

AGENDA

Orange County Commission for the Environment

December 9th, 2019

7:30 p.m.

West Campus Office Building, Room 302, 131 West Margaret Lane, Hillsborough

| <u>Time</u> | <u>Item</u> | <u>Title</u> |
|-------------|-------------|---|
| 7:30 | I. | Call to Order |
| 7:32 | II. | Additions or Changes to Agenda |
| 7:34 | III. | Approval of Draft Minutes - November 11, 2019 The CFE will consider approval of minutes from the last meeting. <u>Action needed</u> (Attachment 1) |
| 7:35 | IV. | Annual Report / Work Plan The CFE will consider adoption of the Annual Report / Work Plan. <u>Action needed</u> (Attachment 2) |
| 7:50 | V. | Successes of the Rural Buffer - Update Kerina Patel to provide update on Successes of the Rural Buffer. |
| 8:05 | VI. | State of the Environment Report Follow-up The CFE will discuss successes of the State of the Environment Report along with potential process improvements for the next. |
| 8:20 | VII. | Elections The CFE will nominate and vote on Chair / Vice Chair positions of the Commission. |
| 8:35 | VIII. | Recruitment The CFE will discuss recruitment process for future members of the Commission. |
| 8:45 | IX. | Updates and Information Items Staff and/or CFE members will provide updates on the following items: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Natural Heritage Areas Inventory• Any other new information from CFE members and staff |
| 9:00 | X. | Adjournment |

** Next Meeting: January 13th, 2020 @ Southern Human Services Center, 2501 Homestead Road, Chapel Hill*

CFE Activities – 2019

| Item | Resp. Party | Next Steps |
|---|-----------------|--|
| Fast Facts for a Greener Orange (for County newsletter) | Piracci / Bouma | Continue to find source(s); send any new ideas to Bouma via email. |
| Forest Management Policy | Land Resources | Land Resources has prepared draft; pending CFE review and comment. |
| Rural Buffer Research Project | Saul / Bouma | In progress; focus is on comparative measurements of sprawl. |
| Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory | Ward / Bouma | Moving forward on final calculations. |
| Fossil Fuel Divestment Resolution | Ward | Parry editing; CFE review; next step? |
| Carbon Fee and Dividend Resolution | Ward / Parry | Resolution has been drafted and reviewed; next step? |
| Climate Action Plan | Parry / Bouma | To begin after GHG inventory complete. |
| Idling Campaign | Bouma | Received signs and delivered to schools; installation underway along with Driving is Exhausting Campaign; schools are using our template to work on a letter to parents; discuss expansion to drive-thru establishments. |
| Landscape corridor planning | Multiple | Request presentation from Eno - New Hope Landscape Corridor Group for early 2020. |
| Other | | |

Recent Achievements

- State of the Environment Report
- 2019 Environmental Summit

CFE Meeting Ground Rules (Adopted 9/12/11)

1. Keep to agenda topic under discussion
2. Share relevant information
3. One person speaks at a time after recognition by the Chair
4. Everyone is invited to participate in discussions - no one person should dominate discussions
5. Strive to reach consensus first before voting

Orange County Commission for the Environment**DRAFT Meeting Summary****November 11, 2019; 7:30 pm**Southern Human Services Center, 2501 Homestead Road, Chapel Hill

Present: Bradley Saul (Chair), Carrie Fletcher, Bill Ward, Jim Eichel, Laura Doherty, Lynne Gronback, Kim Piracci, Jody Eimers

