

# APEX ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date:  
March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2022  
6:00p.m.



Hybrid Meeting  
Apex Town Hall Room 3A  
Microsoft Teams

## **ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS:**

Katie Schaaf, Chair  
Suzanne Mason, Vice Chair  
Patrick Adams  
Adam Efird  
John Garrison

Bill Jensen  
Jason Maynard  
Kim Pierson  
Greg Reger

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### Call to Order & Roll Call

The remote Environmental Advisory Board (EAB) meeting was called to order by Chair Katie Schaaf at 6:00p.m. Members present were Vice Chair Suzanne Mason, and Board members Adam Efird, John Garrison, Bill Jensen, Jason Maynard, Kim Pierson, and Greg Reger. Board member Patrick Adams was absent.

Councilmember Brett Gannt was in attendance on behalf of Councilmember Stallings. Town staff members present were Current Planning Manager Amanda Bunce, Planner II Shelly Mayo, Environmental Engineering Manager Jessica Bolin, 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.

### Approval of Minutes

Chair Schaaf asked the Board if there were any comments on the meeting minutes from February 17, 2022. Upon hearing none, Board member Garrison made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Board member Jensen and the motion passed unanimously.

### Announcements

Staff member Pendell noted this was the first Hybrid meeting since August 2021. All in-person meetings will also include a virtual component going forward.

Staff member Pendell announced the establishment of the EAB Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) Workgroup, dedicated to prioritizing potential UDO amendment recommendations. The Workgroup is made up of Vice Chair Mason and Board members Garrison and Efird.

### Committee Updates

The Arbor Day Proclamation for 2022 was approved by Town Council on March 8th. The Tree Citizens Advisory Panel (CAP) is hosting an Arbor Day Celebration and Tree Planting at Hunter Street Park on Friday, March 18th. The Celebration will commemorate the Town's seventh year as an official Tree City USA. A Plant the Peak update was given at the Tree CAP meeting on March 7th; a total of 98 trees have been installed and a satisfaction survey will be sent to all participants. There is one vacant seat available on Tree CAP, which is being advertised with preference to a new member with an affiliation with the development community.

Two new members are being voted into the Bee City Committee at the March 22nd Town Council meeting. The next meeting date will be announced once the new members have been appointed, and Chair Schaaf will attend as the EAB representative.

### Discussion: Duties & Powers of the EAB

Staff member Pendell explained that the purpose of this discussion is for the Board to regroup on the purpose, interests, and personality of the Board. Town Staff is aware of how much time the Board spends on reviewing rezoning pre-applications, and would like to facilitate in finding a balance between that momentum and other duties, as described in the Board's charter.

The Board expressed that they feel uncertain on the purpose of some rezoning due to the limited background information provided. Staff member Bunce stated that the pre-application does not require an applicant to provide some of the information the Board asks for, such as a stream buffer call, this early in the rezoning process.

Councilmember Gantt spoke on increasing the Board's impact on new development by codifying popular recommendations into the UDO and focusing their time on developments that impact the most environmentally sensitive areas in order to allow for more time on other duties. He emphasized that their expertise could also be used to do more with community engagement and education.

Town Staff presented suggestions for establishing time limits on pre-applications the Board reviews. Staff member Bunce informed the Board that applicants have nine minutes to present their case in front of the Planning Board, as a point of reference. Councilmember Gantt suggested that, if needed, the Board could alter their list of duties and powers to not require the applicant to present to them, and rather provide their recommendations based on the Board's discussions alone. Vice Chair Mason and Board member Garrison agreed that applicants need to be more proactive on what their teams are willing to consider, and that the list of Suggested Environmental Zoning Conditions needs to be tightened. Board member Maynard suggested that the conditions typically agreed to by applicants should be a focus for the conditions considered in prioritization by the UDO Workgroup.

The Board and Town Staff discussed amending the Pre-Application Meeting Request Form to format the list of Suggested Environmental Conditions as a checklist in order to encourage more applicant participation. Town Staff is working on compiling a document with examples of language to use for zoning conditions so that the Board can easily suggest enforceable items, and it was reemphasized that more specificity in recommendations is helpful.

