trees (percentage-based), including everything within the riparian buffer minus the 20' – 30' sewer easement at the southwest corner of the site.
- 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.
 - Lighting with a color temperature of 3000K or less shall be used for outside installations.
- Install pet waste stations in neighborhoods.
- Add signage that will identify environmentally sensitive areas, including RCA and areas in the floodplain.

Board member Szczerbala amended her initial motion to approve the zoning recommendations to add signage about RCA in addition to environmentally sensitive areas. The property is not required to add RCA because of the overall density of the site, but the applicant stated that they would be willing to dedicate it. The motion was amended, seconded by Board member Garrison, and passed unanimously.

Dark Sky Workgroup: Updates

The Dark Sky Workgroup is comprised of Board members Adams, Garrison, Pierson, and Staff members Mayo and Pendell. Board member Pierson has accepted the role as Workgroup Leader. The Workgroup is scheduled to meet the following day, July 17th, to discuss details for future amendment recommendations for UDO section 8.6 Exterior Lighting.

Introduction: Bee City Committee

Bee City Committee Chair Kaitlin Hartman was introduced and shared background on the Committee. The Committee agreed that it would be advantageous for the Committee Chair to present to the Board and share goals and initiatives for potential collaboration, especially in an effort to increase pollinator habitats. The Committee is currently working on building a Pollinator Certification Program. The Program is intended for residents, neighborhood communities, and businesses, and will have three certification levels: Participant, silver, and gold. Tasks for participation include providing food sources for pollinators, using native plants, providing pollinator nesting habitats, reducing or removing invasive plants, and minimizing pesticide use. The Committee will engage in outreach efforts to inform residents, communities, and businesses once the program is finalized, and are aiming to have it completed by PeakFest.

Staff member Mayo shared that the recently updated Design and Development Manual could serve as a resource for native plants reference. Further, she recommended that the Committee include Homeowners Association (HOA) management companies in their outreach efforts. The Apex Planning Department keeps a list of Town HOA contacts, which could be shared with the Committee. Staff member Mayo also suggested that the Committee reach out to the Apex Communications team to align with Town outreach efforts and coordinate posts on Town social media. Additionally, she recommended creating stickers or signs for demonstration purposes. The Town design standards could be shared in order to create this.

Vice Chair Mason asked about whether certification renewal and verification had been discussed. Bee City Chair Hartman stated that it had not yet been discussed and she will bring the idea back to the Committee. The verification or updating process would ultimately depend on the size of the program and bandwidth of Committee members.

Bee City Chair Hartman stated that the Committee plans to encourage planting standards, such as plant diversity and native plant prioritization. Further, Bee City Chair Hartman stated that the Committee is interested in encouraging a positive impact in areas like right-of-way and utility easements.

The Bee City Committee will share the final version of the Certification Program with the Board. Councilmember Gantt thanked Bee City Chair Hartman and expressed appreciation for the input contributed by the Committee on behalf of Town Council.

Discussion: EV Charging in Garages Update

Following the EV Parking Requirements presentation at the May EAB meeting, an update was shared to the Board, which determined that adding a 240-volt charging station as a residential zoning condition is not enforceable because it is not required in the NC State Electrical Code. Board member Garrison explained that such a requirement would need legislation to support it or require approval from the NC Building Code Council to add it as a zoning requirement. Board member Szczerbala shared that if the Board chooses to move forward with inspiring change, it would be beneficial to reach out to neighboring communities for collaboration. Staff member Mayo recommended contacting state congressional representatives to provide express desire for this kind of change at the state level.

Large developments, such as apartment complexes, will be required to meet new EV parking requirements starting in July 2021. The Planning Department has requested retroactively for applicants who submitted in May and June to abide by the new requirement, as well.

PeakFest Education Initiatives & Swag

Staff member Pendell presented on a number of swag giveaway options that the Board could choose from for PeakFest. After discussion, the Board settled on a giveaway of seed paper fans, and prize wheel items including travel utensil kits, travel pet bowls, flower pot sets, and seed passports. The Town of Apex logo and “The Peak of Good *and Sustainable* Living” will be printed on items with promotional personalization options. Board member Szczerbala made a motion to approve the PeakFest swag items, seconded by Board member Rusher, and passed unanimously.

Open Discussion

On behalf of the Planning Department, Staff member Mayo requested a list of priorities from the Board for future UDO amendment proposals. The Board agreed to discuss amendment priorities at the Board meeting in August.

As a follow up from the Triangle Land Conservancy (TLC) presentation at the June EAB meeting, Staff member Mayo shared that TLC has shared their data with Planning staff, and are moving forward with a meeting to discuss the potential of new conservations easements in Apex.

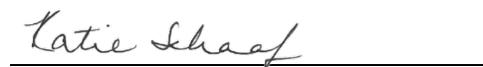
Adjourn

Board member Szczerbala made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Board member Garrison. The motion was approved unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 8:08p.m.



Megan Pendell, non-voting staff secretary

ATTEST:



Katie Schaaf, Chair