

Environment & Energy Commission

City of Columbia & Boone County

Daniel Boone Building, Third Floor Conference Room

Minutes of Tuesday, April 1, 2008

Present: Frank Cunningham, John Miles, Jean Sax, Kip Kendrick, Dan Goldstein, Teresa Hunter, Ted Dyer, David Brodsky, Bob Walters

Absent: Alyce Turner, Barbara Buffaloe

Guests: Marilyn Thorpe, Columbia Water and Light; Kay Hunvald, League of Women Voters; Dick Parker, Power Supply Task Force; Cindy Dyer

City Staff Liaison: Stephanie Brown

Mr. Cunningham called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

AGENDA

The agenda was approved.

MINUTES

The minutes for February 26, 2008 were approved with changes.

LAND DISTURBANCE AND TREE ORDINANCE ISSUES

Mr. Cunningham introduced a letter for the City Council on land disturbance. He said Lou Phemister, the City Arborist, gave speaking points for the letter. Mr. Miles suggested having Mr. Phemister review the letter before submission to the City Council. Mr. Cunningham will send the draft of the letter to Mr. Phemister tomorrow. Once he receives feedback, he will send it to the commissioners and in a week from that he will send the final draft to the City Council. Mr. Kendrick motioned to approve this process. Mr. Goldstein made a second motion. It was approved.

Mr. Dyer was not clear on how the task of creating a Tree Ordinance and the issue of land disturbance are linked together. Mr. Cunningham said something is needed on tree preservation within the land disturbance guidelines. Mr. Dyer suggested tying the two subjects together in the letter so that it is clear. Mr. Cunningham said this was initiated through the investigations and discussions with Mr. Phemister. He has been given permission to work on establishing an urban forest plan. It was suggested at the last meeting to write a letter updating the City Council on the collaboration of Lou Phemister and the EEC on establishing an urban forest plan. Mr. Phemister said an urban forest plan should be created before a tree ordinance. The tree ordinance will naturally come out of the urban forest plan.

Public Meeting – Mr. Kendrick was assigned to research possible dates and any conflicts for the public meeting regarding the tree ordinance and land disturbance issues. Mr. Brodsky inquired of the purpose and goals of the public meeting. Mr. Goldstein said the first step should be for public awareness. Specific goals need to be established with questions and responses from the public.

John Fleck, the GIS Coordinator for the city will be at the April 22, 2008 EEC meeting to discuss the Natural Resource Inventory. Mr. Goldstein said Mr. Fleck could provide statistics on slopes such as what already exists and what works and doesn't. He can also see how much is being affected. Mr. Cunningham recommended asking Mr. Fleck to focus on the natural resources inventory as it pertains to land disturbance and the tree ordinance. Mr. Goldstein said Mr. Fleck has maps of the forestry of the city from 1996 and 2005 that show a before and after view. Mr. Cunningham suggested focusing on land disturbance for the April meeting.

Mr. Brodsky asked if there were any experts on moving dirt. He said on the Stadium project trees could have been cut down but the dirt could have remained there to preserve that habitat.

STREET LIGHTING

Mr. Dyer found several deficiencies with the proposed street lighting ordinance from January 28, 2008 that was presented at a Council workshop. He said he found three items that he thought should be covered in the document; obsolescence of mercury vapor, consideration of LED technology, and lack of forward-looking strategy. Mr. Goldstein felt that the City Council should present a deadline when directing the EEC to pursue a task so that the EEC will not be excluded from the process. Mr. Walters explained that this initiative came about because the City Council stopped the installation of streetlights along Chapel Hill and Forum Boulevard. Councilperson Jerry Wade wanted more options. Mr. Walters said some residents wanted a larger number of lower lights. Mr. Dyer said what ever is chosen must comply with RP-8 street lighting guidelines. Cost and liability must be kept in mind. Mr. Cunningham pointed out that there will always be a conflict between preferences. Mr. Dyer presented a letter to Council asking them to withhold future action on a street light policy until the recommendation of the commission could be delivered to (and considered by) staff. Mr. Walters moved to approve the letter with changes and Ms. Sax seconded. The letter was approved with changes.

Mr. Dyer is scheduling a meeting with the Water and Light staff. It will mainly be a fact finding meeting.