#### Summary of Changes to Pre-App Review Process:

- Staff offered to provide more information on their end for the Board forward, such as an aerial map, property information, and stream layers.
- Amending the Suggested Environmental Conditions section of the Pre-Application Meeting Request Form into a three-column checklist (yes, maybe, no).
- A sub-group of the Board will meet with Staff member Mayo to edit down and update the current list of Suggested Environmental Zoning Conditions.
- Enforce the following time limits for Pre-Application Review:
  - Applicant states their case and explains their project: 5 minutes
  - Questions from the Board: 10 minutes
  - Option for the Board to make a motion to extend discussion time as needed.

The discussion refocused on the duties and powers outlined in the Board's charter. Vice Chair Mason inquired about the Town's tree canopy goals. Staff mentioned the 2018 Trees and Stormwater Study, a fiscal year 2022-2023 position request for an Urban Forest Internship with the Sustainability Team, and the new 2022 Wake County Tree Canopy Study. The 2018 Trees and Stormwater Study recommended for the town to preserve 40% of tree cover, but there was neither a resolution by Town Council to adopt this nor has there since been staff capacity to measure tree canopy on an ongoing basis. Board member Jensen asked about the Study's recommendation to plant on private property, and Staff clarified that this would be done through an outreach program that encourages additional trees on private property. Vice Chair Mason suggested that it is better to focus on preserving trees rather than replanting, and that resource conservation areas (RCAs) should be consolidated and have a connectivity requirement in order to better preserve habitat.

Board member Efird highlighted his interest in the duty to "Act as a proactive vehicle for community feedback on environmental issues," seconded by Chair Schaaf and Board member Pierson.

Board member Maynard stated that to meet their duty of “Maintaining and acknowledging the natural terrain, to the extent reasonable and practicable,” the Board could focus on soil preservation because it would maintain the natural terrain while contributing to carbon sequestration.

Board member Garrison pointed out that the Board could “Support the Town’s efforts to reduce town's carbon footprint” by working to improve bicycle and pedestrian routes downtown, and would specifically like to see more bike lanes on Salem Street. Staff highlighted that this is also a goal addressed in the Town’s Downtown Plan, as well as in the Transportation Plan.

Chair Schaff recommended that the Board narrow down which of their duties they would like to set near term goals for, and the Board discussed focusing on a Community Education initiative. Staff member Pendell stated that the Board could make time to regularly discuss this at their monthly meetings and/or could be the focus of a new workgroup.

#### Discussion: Apex EarthFest Plan

Apex EarthFest is planned for April 23rd from 12:00-4:00p.m. at the Town Campus Courtyard (73 Hunter Street), and there are currently 38 vendors confirmed to attend. The Board contemplated what kind of resources and activities to provide. Given the work done over the past year by the Dark Sky Workgroup, the Board will provide resources on the subject of dark sky and attempt to create an interactive game related to Dark Sky, as well. Staff member Pendell will send a form for the Board to sign up for shifts for the EAB booth, as well as share materials that Board members can use to promote the event.

#### Open Discussion


Board member Garrison suggested enforcing time limits on general presentations given to the Board. Chair Schaff agreed, and suggested a time limit of 10 minutes, with 5 minutes for the Board to ask questions. Staff reminded the Board to let them know if there are any presenters they are particularly interested in seeing at these meetings.

Board member Maynard asked why there was a discrepancy in the charging station suggestions recommended for apartments and townhomes. Staff member Bunce clarified that every townhouse must provide two parking spaces either in a garage, in the driveway, or as on-street parking. The Town cannot require charging stations to be installed inside the building due to Building Code, and requiring it for on-street parking could be problematic due to the utilities that need to be maintained in the right-of-way. If a townhome development has an amenity center, a charging station could be suggested to go there.


Vice Chair Mason asked that if the Town is requiring charging stations, does the Town cover the cost of electricity. Staff answered that the cost of the charging stations on these properties is up to the owner of the property. Board member Maynard stated that the charging stations could be maintained by a third-party network as well.

#### Adjourn

Chair Schaaf made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Board member Garrison. The motion was approved unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 7:27p.m.

  
Katie Schaaf, Chair

ATTEST:



Megan Pendell, non-voting staff secretary