

APEX ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date:
August 18, 2022
6:00p.m.



In-Person Meeting
Apex Town Hall Room 3A

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

Call to Order & Roll Call

The in-person Environmental Advisory Board (EAB) meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Suzanne Mason at 6:01p.m. Members present included Vice Chair Mason and Board members John Garrison, Adam Efird, Bill Jensen, Jason Maynard Kim Pierson, and Greg Reger. Board member Jason Maynard arrived after roll call at 6:04p.m. Chair Katie Schaaf and Board member Patrick Adams were absent.

Councilmember Brett Gantt was in attendance in place of Councilmember Cheryl Stallings. Town staff members present were Planning Manager Amanda Bunce, Senior Stormwater Engineer Robert Patterson, Sustainability Specialist Valeria Mera, and non-voting staff secretary Sustainability Coordinator Megan Pendell. The meeting was open to members of the public.

Approval of Minutes

Vice Chair Mason asked the Board if there were any comments on the Meeting Minutes from July 21, 2022. Board member Garrison made a motion to approve the Minutes, seconded by Board member Jensen, and the motion passed unanimously.

Announcements

Staff member Pendell announced that Staff member Mera will be departing her role with the Town at the end of August, making this her last EAB meeting. Staff member Mera was thanked for her positive contributions to the Board these last two years.

Committee Updates

The Tree Citizens Advisory Panel (CAP) submitted their comments on the EAB Suggested Environmental Zoning Conditions list, and the Bee City Committee is expected to submit comments after their meeting on Aug. 31st.

UDO Amendment Workgroup Updates

The workgroup is editing the language of the document to incorporate comments from group members and Tree CAP. In anticipation for comments from Bee City, the list should be ready for the Board to review at the next meeting.

Pre-Application Meeting: The Preserve at Holt

The project representative for The Preserve at Holt was Phil Koch, Design Engineer with EarthCentric. Applicant Koch reviewed the commitments that his team has agreed to, and reviewed suggestions received from the Board. The project team would not commit to any suggested conditions related to Stormwater Control Measures (SCM) because the development would not need one if the team adhered to within 12% of impervious surface. The project team has discussed the SCM requirements if the 12% impervious surfacing was exceeded with Staff member Patterson in preparation.

Items and questions discussed with the Board include:

- Greenways. Vice Chair Mason asked about the alignment of the greenway and its placement in the riparian buffer. The applicant explained that its designated location causes the least impact because of the sewer extension being required by the Town. The current location was determined in collaboration with Planning to have the least amount of wetland impact, all things considered. Board member Jensen asked if it would be possible to use permeable pavement for the greenway, to which Staff member Bunce explained that the infrastructure for maintenance is not currently available in the Town.

Summary of Recommendations:

- The Project shall have one (1) pet waste station in the community.
- The Project Shall install one (1) sign to reduce pet waste in locations that are publicly accessible, such as adjacent to sidewalks, greenways or side paths.
- The project shall preserve a minimum of 50% of the existing tree canopy. Preserved areas may include, but are not limited to, RCA, perimeter buffers, riparian buffers and/or HOA maintained open space throughout the neighborhood.
- Existing trees greater than 12” in diameter that are removed by site development shall be replaced by planting a 1.5” caliper native tree from the Town of Apex Design and Development Manual either on-site or at an alternative location approved by Town Planning Staff, above and beyond standard UDO requirements.
- A minimum of 75% of species native to the eastern US shall be used to meet the landscaping requirements for Section 8.2 of the UDO.
- Tree clearing, SCM, or infrastructure shall not occur or be placed in either zone of the riparian buffer, except as necessary for the installation of Town of Apex utilities or greenway construction.
- A solar PV system shall be installed on a minimum of 2 homes within the development and all homes shall be pre-configured with conduit for future installation of a solar PV system.
 - All single-family detached homes shall be pre-configured with conduit for a solar energy system.
 - A solar PV system with a minimum four-kilowatt (kW) capacity shall be installed on at least two (2) homes within the development. All solar installation required by this condition shall be completed or under construction prior to 75% of the building permits being issued for the development. The lots on which these homes are located shall be identified on the Master Subdivision Plat, which may be amended from time to time.
- Increase biodiversity.
 - Plant pollinator-friendly flora.
 - Plant native flora (Refer to the Apex Design & Development Manual for approved native species).
- Include landscaping that requires less irrigation and chemical use.
 - Plant warm season grasses for drought-resistance.
- Development shall meet all stormwater reduction requirements listed in the UDO, including limiting the post-development stormwater flows to not exceed the pre- development rates. In addition, the post-development peak runoff rate shall be limited to the pre-development peak runoff rate for the 2-year, 24-hour, the 10-year, 24-hour and the 25-year, 24-hour storm events.

