

CITY OF WINCHESTER
NATURAL RESOURCES ADVISORY BOARD
November 18, 2010
Winchester City Yards Conference Room
5:30 P.M.
MINUTES & ACTION ITEMS

- I. Board Chair Dave Worthington welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order. In attendance were Gerald Crowell, Dave Worthington, Woody Bousquet, Jim Giraytys and Tom Hoy. Two City Council members were also present, Mr. Milt McInturff and Mr. John Tagnesi.
- II. The minutes from the meeting on October 28, 2010 were reviewed. Motion to approve the minutes as modified by Gerald Crowell, seconded by Jim Giraytys. Approved by a 4-0 vote.
- III. Status of Previous action items: Dave Worthington said that they will be meeting with individual City Council members two at a time. He asked how the members want to do this. Woody said that it could be based on where the members live for a start. Dave said at the next meeting they could break it down by wards. Dave said the Valley Air support letter is complete. He said that the thank you letter to Vince Diem has been sent. Dave said that the sign design for Whittier and Friendship parks will be on hold until the next meeting since Jim Lawrence was unable to attend this meeting. Woody said that the NRAB had a request from a new faculty member at Shenandoah University for one of the members to speak about how the local environment affects public health. He said that there is a new public health program going on at Shenandoah University and since he is the Vice-Chair of the NRAB as well as a faculty member at the University, he volunteered. He said that he mostly focused on water quality. He passed out an example of the handout and said that they discussed what the local environment should provide for humans and their community. He said that he talked about water pollution and things people can do on the local level to help protect water quality. He said that she was glad to hear that other NRAB members would be willing to talk about other topics and at some point she will contact the NRAB as she refines her courses. Dave said that there was also a request from the Boy Scouts for a guest speaker. He said that since Gerald has experience he asked him to take care of that. He said that the Cub Scouts have a Forestry Activity Badge.
- IV. No-Mow Ordinance: Dave Worthington said that he wanted to go over the No-Mow Ordinance and what it entails so that Mr. McInturff could better understand what the Natural Resources Advisory Board is doing. Dave said that last summer the NRAB was contacted by the Parks and Recreation Department because they were having some problems with some areas that they were mowing. He said that these were water retention areas that were costing them a lot of cost and time to maintain. He said that they asked them to look into it to see what they would recommend. Dave said that the NRAB recommended that they not mow these areas and let them grow natural. Dave said that this would lower the cost to the city and also have some environmental affects. He said that using less fertilizer reduces the chemicals and there are more habitats for wildlife. He said that it is also

aesthetically more pleasing. He said that they gave these recommendations to Brad Veach. He said that using the recommendations has reduced cost and there have been no complaints from the neighbors. He said that because of the success Tom asked the NRAB to look at doing a now-mow initiative for the city. Dave said that they came up with a Now-Mow Zone and Vegetative Management Plan for the Winchester code. He said that Vince Diem gave them a lot of help to put it into the correct format. Dave said that after it was written up they sent it to Tom and now they are at a point where they are ready to move on with it. Tom said that the next step would be to present it in a work session. He recommended having individual meetings with two City Councilors at a time. Mr. McInturff said that he did read it and he recalls some of the parameters in reference to the citizen being able to take advantage of it. He said that there is some purview from the city in reference to not letting this get out of control and that there is some sort of request so that the property is put on some type of list to review on some type of a basis. Dave said that the NRAB would be part of the evaluation process to assist the city in actions to be taken. He said it would go through the Department of Zoning and Inspections. Mr. McInturff said that he didn't have a problem with any of it. He said the only question has is what problems does the NRAB anticipate? He said that if this goes to City Council, is there a list of anticipated questions that the NRAB feels Council is going to ask? Mr. McInturff said that this method is used a lot in resort areas and other places and it blends with the landscape. Mr. McInturff said that the things that he see that are met with resistance are things that City Council members don't know about. He said that it is a good idea to meet with Council members two at a time to let them know what is going on. Mr. Tagnesi said that when it comes to the entrances to the city the NRAB may want to take a look at each location on a case by case basis. Mr. Tagnesi said that even though an area may qualify, from the first impression it may be a place that needs to be mowed or trimmed. Dave said that he spoke to Tom about it and these areas compliment the mowed areas. Woody said that the NRAB would respond to the Science and the Planning and Zoning Department would make the decision in terms of what ever ordinance is in place to protect a city entrance. Dave said that the NRAB is really excited about it and several communities have had success with it. Woody said that allowing the plants to grow up lets the plants take up the nutrients and leaves the microorganisms to lock up what is washing off of the roads and off of the grass areas before it gets into the water. He said those natural services are free, money is saved by not mowing and it helps protect water quality. He said that every community needs to show that it is taking steps to improve water quality. He said that when stricter regulations are implemented then the city will be able to demonstrate that they have done their part. Dave said that there is a considerable cost savings because there is no seeding, fertilizing, mowing or pesticide application. He said that there is an initial cost for planting but after that there is no cost. He said that it also reduces the geese population because geese don't like areas where there could be predators. He said that mowed areas are more likely to attract geese. He also said that the third highest contributor to air pollution behind cars and trucks is lawn mowers. He said by not mowing the areas it also reduces air pollution. Mr. McInturff said that it might be a good idea to present the No-Mow ordinance to a couple of City Councilors fifteen minutes before a

