



Environmental and Energy Stewardship Subcommittee

200 College Street, Room 404

January 20, 2023

Meeting Minutes

Subcommittee Members Present

Chairman Newman, Commissioner Sloan, Commissioner Wells, Lena Henson, Chris Link

Staff Members Present

Sybil Tate, Jeremiah LeRoy, Jennifer Harrison, Jackie Hamstead, Max Taintor, Rafael Baptista, Michael Frue, Ashley Featherstone, Dane Pederson, Bob Haynes

Commissioner Sloan called the meeting to order at 10:03 am.

Approval of Agenda and Minutes

Motion to approve the January 20, 2023 agenda and the December meeting minutes passed unanimously.

Public Comment:

No public comment.

Waste Pro Public Input and Focus Group Results:

- Held to determine if convenience sites are viable, publicly supported options for waste disposal
- 6 meetings at locations around the county,
 - Who attended: average 9 participants per meeting, no municipal residents, all had been to landfill or transfer station
 - Feedback:
 - Folks want convenient access to bulky items, metal, hazardous waste disposal
 - Public was generally not supportive of spending money on these sites
 - Landfill and transfer station are too far/ not conveniently located
 - Concerns around trash hauler monopoly
 - Concerns about litter, sound, traffic, smell around new convenience centers
- Estimated cost of \$220 annually for each household to fund 4 convenience centers
 - “Pay as you throw” billing would only charge those who use the centers
- Next steps:
 - Department of Solid Waste recommended not moving forward with study to site convenience centers citing not enough public support. However, subcommittee suggested a more narrow analysis of unmet needs and deeper understanding of anticipated costs.
 - Solicit input from the non-subscribers: ~20K households are not using Waste Pro
 - What is the cost to open one convenience center?
 - Look into opportunities to improve Transfer Station experience
 - Fleet maintenance is moving which might free up additional space



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Food Waste Solutions

- Asheville Buncombe Food Policy Council established in 2011
- Current work: Outdoor food pantries, support food security reparations coalition, WNC Food Justice Planning, Food Waste Solutions, Asheville Edibles Map, Neighborhood Emergency Food Preparedness Plan
- Food Waste Solutions, WNC: a collaborative group of stakeholders from local businesses, universities, government agencies, and non-profits working to reduce food waste in western NC.
 - Outreach: Annual summits and quarterly educational/ networking events
 - Projects/ programs initiated by subcommittees/ working groups
- Asheville is a member of the NRDC Southeast Cohort along with Atlanta, Nashville, Orlando, and Memphis
- Community Education is focusing on Food Recovery Hierarchy:
 - Where are the gaps in Buncombe County? Feeding food waste to animals, industrial uses
- Opportunities for deeper engagement with Buncombe County: Sponsorship of events, attendance at next summit, celebrations for Food Waste Reduction Month in April

Agriculture and Water Quality Farmer Experience

- Anthony Cole is a farmer, soil scientist, Newfound Watershed Community Coordinator, and elected member of the Buncombe County Soil and Water Board
 - Century farm status, from Buncombe County
 - Farm borders ½ mile of Newfound Creek on both sides
 - Sources local restaurants and community organizations
 - Has participated in cost share programs to fence sheep out
- Farmer perspectives on water quality:
 - Many feel personally accountable for water quality
 - Trained in food safety/ pesticide application and tracking
 - Flood events are increasing, rain events are flashier
 - Prime soils can't be replaced, need to be protected
 - Infiltration rates are higher in areas where ewes have grazed, increased worm density
 - Farmers must be a partner in setting water quality goal
- Observed impacts from impervious surfaces/ new development at the top of the watershed
 - New construction sites lack adequate site stabilization/ erosion control
 - Cut banks, driveways are highest contributors to sedimentation
 - Every 4 years Mr. Cole removes sedimentation that settles in his corn field
 - Septic repairs are being done that aren't up to code
 - 12% increase in E.coli in private wells from last year
- How can County improve participation in cost share programs? Supplement cost share
 - Only 3 applications for septic cost share program (out of 300 project repair permits)

Water Quality Updates and Goal Setting

- Watershed plans could help set short term goals, identify projects, and help qualify for funding
 - Cane Creek could be a good candidate:



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- There is already momentum on a WAP
- \$3 million in funding already keyed up in Cane Creek
- Good example of agriculture and development issues, 2 dairies
- No sewer= a lot of septic
- Thoughts and ideas around next steps:
 - Issue RFP for 9 element watershed plan and determine budget
 - Gather existing data (land use, pollutant sources, waterbody conditions, water monitoring data)
 - Build partnerships
 - Consider metrics that are easier to track: # of cost share programs, increased enforcement.
 - Revisit this discussion at the top of the next meeting

New Board Member and Term Limits

- 4 community members all started at the same time, the stagger for roll-off/ reappointment was never established
- Lena Henson volunteered to have shorter initial term
- Motion made by Commissioner Wells to reappointment Lena, approved unanimously
- As a new member of the subcommittee, Chris Link will be on the same schedule as Lena Henson

Adjournment

Motion made by Commissioner Wells at 12:07, approved unanimously.