Absent: Alan Parry, Matt Crook, Jeremy Marzuola

Staff: David Stancil, Christian Hirni, Brennan Bouma, Wesley Poole

- I. Call to Order** – Saul called the meeting to order at 7:35.
- II. Additions or Changes to Agenda** – No additions or changes to the agenda were requested.
- III. Approval of Draft Minutes from August 12th & September 9th, 2019** – Both previous meeting minutes were presented for approval. Motion of approval made by Ward, seconded by Piracci; all in favor, none opposed, motion passed.
- IV. OWASA Forest Management**
 - a. Hirni introduced Ruth Rouse, Planning and Development Manager for Orange Water and Sewer Authority, whom presented on OWASA’s new Forest Management policy, procedures and “Guiding Principles”.
 - b. Interest was portrayed by Eimers for future discussions involving forest health and forest management.
- V. Natural Heritage Areas Inventory- Update**
 - a. Hirni and Stancil discussed recent effort to organize an update and complete re-inventory of the Orange County Natural Heritage Areas, which was quickly discovered to be of regional interest. Future partnerships with Durham, Chatham, and Wake Counties as well as contained municipalities and private, non-profits as maybe a funding and research possibility.
 - b. Saul discussed support of the CfE toward the BOCC toward NHA funding and potential research assistance.
 - c. Bouma reminded CfE that on the afternoon after the Environmental Summit, the Botanical Gardens have been booked for a discussion of the NHA update by interested parties.
- VI. Project Scoring for ¼ cent Climate Mitigation Tax**
 - a. Bouma presented a rubric scoring sheet for scoring individual projects for possible funding for the new tax. Projected tax income in 19/20 fiscal year is \$470,000 and five projects were slated into the rubric for the CfE to score on an individual level prior to the meeting and proceed to consensus in session.

Orange County Commission for the Environment**Meeting Summary****November 11, 2019; 7:30 pm**Southern Human Services Center, 2501 Homestead Road, Chapel Hill

- b. Saul mediated the session and CfE members held votes for each project and each of the five categories (Racial Equity, Emissions Reduced, Efficient Use of Funds, Time to Complete, Ease of Understanding, and Likelihood of Success)
 - c. The rubric was utilized to rank each project in order of importance and highest affect. (see attached final rubric scoring sheet?)
- VII. State of the Environment Report- Update**
- a. Saul and Bouma discussed the final review by County Staff and editing by the editing committee has largely been completed and the final draft should be available on the Google Drive.
- VIII. Annual Report and Work Plan- Update**
- a. After a prompt from Saul, Stancil made the suggestion to discuss this agenda item
 - b. Stancil discussed the Report and Work Plan and suggested that staff could largely draft the majority of the report for Commission approval but that the last 2 questions (Identify activities for 2020, and Concerns and Emerging Issues) that staff will send to email list serve to ask for total Commission input and drafting.
- IX. Other Updates and Information Items**
- a. Items under other updates postponed to next meeting due to time restraint.
- X. Adjournment-** Saul adjourned the meeting at 9:23 following the unanimous approval of a motion to adjourn the meeting which was offered by Eimers and seconded by Ward.

NAME OF BOARD/COMMISSION: Commission for the Environment

Report Period: 2019

**ORANGE COUNTY ADVISORY BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS
ANNUAL REPORT/ WORK PLAN FOR THE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

The Board of Commissioners appreciates the dedication of all the volunteers on their boards and commissions and welcomes input from various advisory boards and commissions throughout the year. Please complete the following information, limited to the front and back of this form. Other background materials may be provided as a supplement to, but not as a substitute for, this form.

Board/Commission Name: **Commission for the Environment**

Person to address the BOCC at work session- if applicable- and contact information: **Bradley Saul, Chair** bradleysaul@gmail.com

Primary County Staff Contact: **David Stancil, DEAPR Director (Christian Hirni, Wesley Poole, Brennan Bouma)**

How many times per month does this board/commission meet, including any special meetings and sub-committee meetings?

The board meets once per month (2nd Monday). No meeting is held during the month of July. Committees meet as needed during regular meetings.

Brief Statement of Board/Commission's Assigned Charge and Responsibilities.

Purpose: to advise the BOCC on matters affecting the environment, with particular emphasis on environmental protection and enhancement. Other duties include:

- **Perform special studies/projects on environmental issues as requested by BOCC**
- **Recommend environmental initiatives to the BOCC, especially of local importance**
- **Study changes in environmental science and environmental regulations in the pursuit of the CFE's duties**
- **Educate the public and local officials on environmental issues**

What are your Board/Commission's most important accomplishments?

