



Environmental and Energy Stewardship Subcommittee

200 College Street, Room 310

February 17, 2023

Meeting Minutes

Subcommittee Members Present

Chairman Newman, Commissioner Sloan, Commissioner Wells, Lena Henson, Councilperson Ullman, Meg Jamison

Staff Members Present

Sybil Tate, Jeremiah LeRoy, Jennifer Harrison, Jackie Hamstead, Ashley Featherstone, Jessica Silver

Councilperson Ullman called the meeting to order at 10:01 am.

Motion to approve the February agenda and the January meeting minutes made by Commissioner Wells, passed unanimously.

Public Comment:

Contractor specializing in plumbing and septic systems recommends financial assistance for property owners in need of septic repairs, suggests that septic inspections should be more frequent, and is asking for support with permitting issues.

Surface Water Data

- Landon Davidson and Tim Fox from NC DEQ, implement DWR regional office with 15 staff
- NC DEQ Surface water sampling programs:
 - Statewide: Complaint, Compliance, and Ambient (1x/ month sampling)
 - WNC Rec Monitoring (unique to our region):
 - Collaborative sampling strategy: DWR provides bottles and analysis but engages partners to sample
 - Sample 1x/ week from May to early October
 - Data is shared with the public through the Swim Guide
 - Human waste is the biggest risk to human health, then bovine
 - French Broad is Class B/ Primary Recreation= expectation of swimming
 - Watershed assessment program: Cane Creek Watershed example
 - Effort led by French Broad River Partnership
 - Causes of E. coli in Cane Creek mostly come from non-point sources which can be difficult to identify. Likely sources are sewer lines and stormwater/ ag runoff.
 - PCR/ DNA technology is tool to measure source of E. coli
 - Technology is better for the human markers than other species
 - DWR has a local lab that just received PCR equipment

Watershed Management Plans

- Mary Roderick with Land of Sky Regional Council (LOSRC)
- Example WAP- Upper Swannanoa
 - Funded by LOSRC, completed in 2016



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- Certain funding opportunities require WAPs for eligibility. This WAP allowed LOSRC and their partners to secure funds to implement projects.
- Includes education component
- LOSRC is partnering with Black Mountain to implement projects IDed in the WAP
- DEQ is developing a dynamic, efficient, integrated, and synergistic WAP tool.
- Smith Mill Creek WAP is underway, being led by RiverLink and Wildlands
- Once public engagement piece of the Cane Creek WAP is complete, funding will be unlocked for project implementation
 - Early engagement meeting for Cane Creek, Fletcher Town Hall, 3/22/2023, 4:30-5:30
- New development best practices (proactive strategy)
 - Buncombe County is delegated authority from the state, meaning it cannot regulate more stringently than the state.
 - Other, non-delegate counties and MS4 communities (Asheville, Black Mountain) have more flexibility to regulate more stringently
 - Support erosion control ordinances. Sediment is biggest pollutant. Its not being addressed properly.

Water Quality Wrap-Up

- Identifying proven projects and implementing them is a more actionable way forward than additional planning.
- Thoughts on establishing a fund to support pipeline of projects
 - Upper Swannanoa, Central Asheville, and South Mill WAPs have identified projects
 - Allow for private partner contributions to the fund
 - Utilize a similar application/ award process as Strategic Partnership grants
 - Could be used to reduce cost share/ leverage other funds (40% match for 319 funds)
 - Subcommittee needs budget scenarios to assess how the County might participate
 - Wake County is a good example for recreation water quality projects
- Thoughts on policy related issues:
 - Do we need additional enforcement?
 - Important to tailor rules to slopes
 - Subcommittee could offer positive recommendation for pending stormwater inspection position request.
- Staff will come back with more concrete thoughts on the “Buncombe County Clean Water Fund”

Announcements

- Climate Pollution Reduction grant announcement:
 - Two phases: Planning (non-competitive) and Implementation (competitive)
 - Additional planning could be redundant with other efforts but might make us more competitive from implementation grants.
 - SSDN can support in this decision making- review grant applications and talk us through grant requirements

Adjournment

Motion made by Commissioner Sloan at 12:07 pm.