EARTH DAY EVENT TABLE

Mr. Cunningham said Earth Day is Sunday, April 20, 2008 with a rain date of April 27. Mr. Walters suggested having the booth next to the Water and Light booth, and Mr. Goldstein would like also to be near the Smart Growth Coalition booth. Mr. Cunningham will contact the Earth Day coordinators regarding the booth positioning process to request a booth next to Water and Light and Smart Growth Coalition. The cost per booth in the section where the EEC was last year is \$10 and the cost for a booth on Elm Street near the Water and Light booth is \$20. Mr. Cunningham will pay the booth fee and settle it with the commissioners later. Ms. Brown will contact staff from Water and Light about providing a solar panel display and a solar powered radio.

Mr. Brodsky, Mr. Goldstein, Mr. Walters, Mr. Miles, Mr. Dyer, and Ms. Buffaloe are available on the 20th to work at the booth. Mr. Walters will email the commissioners a schedule request and then email a grid once everyone has responded. Mr. Cunningham said paper weights, bungee cords, and tape are some of the items needed for the booth.

Mr. Goldstein talked to Mr. Fleck about providing displays for the booth of aerial and satellite maps of before and after shots of areas such as the Cross Creek division.

Mr. Walters suggested displaying the U.S. Mayors' Climate Protection Agreement and information on the City Building.

FY08/09 PROGRAM OF WORK COUNCIL QUESTIONNAIRE

Mr. Cunningham received a questionnaire from the city on what the commission is currently working on and budget needs. He will email his responses to the commissioners.

APRIL 4, 2008 MEETING WITH COLUMBIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Mr. Cunningham and Ms. Buffaloe set a meeting with the staff of Columbia Public Schools regarding the letter that he sent. The meeting will be April 4, 2008 at 1:30 p.m. at the West Worley facility. He said the superintendent for the elementary schools and the secondary schools, Phyllis Chase, and the architect will be at the meeting. Mr. Goldstein expressed concern that the information discussed in the meeting with staff will not get to the school board. Mr. Walters recommended sending a follow up letter about the meeting shortly after to insure the information gets carried forward to the board.

Mr. Cunningham said Columbia Public Schools are following LEED guidelines but are not trying to get certified. They are using ground source heat pumps and high output fluorescent light bulbs.

PROVIDING UTILITY BILL FEEDBACK

Mr. Goldstein showed a graph of his residential gas usage versus degree heating days. Mr. Cunningham will send the template used to analyze his utility bill to the commissioners.

Online tools were suggested as a tool the city could provide to customers. Mr. Goldstein suggested meeting with city staff to establish ideas. Mr. Dyer said comparables would be more attractive to the average customer. Mr. Cunningham said heating degree days lose value in the off months. Dick Parker said the EEC should work with the study performed by Burns and McDonnell which includes an analysis of the programs and incentives offered by Water and Light. Mr. Cunningham suggested tabling this subject until a later date.

FOLLOW-UP TO JOHN WELECK'S PRESENTATION

Mr. Miles presented a draft letter for the City Council commending John Weleck on his sustainable development. Mr. Goldstein expressed concern about the EEC commending developers. He felt that this will draw others to try to get EEC recommendations. Mr. Brodsky suggested taking out the third paragraph. Mr. Walters felt that the phrase "We recommend" was controversial. Mr. Goldstein said the EEC needs to establish criteria and policy on what the EEC judges. Ms. Hunter suggested establishing a list of green developers. Mr. Goldstein suggested having Water and Light develop criteria for a list. Ms. Sax recommended rewriting letter to endorse the energy saving technique used by Mr. Weleck. Mr. Miles suggested having someone else write the letter. Ms. Sax volunteered.

RENEWABLE ENERGY REPORT

Ms. Brown said the Renewable Energy Report will go to public hearing before the City Council on April 7. Any comments that the EEC may have should be sent to the City Council.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/COMMENTS OF COMMISSIONERS

Mr. Brodsky said at the March 3 City Council meeting land disturbance was brought up and it was suggested that the EEC work on this topic with city staff.

Mr. Walters said he signed a petition to have all energy providers uphold to the renewable energy criteria.

John Fleck will speak for thirty minutes at the next meeting and the remainder of the meeting will be devoted to land disturbance and the tree ordinance.

Mr. Cunningham will email the contact person at CATV about having a commissioner on a panel to discuss building efficiency on Tuesday night. He and Ms. Buffaloe will be there. He also announced that there will be a Green Challenge Community Forum in the Kimball Ballroom of the Stephens College at 7 p.m. on April 2, 2008. Mr. Cunningham announced that he will not reapply for his term on the commission in May.

UPCOMING MEETING ITEMS

Guest Speaker John Fleck, GIS Coordinator with the City of Columbia
Land Disturbance and Tree Ordinance Issues

Prepared by: Stephanie Brown, City Staff Liaison