

APEX ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY BOARD

MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date:
June 18, 2020
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
Tim Carley
Laura Duggan
John Garrison

Michael Rusher
Marilee Szczerbala
Jessica Wilkerson
Ted Williams

The online Environmental Advisory Board (EAB) meeting was called to order by Chair Hal Langenbach at 6:01pm. Members present were Chair Langenbach, Vice-Chair Katie Schaaf, Board Members Tim Carley, John Garrison, Mike Rusher, Marilee Szczerbala, Jessica Wilkerson, and Ted Williams. Board Member Laura Duggan was absent.

Council member Brett Gantt was in attendance and Town staff members present were Current Planning Manager Amanda Bunce, Environmental Engineering Manager and non-voting secretary to the EAB Jessica Bolin, Water Resources Specialist David Hardin, and Zoning Compliance Officer Mark Siburt.

After Chair Langenbach went over the logistics of how the online meeting will be run, a motion was made by Board member Carley to approve the minutes from the May 21, 2020 meeting and the motion passed unanimously.

Chair Langenbach opened a discussion about formalizing comments and ideas received from board members. It was suggested that a written summary of any potential initiative be sent directly to staff member Bolin and she will compile and maintain a list of these future action items. The board can then prioritize these initiatives and move through them accordingly. The priority list would be available to all board members, the Town's Planning and Legal departments, and potentially the public. Chair Langenbach said it was important for the board to have input from the Council on what is important to them as this list is developed. Council member Gantt weighed in from the Council's perspective and suggested that the most updated priority list be sent to the entire Council quarterly for general awareness and for the potential to comment.

Staff member Bunce reminded the group about the existing resources of the Bee City Committee and the Tree Citizen Advisory Panel (CAP) and to use them as necessary moving forward with any initiatives.

Chair Langenbach asked the group how the board should be interacting with the public. Board member Garrison suggested a single website or Facebook page. Member Rusher suggested a webpage within the Town's website for how to contact the EAB with questions, concerns, or recommendations.

Board member Szczerbala recommended the board begin suggesting changes to the UDO and be ready to start reviewing rezoning applications. Member Wilkerson said that the community wants environmental mitigation from developers and that the EAB is contingent on what citizens want. Chair

Langenbach cautioned the board that they can take comments from the public but not to be steered too much since the board is supposed to represent the public as a whole and not just those most vocal to the board.

Chair Langenbach closed the discussion and made a motion that a summary for any new idea for a board initiative be routed through staff member Bolin who will maintain a list. Member Carley seconded the motion and it was passed unanimously.

Staff member David Hardin introduced himself and gave his background in drinking water and wastewater quality. There was a general GenX discussion and staff member Hardin noted that the Cary/Apex Water Treatment Plant tests for approximately 30 compounds not currently regulated by the EPA or the State and that levels are in parts per trillion and not currently a concern. Staff member Hardin also spoke about testing in streams in Town and that this is only completed by TJCOG through the USGS gauging stations at the Haw River and in Jordan Lake but nothing on individual creeks or streams.

Council member Gantt asked about the connection between stormwater and drinking water and staff member Hardin spoke about how nutrient levels in runoff can cause algal blooms in the lake and have associated taste and odor issues in the finished water.

Member Wilkerson suggested an item be added to the board's priority list for public outreach related to water quality in neighborhood streams. She spoke about how citizens spend money on reverse osmosis systems on their whole house and this could potentially be something the Town could require developers install on new construction.

Chair Langenbach turned the discussion over to Member Rusher to lead a conversation about screening and perimeter buffers. Member Rusher suggested the board use the street view on Google maps to see different types of buffers and pointed out the difference between the buffer on Highway 64 in front of Costco versus across the street on 64 in front of the Knollwood subdivision and how different they appear. Staff member Bunce highlighted the fact that the age of the development needs to be taken into account when comparing buffers since it takes years for vegetation to mature. She went on to say that requiring a wider buffer on new development takes away developable land and can increase the home prices in that particular subdivision and how setting the right width to require is a balancing act.

Member Sczcerbala asked if buffering would be considered similarly to the RCA discussion from the May EAB meeting in that different widths could be required depending on where you are in Town. Staff member Bunce said buffer width is currently determined by proposed and adjacent land uses and staff believes that method is appropriate regardless of where you are in Town. The one exception is the Small Town Character Overlay District where there are no buffers required. This is to allow more development opportunity close to the downtown core.

Member Wilkerson asked for further details about a recent Council meeting where tree replacement was discussed. Staff member Bunce said a tree survey is currently required on new development plans for every deciduous tree 18" and greater in diameter. The Council is interested in preserving trees where possible so is interested in potentially requiring the replacement of any deciduous tree 18" and greater that is removed. A 1.5" diameter tree would be required as a replacement either on site or offsite. The Town has not investigated how this would work on a large scale development yet. Staff member Siburt, a certified arborist, said this initiative would be under the purview of the Tree CAP and is an example of how these two committees could work together.

Board member Carley made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:28pm and the motion was seconded by Board member Sczcerbala and approved unanimously.



Jessica Bolin, non-voting staff secretary

ATTEST:



Hal Langenbach, Chair