Board member Jensen made a motion to approve the rezoning recommendations, seconded by Board member Reger, and the motion passed unanimously.

Pre-Application Meeting: Chapel Ridge North PUD

The project representative for Chapel Ridge North PUD was Matthew Carpenter. The project is an apartment complex along the northern portion of Chapel Ridge Road. The applicants presented the project to the Board in March, and after following the remainder of the rezoning application process, was ultimately deferred by Town Council to work out some of the moving parts. The moving parts in question include:

1. Acquisition of Bishop property. In February, the adjacent property was not part of the rezoning case because the property owners did not join the assemblage that collaborated together to sell the land. Acquiring this land results in a more consistent development plan, and is reflected in the site map presented to the Board.
2. Designation of Sherry property. In February, this plot of land was shown as a Resource Conservation Area (RCA). This land will now be designated as single-family detached as a result of feedback from neighbors of the property.

The project team is maintaining 11 out of 13 EAB commitments from the previous meeting. The recommendations they could not commit to were related to solar panels and green infrastructure.

Items and questions discussed with the Board include:

- Solar. The applicant explained that in trying to solidify other aspects of the property, the team did not have the opportunity to thoroughly discuss solar with the developer.
- Stormwater. The applicant will discuss the potential of increasing the SCM from a 25-year-storm to a 100-year-storm, given its proximity to Interstate 540 and its watershed boundary.
- RCA. Given that the Shelly parcel will no longer be designated for RCA, the applicant explained that they are still going to meet the RCA requirements necessary, such as by preserving the northern part of the property that is currently a stream buffer.

Summary of Recommendations:

- Increased stormwater quantity and quality control measures. This PUD shall go above the stormwater management requirements for quality and quantity treatment outlined in Section 6.1.7 of the UDO such that:
 - Post development peak runoff shall not exceed pre-development peak runoff conditions for the 1 year, 10-year, 25-year, 100-year (if practicable), and 24-hour storm events.
 - Treatment for the first 1 inch of runoff will provide 85% removal of total suspended solids.
- The project shall install at least three (3) pet waste stations across the development in locations that are publicly accessible, but outside of public property and/or public easement(s), such as adjacent to amenity centers, sidewalks, greenways, or side paths.
- A minimum of 5% of the total parking spaces that the UDO would require for the project shall be Electric Vehicle Charging spaces. Final unit mix and amount of required parking shall be determined at site plan. The EV charging stations shall comply with the standards set forth in the UDO.
- The project shall select and install tree, shrub and perennial species with special attention to providing diverse and abundant pollinator and bird food sources, including plants that bloom in succession from spring to fall.
- The project will increase biodiversity in perimeter buffers and open space areas by providing a variety of species for the canopy, understory, and shrub levels. Native and adaptive plant species shall be provided within these areas to minimize death from disease and to provide increased habitat and food sources for insects and animals. A minimum of 75% of the species provided shall be native or a nativar of North Carolina. No invasive species shall be permitted. No single species of tree or shrub shall constitute more than 20% of the plant material of its type installed on a single development site.
- The project shall install signage adjacent to wooded or natural condition Resource Conservation area. The signage shall indicate that the area is RCA and is to be preserved in perpetuity and not disturbed. Signage shall be installed in locations that are publicly accessible, such as adjacent to, but outside of public property and/or public easement(s), amenity centers, sidewalks, greenways, or side paths.
- The project shall be designed to meet the requirements for one of the following green building certifications: LEED, Energy Star, BREEAM, Green Globes, NGBS Green, or GreenGuard. A third-party consultant shall be hired to evaluate the project and certify to the Town of Apex that the project meets the standards for the certification. The applicant shall forward a copy of the certification application to the Town of Apex Planning Department to verify that the application has been submitted.
- Solar conduit shall be provided on all multi-family and/or condominium buildings to accommodate the future installation of solar panels.

