

**CITY OF WINCHESTER
NATURAL RESOURCES ADVISORY BOARD**

January 13, 2011

Winchester City Yards Conference Room

5:30 P.M.

Work Session Minutes

- I. Board Chair Dave Worthington welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order. In attendance were Gerald Crowell, Dave Worthington, Jim Lawrence, Jim Giraytys, Jim O'Connor and Tree Commission liaison T'ai Roulston.

- II. Dave Worthington began by thanking Mr. O'Connor for attending the meeting. He said that the work session was scheduled to come up with a plan for presenting the No-Mow ordinance to City Council and also to discuss the Valley Air Now levels of funding. Dave asked Jim Giraytys to explain the details of the Valley Air Now program to Mr. O'Connor as well as the levels of city funding that the board is suggesting for the upcoming fiscal year. Jim said that there is currently a meter which is near the rest stop north of Winchester. He said that the particulate matter that is measured is 2.5 macrons, which is small, has barbed edges and never leaves the lungs. He said that 10 macrons are the larger particles from trucks and manufacturing and it is not as harmful. Jim said that the city and county are currently within the EPA standards but may not be when the new regulations are put into place. Jim said that the city used to match what Frederick County contributed and last year they stopped. He said that what the Natural Resources Advisory Board is suggesting to City Council is three levels of funding. Jim said that the first level of funding is \$15,000 which would include \$10,000 for air quality and \$5,000 for membership in I.C.L.E.I. Jim said that the second level would be \$75,000 which is what the city had funded in the past. He said that the program would be agreed upon by all parties that are involved as far as the use of the funding. He said that in the past the program was submitted to the Frederick County Board of Supervisors and the City Council. Jim said that the third level would be considering the possibility of adding another 2.5 gauge and an ozone gauge. Jim said that everything currently is dependent on the readings from the one gauge and it may not be very representative of the entire area. He said that the third level would be to fund a second gauge with Frederick County. Jim said that the cost for the 2.5 gauge and ozone meter that were installed at rest was about \$110,000. Jim Lawrence asked Jim Giraytys if the \$15,000 would be earmarked for outreach. Jim Giraytys said that a plan is submitted to the Frederick County Board of Directors and City Council and they make the decision on how the money is used. He said the funding was approved in the past with the condition that the plan was approved. Dave Worthington stated to Mr. O'Connor that the NRAB is currently recommending that the City Council fund the \$15,000 level to start. Mr. O'Connor encouraged them to send the letter of recommendation for Valley Air Now. He said that it is really going to come down to putting priorities on budget dollars. He said that it will be put into the budget folder because they are now receiving requests from the different departments. Dave Worthington asked about the budget approval process. Mr. O'Connor said that people make the requests as to what they want and

the funding required. Mr. O'Connor said that they put those into a priority list. He said that these requests are outside the operational costs and capital of the city. He said that on January 22, 2011 there will be a retreat to talk about setting priorities. He said all of the requests will be read by council members. Dave Worthington asked when the final budget will be decided on. Mr. O'Connor said that it will be adopted in June but there will be budget meetings at the end of March and beginning of April.

- III. Dave Worthington asked Mr. O'Connor if he had seen the actual language of the No-Mow ordinance. Mr. O'Connor said that it has been passed by him but he has not sat down with anyone to talk about it. Dave said that Mr. McInturff was at the last meeting and he suggested presenting the ordinance to the individual council members to familiarize them with the idea of what the Natural Resources Advisory Board is proposing. Dave said that they are meeting to see how to move the No-Mow ordinance forward with City Council. He said that the board members want to meet with the council members on a one on one basis to show them why it is a good idea and why it needs to be done and to answer any questions they may have. He said the reason for this meeting is to determine what should be discussed with the council members and how they should go about it. Jim Lawrence said that the existing law requires any grass over ten inches to be cut. He said that it is almost a change in the existing law that would allow a person with a riparian zone or a storm water conveyance to have a natural area in place versus a managed turf. Mr. O'Connor stated that people agree that there are some no-mow zones. He said the key is keeping it under control. Gerald said that they came up with a list of species that were native plants and plants that were not invasive. Dave Worthington said that some of the language was taken from other jurisdictions that have done this. He said that this is something that a lot of other communities have already started. Jim Lawrence said that Ron Tuttle is the Natural Resource Manager for Fairfax County and he lives in Winchester. He said that Ron would like to get involved with anything the Natural Resources Advisory Board is doing. He said that Ron has a tremendous amount of experience with this subject and he thinks the board would benefit from speaking with him. Jim said that he thinks one of the biggest hurdles will be public outreach. He said there are a lot of myths and one person's natural area is another person's eye sore. He said there is some education needed as far as the environmental and economic benefits. Jim said that if the Natural Resources Advisory Board proposed a public outreach plan along with the ordinance it might help reduce the fears and the phone calls that City Council might receive. Mr. O'Connor said there was a similar program in Oak Ridge, TN and they got the state environmental department to sign on to the program and they would testify as to the environmental benefits. He said that they only used it on public property and it wasn't for private ownership. T'ai Roulston asked who would enforce the ordinance. Dave Worthington said that the application is reviewed by the Natural Resources Advisory Board and then they make a recommendation to the city whether the application should be approved or not. He said the board would decide if the applicant is in compliance. Gerald Crowell said that if the application is denied then the applicant has the right to appeal and it will be decided by the City Manager. Dave Worthington said that there are specific requirements that have to be met and if they are not met then the

city can cancel it. Mr. O'Connor said that he thinks it would be a good idea to have an agency that gives the board a third party opinion that this type of growth is compatible with nature and good in an urban setting. He said that he thinks it would be good for supporting documents when it is presented to City Council. Jim Lawrence said that he thinks the Department of Conservation and Recreation would be the agency that the board would want to have comment about the benefits. Dave Worthington asked if the members want to take the information that he has given them and then in two weeks at the meeting they can bring back their modifications or things they want to delete or add and then it can be approved. He said he can get a copy of it to Woody Bousquet. The members agreed. Dave Worthington said that he has spoken with other jurisdictions and they have already gone through this and done the outreach and they can give good advice on how to do it. Jim Lawrence said he could talk to Ron Tuttle about it since he has dealt with it and knows a lot about it. Dave Worthington asked if it would be possible to get him to come to the next meeting. Jim said he could give him a call. Dave asked if anyone else had anything to discuss.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:27 p.m.