

APEX ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY BOARD

MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date:
September 16th, 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

Bill Jensen
Kim Pierson
Mike Rusher
Marilee Szczerbala

Call to Order & Roll Call

The remote Environmental Advisory Board (EAB) meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Mason at 6:08p.m. Members present were Chair Katie Schaaf, Vice Chair Suzanne Mason, and Board members Patrick Adams, John Garrison, Kim Pierson, Mike Rusher, and Marilee Szczerbala. Board member Bill Jensen entered the meeting at 6:23p.m. Board member Adams left the meeting at 6:40p.m. and Chair Schaaf left the meeting at 7:00p.m.

Councilmember Brett Gantt was in attendance and Town staff members present were current 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

Vice Chair Mason asked the Board if there were any comments on the meeting minutes from August 19th, 2021. Hearing none, Chair Schaaf made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Board member Szczerbala and the motion passed unanimously.

Announcements

Staff member Pendell announced that the appointment of a new board member will be presented before the Town Council on September 28th. As a follow-up on discussion from the July EAB meeting, Staff member Mera provided an update on how to move forward with updating the NC Building Code to make adding a 240-volt charging station as a residential zoning condition an enforceable condition. The Board ultimately decided not to pursue this.

Committee Updates

The Tree Citizens Advisory Panel (CAP) last met on September 2nd. Tree CAP joined the Sustainability Team at PeakFest and gave away 50 native trees, supplied by Project Pando. Each tree had a QR code to a guide on proper tree planting. The Tree CAP Tree Planting Program went live on September 1st and received almost 200 applications in the first week. Though the program can only fund 100 applicants, the number of applications exemplifies the popularity of trees in Apex and there are high expectations for program growth next fiscal year.

The Bee City Recognition Program is scheduled to go live the first week of October, at which point the Board can discuss potentially incorporating the program into the Suggested Environmental Zoning Conditions list.

Pre-Application Meeting: Retreat at Cedar Crossing

Staff member Pendell admitted two representatives for the rezoning project, Retreat at Cedar Crossing, into the remote meeting access. The Representatives for Retreat at Cedar Crossing were Justin Brown and Nil Ghosh. Project representative Ghosh explained that this neighborhood is an age-restricted community consisting of approximately 88 homes. The developer is proposing to replace the play lawn condition with a trail and wildflower garden. The project team will commit to the recommendation from the Board to add pet waste stations.

Items and questions discussed with the Board include:

- Impervious Surface. The approved planned unit development (PUD) plan and construction document plan allotted 10,000 square feet for future amenity space design. The proposed increase in impervious surface from this project is already accounted for within the stormwater control measure (SCM) that this area drains to, which was confirmed by Staff member Bolin.
- Lighting. It was recommended by the Board to incorporate lighting suggestions from the Conditions list, specifically surrounding the pickleball court. To ensure that the neighborhood adjacent to this amenity is not disturbed by the lighting, downward shielded light is recommended for implementation. Project representatives confirmed that the existing buffer, retaining wall, and tree canopy between the neighborhood and the pickleball court will remain. Lighting should be as reduced near the garden area, as well.
- Landscape Plan. The extent of trees for this area is reflected on the plans presented to the Board. A total of 7 trees will be planted, coupled with the planned garden area. Although the specific design of the garden has not been discussed yet, the intention is to plant native species and pollinator-friendly plants. The Board recommended that the plants selected require less irrigation if possible, and are strategically selected for year-round growth.
- Garden Maintenance. Staff member Bunce clarified that because the wildflower garden is being proposed as a rezoning condition, the Town could enforce that the Homeowners Association (HOA) of the property maintain the garden. A plan for the irrigation system will be coordinated once plants for the garden have been selected.
- Solar. The approved PUD plan committed to pre-wiring 9 homes in this neighborhood with solar. The Board added a recommendation that all homes be pre-wired for solar and that a minimum of 20 homes have solar PV systems installed that are a minimum of 4-kW.

Summary of Recommendations:

- Include mulched walking paths.
- Include a wildflower garden.
- Plant pollinator-friendly flora.
- Install at least 1 pet waste station in the amenity area.
- Install community gardens and native pollinator demonstration gardens.
- Include landscaping that requires less irrigation and chemical use.
- Include energy efficient lighting in building design.
 - *Option 1:* Lower maximum foot-candles outside of buildings.
- Recommendation that all homes be pre-wired for solar and that a minimum of 20 homes have solar PV systems installed that are a minimum of 4 kW.
- Recommendation that the average [HERS index](#) for all homes in the development be a maximum of 60.
- Apply the following lighting standards to the amenity area, with particular focus on the pickleball courts and garden:
 - Install timers or light sensors or smart lighting technology.
 - Incorporate natural lighting techniques into building design.
 - 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.

Board member Rusher made a motion to approve the zoning recommendations, seconded by Board member Szczerbala, 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 serves as Workgroup Leader and provided updates. The workgroup last met on August 27th and members will focus on recommendations for UDO updates. Vice Chair Mason mentioned that the City of Raleigh turned down non-essential lighting.

UDO Amendment Prioritization

At the July EAB meeting, Staff member Mayo asked the Board to prioritize UDO amendments that had been discussed so far, including: Conservation Subdivisions, Dark Sky Updates, and EV Updates. Vice Chair Mason suggested tabling conservation subdivisions until Chatham County concludes revisions for UDO language on conservation subdivisions. Board member Garrison expressed uncertainty that the effort to amend the Building Code would be worth the time and effort of the Board, and he would prefer to focus on Dark Sky UDO amendments. Chair Schaaf and Vice Chair Mason agreed with Board member Garrison's idea. Chair Schaaf suggested that with more advanced experience with rezoning applications, the Board could review what items are routinely accepted by projects and consider incorporating those items into the UDO.

Suggestion Environmental Zoning Conditions: Bee City Recognition Program

Tabled for the October EAB meeting due to the program still being in draft stage.

PeakFest Outcomes

The Board discussed the success of the engagement activities and giveaways. For next year, it would be beneficial to complement educational games with a handout, such as information about Waste Wizard for the recycling game. Additionally, having a minimum of three members per volunteer shift would help to better manage multiple stations. An inventory of the prizes will be taken to help gauge quantity of future purchases. Staff member Pendell confirmed that none of the prize items, including the seed packets, were perishable and could be used at future events.

Open Discussion

None.

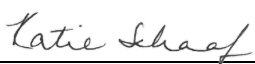
Adjourn

Board member Garrison made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Board member Szczerbala. The motion was approved unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m.



Megan Pendell, non-voting staff secretary

ATTEST:



Katie Schaaf, Chair