Board member Garrison made a motion to approve the rezoning recommendations, seconded by Board member Efird and the motion passed unanimously.

Pre-Application Meeting: Apex Light Industrial

The project representative for Apex Light Industrial was Jason Barron. The applicant explained that this project coincides with the Town's Future Land Use Plan and that the vast majority of the suggested conditions from the Board will be fairly easy to include, but the applicant does not have the authority to commit to them as of this meeting.

Items and questions discussed with the Board include:

- Solar. The developer client is not experienced with installing solar, though the pre-configuration of buildings should likely not be a problem.
- RCA. The location of the RCA has not yet been determined, but will likely be composed of areas that are undevelopable.
- Surveys. Surveys for wetlands and stream delineation are in progress. The intention is to minimize and avoid impacts to the environment as they move forward.
- Tree Canopy. The Board determined that there is not a lot of worthwhile tree canopy to preserve from the few trees that are on the property.
- Bus. Given the development happening in this area, the Board suggested adding a bus stop if the stop is desirable and recommended by Town staff and transit providers after coordinating with them. Council member Gantt pointed out that the transit plan doesn't go that far out west yet.

Summary of Recommendations:

- Maximum of 530,000 square feet of tech flex and light industrial uses.
- Maximum of 100,000 square feet of retail, commercial, and office uses.
- Design stormwater to the 25-year storm event.
- Install signage near environmental sensitive areas to reduce pet waste and eliminate fertilizer near SCM drainage areas.
- Add a minimum 20-kilowatt(s) (kW) of solar photovoltaic (PV) system(s) to each building A, B, C, D, and the "retail building". A 20-kW solar PV system will consist of approximately 50 solar panels of dimensions 3.5 ft X 6 ft. The 20 kW may be comprised of a sum of smaller systems.
- Pre-configure each unit of the buildings for solar PV systems per town specifications.
- All buildings shall be pre-configured with conduit for a solar energy system.
- Include energy efficient lighting in building design.
 - Lower maximum foot-candles outside of buildings.
- 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.
 - Use 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.
- Apply for green building certifications, such as LEED, Energy Star, BREEAM, Green Globes, NGBS Green, or GreenGuard.

Board member Jensen made a motion to approve the rezoning recommendations, seconded by Board member Garrison and the motion passed unanimously.

Open Discussion

The Board discussed the possibilities of solar on apartment buildings, and ultimately determined that it is not yet feasible to pursue this in North Carolina. Councilmember Gantt suggested looking into the Inflation Reduction Act, as there are subsidies for developers to install solar that the Board could suggest.

Councilmember Gantt highlighted that one way to measure the impact of the Board is to count the number of recommendations taken on by different projects. When applicable, the Board should consider leaving a project with fewer, more impactful recommendations. Board member Garrison stated that the hope is for the simpler, more popular recommendations to make it into the UDO. Vice Chair Mason suggested that if Board members have ideas for what else to include on the checklist, those can be incorporated into the list once the list is presented to the Board again. Board member Jensen stated that developers should somehow gain more interest in solar and be more educated, to which Staff member Pendell suggested that the list could provide educational resources if the Board so wished.

Staff member Pendell explained the Solarize the Triangle initiative to the Board. The Board then discussed other initiatives that could be implemented in the future, such as solar canopies and white roofs on buildings to reduce heat island effect.

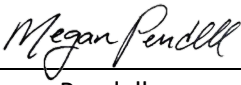
Adjourn

Board member Pierson made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Board member Maynard. The motion was approved unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 7:13p.m.



Katie Schaaf, Chair

ATTEST:



Megan Pendell, non-voting staff secretary