



HENDERSON COUNTY ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT

Environmental Advisory Committee

Thursday, July 2, 2009

The Environmental Advisory Committee met on Thursday, June 4, 2009 at 3:30 pm at the King Street Meeting Room at 100 N. King St.

Committee members present were: Chairman Ronald Ehlinger, Ms. Marijane Pell, Mr. Jeff Jennings, Mr. David Lowles, Dr. Richard E. DeSimone, Mr. Richard Freudenberger, Mr. Anthony J. Brancato, Mr. Jim Fickes, and Dr. Tom Davis

Staff present were: Ms. Alexis Baker, Environmental Programs Coordinator; Ms. JoAnn Deluca, Solid Waste Administrative Assistant; Ms. Natalie Berry, Assistant County Engineer/Erosion Control Chief; Mr. Tim Fox, Erosion Control Technician

Guests present were: Ms. Marilyn Westphal, Volunteer Water Information Network

CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME

Chairman Ehlinger called meeting to order.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The motion was made to approve the minutes with the minor correction of the day of the week from Monday to Thursday. The motion was passed unanimously.

DISCUSSION

Chairman Ehlinger introduced new member, Mr. Richard Freudenberger, who replaced Ms. Angela Fernandini on the Committee. Mr. Freudenberger is the publisher of Backhome Magazine. From 1974-1990, he worked on Mother Earth Magazine. He has also worked with an architecture firm on sustainable building and green technology. He has worked with the Appalachian State University technology department, editing books for renewable energy technology. He has also worked with the local food movement and has been involved with the Volunteer Water Information Network.

Chairman Ehlinger presented Ms. Berry to speak on erosion control issues in the County. Ms. Berry introduced Mr. Fox, Erosion Control Technician. Mr. Fox told the Committee about the

challenges facing Henderson County. He addressed the concerns of the Committee in regards to Carriage Park. Sections 15 and 16 in Carriage Park is the area that is being disturbed. For the most part, development in Carriage Park has slowed. Ms. Berry added that a year ago the County took over Erosion Control permitting and enforcement for Carriage Park development from the state as the County could respond to these issues more rapidly. She added that they asked Carriage Park to re-do Sections 15 and 16 because it did not have adequate erosion control measures in place. Section 16 has been draining into Lake Rugby while Section 15 drains into Triple Creek. If Carriage Park does not address these issues, a timetable will be created to get erosion control measures finished. Mr. Fox said that erosion control plans from the state did not correct many erosion control issues. Ms. Berry further told the Committee that the state did not require engineers to seal the erosion control plan while Henderson County requires an engineer's seal. Currently, Mr. Chuck Cranford from the Division of Water Quality and Liz Hair from the Army Corps of Engineers are assessing the streams around Carriage Park to determine if they need to be cleaned. The worst streams appear to be towards Triple Creek.

Ms. Westphal said that she remembered an enormous amount of sediment coming down Haywood Knolls about two years ago. Mr. Fox said that Mr. Cranford noticed that there is a lot of sediment still left in stream and that development causes a lot of this sediment. Ms. Berry continued that there were no phase two storm water management programs in the County when Carriage Park began building. She walked the site with the Carriage Park engineers and showed them the issues. After each significant rainfall event, sediment traps must be cleaned out. Adequate silt fencing must be put up during construction phases.

Ms. Berry also added that many erosion control issues stem from bad paving jobs and often times these problems are inherited by the property owners. Mr. Fox said that many storm water runoff issues could also be solved if Carriage Park converted ponds to wetlands. There are Soil and Water Conservation Programs that pay up to 75% of costs for water quality projects. However, the maintenance of these wetlands would also be inherited by the homeowners.

Mr. Lowles said that there were problems that arose from people building on steep slopes. Ms. Berry told the Committee that very few projects fall into the steep slope regulations. In the current regulations any land disturbing activity which uncovers 21,780 square feet of land with an average slope of 16 percent to 25 percent or uncovers 10,890 square feet at a slope of 25 percent or more requires an erosion control plan. However, she reiterated that problem lots in Carriage Park were mostly due to grading and not to the lots themselves. She also mentioned that there are brochures available about erosion control. However, homeowners really only get contacted when there is a problem. She recommended that it wouldn't hurt to make these brochures available to homeowners when they get building permits.

The Committee asked if the ordinance applies to land disturbing activities prior to the County ordinance. Ms. Berry said that the County Attorney said that it could in certain circumstances.

A motion was made for the Committee to take the task of making improvement to the Erosion Control Ordinance.

A second motion was made that Staff should report to the Committee on proposed changes to the Erosion Control Ordinance, and the Committee should authorize Staff input on the Erosion Control Ordinance for Committee deliberations.

Both motions were passed unanimously.

Ms. Westphal was introduced by Chairman Ehlinger. She spoke about how water quality is dependent on water patterns. Water quality is often better during drought conditions. She explained that a possible point source pollutant for Mud Creek was the waste water treatment plant. However, she said that Gash Creek was actually one of the worst creeks in the County. Cane Creek also has bad water quality during heaving rains. Lately, the water quality was improving, which is likely attributed to drought conditions. An overall improvement in water quality could also be caused by less development occurring in the County. She would like to come back after a recent rain event and then speak about if water quality in the County is actually improving.

Ms. Westphal also pointed out that Mill Pond Creek is monitored upstream of the landfill and received those pollutants. Development along Highway 191 produces a lot of urban run-off into Britten Creek. Best practices to reduce the amount of run-off into streams could be retention ponds, grassy swales, and better outreach to small communities. And work with homeowners to reduce run-off from roofs and pavement. Mr. Jennings added that berms or curbs on road should be used to keep sediment out of creeks.

A motion was made to elect Dr. DeSimone as vice chairman.

The motion was passed unanimously.

Ms. Pell mentioned that the Committee should address the Brushy Ridge project and give comment to the Environmental Conservation Organization.

The next meeting is set for August 6, 2009.

Meeting Adjourned