- Planning the 2019 State of the Environment report and 12/4/19 Summit (2018, 2019)
- Prepared resolutions for BOCC consideration concerning: Anti-Idling Campaign, Support for Carbon Fee and Dividend legislation, Request for NC to Divest from Fossil Fuel Corporations, Roadside Wildflower Conservation (2018)
- Developed recommendations for the County's Climate Change Program scoring system (2019)
- Created subcommittee for Roadside Wildflower Conservation (2019)
- Requested the BOCC consider joining the Global Covenant of Mayors and Chairs organization concerned with global climate change (2018)
- Wrote a series of climate change articles (2017)
- Developed and posted a Facebook page (2017)
- Edited and recommended a renewable energy resolution to the BOCC (2017)
- Recruited UNC capstone students to assist with the 2019 State of the Environment report (2017)
- Provided input on updates to the Lands Legacy Action Plan (2017)
- Made recommendations to BOCC on UDO amendment to flexible subdivisions (2016)
- Initiated a series of newspaper articles on environmental issues featured previously in the Orange County State of the Environment report (2015-16)
- Made recommendations to BOCC on 2016 bond package, the use of pesticides at County facilities, and incentives for energy efficient construction (2015)
- Commented to Planning Bd. on proposed changes to impervious surface rules (2015)
- Provided ideas for Public Services Announcements for County radio spots (2015)
- Collaborated with others on energy conservation and mgmt. projects (2015-16)
- Published the 2014 Orange County State of the Environment report (reports were previously completed in 2000, 2002, 2004, and 2009)
- Convened Orange County Environmental Summit (2005, 2009, 2014)
- Made recommendations to BOCC on food waste and solid waste tax district (2014)
- Worked with Orange County Schools to introduce local environmental indicators into middle and high school science curricula (2004, 2009, 2014)
- Hosted a Solid Waste Forum with the Chapel Hill Sustainability Committee (2013)

- Co-sponsored *The Nature of Orange* photography contest (2012 - 2018)
- Advocated for ½ cent sales tax referendum for Triangle Region public transit (2012)
- Compiled annotated bibliography of the effects of forestry on water quality (2012)
- Developed sustainable landscaping and forest management policies for the administration of County-owned facilities (2010)

List of Specific Tasks, Events, or Functions Performed or Sponsored Annually.

- **Co-sponsor “Nature of Orange” Photography Contest**
- **Liaison to Intergovernmental Parks Work Group**
- **Review and comment on environmental issues (e.g., anti-idling efforts, fracking, biosolids application, water pollution, air quality, forest mgmt.) and other issues assigned by the BOCC**
- **Identify priorities for the Lands Legacy Action Plan (natural areas and wildlife habitat)**
- **Conduct special studies pertaining to Orange County environment (e.g., energy efficiency/sustainability, forestry effects on water quality, herbicides and native flora)**
- **Conduct environmental education outreach events (e.g., Earth Evening)**

Describe this board/commission’s activities/accomplishments in carrying out BOCC goal(s)/priorities, if applicable.

BOCC Goal Five: Create, preserve, and protect a natural environment that includes clean water, clean air, wildlife, important natural lands and sustainable energy for present and future generations.

- Presented findings and recommendations to BOCC on selected environmental issues: 1) roadside wildflower preservation; 2) effects of forest mgmt. on water quality; 3) effects of herbicides on roadside native plant habitat; 4) potential effects of hydraulic fracturing (“fracking”) in Orange County; 5) need for 100% renewable energy in Orange County (BOCC Priorities #1 and #12)
- Stayed abreast of ongoing and developing env. issues of importance to the County, such as Falls & Jordan Lake nutrient mgmt. rules, reducing commercial food waste in solid waste stream, and permitting of biosolids on farmland (Priorities #12 and #16)

Describe the collaboration relationship(s) this particular board has with other advisory boards and commissions?

As needed. Members of this commission are also on the Planning Board and the Intergovernmental Parks Work Group.

If your board/commission played the role of an Element Lead Advisory Board involved in the 2030 Comprehensive Plan preparation process, please indicate your board's activities/accomplishments as they may relate to the Comprehensive Plan's goals or objectives.

(The Element Lead Advisory Boards include: Planning Board, EDC, OUTBoard, Commission for the Environment, Historic Preservation Commission, Agriculture Preservation Board, Affordable Housing Board, Recreation and Parks Advisory Council)

The CFE provided extensive input into DEAPR staff development of the *Natural and Cultural Systems Element* of the Comprehensive Plan—specifically the chapters on Air and Energy Resources, Water Resources, and Natural Areas and Wildlife Habitat.

Objective AE-1:

Assess and implement the current countywide greenhouse gas emissions inventory and action plan target reductions.

- The CFE helped to initiate a countywide inventory of greenhouse gas emissions (2005), and continues to advise on ways to reduce the County's "carbon footprint."

Objective AE-15:

Foster participation in green energy programs such as installation incentives for solar hot water/solar generation/solar tempering in residential or commercial construction. The County should develop programs that will link citizens and businesses with options for alternative and sustainable energy sources.

- The CFE's Energy Resources Committee has developed proposals that address energy efficiency and renewable power issues, and will pursue further in collaboration with other advisory boards and stakeholders.

Objective NA-3:

Develop a more detailed and consistent methodology for monitoring changes in forest cover throughout the County, and specifically the extent of mature hardwood forest.

- The CFE's State of the Environment report documented significant reductions in mature hardwood forest that occurred from 2003-2008 and since 1988.

Objective NA-11:

Develop a comprehensive conservation plan for achieving a network of protected open space throughout Orange County, which addresses 1) threats

to important natural areas; 2) connectivity between protected areas; 3) coordination with neighboring counties; and 4) sustainable management of critical natural resources.

- The CFE's Land Resources Committee is participating in a County effort to identify and preserve important landscape corridors that connect significant natural areas.

Objective NA-16:

Create a system of public and private open space and conservation areas, including parks, nature preserves, and scenic vistas representative of Orange County landscape.

- The CFE advises County's Lands Legacy program in its efforts to protect the most important natural and cultural resource lands through a variety of means.
- The CFE's Land Resources Committee is participating in a County effort to identify and preserve important landscape corridors that connect significant natural areas.

Objective WR-5:

Promote and participate in regional efforts to plan for use of water supplies in the region in an equitable manner, including contingency planning for water supplies during droughts. [Also Objectives WR-9, WR-10, and WR-15]

- CFE advocates for full implementation of the Water Resources Initiative to ensure planning for an adequate water supply for current and anticipated future needs

Objective WR-11:

Provide incentives and educational information to landowners to increase protection of watersheds and ground water supplies and their inter-relationships.

- The CFE distributes groundwater and surface water educational materials at Earth Evening and as part of its State of the Environment reports

NOTE: The newly-produced Orange County State of the Environment 2019 identifies specific recommendations on ways to help maintain and improve Orange County's environmental quality, many of which address objectives stated in the Orange County Comprehensive Plan.

Identify any activities this board/commission expects to carry out in 2020 as they relate to established BOCC goals and priorities.

If applicable, is there a fiscal impact (i.e., funding, staff time, other resources) associated with these proposed activities (please list).

- **Green Tips for newsletter (need details)**
- **Assist in plans to update the Inventory of Natural Areas and Wildlife**

- Habitat, in conjunction with a possible regional initiative.
- Complete work on tree policy for all County-owned lands.
- Continue to monitor OWASA planned forest management on its lands in rural Orange County, providing feedback where needed.
- Other?

What are the concerns or emerging issues your board has identified for the upcoming year that it plans to address, or wishes to bring to the Commissioners' attention?

- Closely monitor recent findings downstream in the Haw River of PFAS and Dioxane 1,4. On a related note, look into wastewater biosolids from upstream Haw jurisdictions being applied in Orange County.
- Work to ensure that the Upper Neuse River Basin Association and the NC Division of Water Resources include a broad toolbox of potential nutrient reduction activities for Falls Lake – including land conservation, an area Orange County has invested significantly.
- Long-term water supply independence (for drinking water, agriculture and other needs) in light of future climate change impacts. Having a food and water plan for times of economic or climatic stress.
- Other?