work session because some of the Councilors aren't readily available. He said that once the Councilors have made that commitment to attend the work session it is a lot easier to tag fifteen minutes onto the beginning of the meeting. Tom said that he would recommend that the NRAB develop a fifteen minute presentation at the December meeting and then the members could check it their self with questions that may come up before hand. Dave said that he would draft a one page presentation. Mr. McInturff said that the only other thing he could think of is that if the ordinance gets passed by City Council is some kind of educational campaign for the general public so that they understand what is going on. Woody said that a one page flyer for the public might be a good idea that can be put up on the City website that explains why it is a good idea, how the public can get involved and why is the City doing it. The members agreed to use the December meeting to discuss the presentation to City Council. The meeting will be held on December 16, 2010. Mr. McInturff said that the City Council is moving away from liaisons for the boards but he is available anytime a member wants to give him a call.

- V. Review of Valley Air Now Support Letter: Dave Worthington said that his comment would be to put something in the letter as to why the NRAB wants to do this. Dave asked Jim Giraytys to give a background so that Mr. Tagnesi would know why they are doing it. Jim said that the NRAB had agreed that there should be some activity with respect to air quality. He said that there were several long discussions on the air quality issues. Jim said that the NRAB is proposing three recommendations for the city to consider. He said that the first recommendation is that the city supports the Air Quality Task Force. Jim said that there is an organization called I.C.L.E.I. for local communities for sustainable development. He said that it is an international organization which provides assistance to members and the main assistance is related to air quality issues. He said that they have a set of procedures that communities can go through to evaluate what level of air quality problems they have. Jim said that Winchester did belong to the I.C.L.E.I. and they did an assessment all of the standards that I.C.L.E.I. had produced and they came up with results as to where the particular problems were. Jim said that he included a table with the documentation and in 2010 there were only two days that exceeded the ozone standard which is 75 parts per billion. He said that there is a gauge at a place called Rest which is about a quarter of a mile east of the Interstate 81 rest stop North of Winchester. He said that the Shenair program bought equipment and installed an ozone gauge and a particulate matter gauge. He said that Shenair bought the gauges and installed them in a specially designed container for the equipment. He said that DEQ now owns it and they are responsible for doing all of the maintenance and statistic quality. He said that Shenair doesn't have any more responsibility for those instruments. Jim said that the maximum number of days that exceeded the ozone standard was in 1998 and that was a period of drought. He said that in 2002 there were twenty-two days that exceeded the ozone standard. He said that the readings are very weather dependent. Jim said that he hopes that the teacher from Shenandoah University will be interested in some information on the Air Quality Program because that is as big of a health issue as water quality. Jim said that this is all background information. Jim said that the first level of support would be \$15,000 which would assist the Air Quality

Task Force in their work for 2011. Jim said that previously the city contributed \$75,000 and Frederick County contributed \$75,000 on an annual basis. He said that last year the city did not contribute because of budgetary constraints but Frederick County did. He said that the money was used mostly for outreach. He said that they went to all of the city and county schools. He said that a person was hired to go around and give briefings. He said that last year they had to let the person go because they lost the funding from the city. He said the \$15,000 would include the I.C.L.E.I. membership. Jim said that the next step would be to put in \$75,000 to match the contribution made by Frederick County along with another \$5,000 to support the I.C.L.E.I. program. Jim said that finally there is only one gauge that is near Interstate 81 and everything that the county and city are judged on by the Environmental Protection Agency is from that one gauge. Jim said that for the final step he would recommend installing another particulate matter gauge if the funding is available. He suggested someplace in the county or the city to give a better representation of what the community might be encountering. He said that there was a study done in the early two thousands by the DEQ and they had a portable station at the Winchester GE plant. He said that it was in place for the entire ozone season and they did find some differences in the particulate ozone matter as opposed to the one at Rest. He said the differences weren't that great at that time but it was before the standards were reduced. He said that the standard went down from 85 parts per billion to 75 parts per billion. Jim said that at 75 parts per billion we are right on the edge of being in non-compliance again. Jim said that non-compliance can mean a number of things. He said that in Northern Virginia they will never be compliant and that is why they have the testing standards for emissions from automobiles and they have a different formulation for gasoline. Jim said that those restrictions were put on them by the EPA because they are non-compliant. Jim said that the Winchester area avoided having restrictions placed on them in the late 1990's and early 2000's because they joined the early action compact. He said that the Valley Air Now Program and the Shenandoah Valley Air Quality Program kept this area from receiving any fines or any constraints put on us. Woody suggested beginning the letter with the mission of the Natural Resources Advisory Board. He then suggested adding, "Accordingly, the Natural Resources Advisory Board recently reviewed the Shenair Program and recommendations of the Air Quality Task Force. We offer the city our summary and recommendations below." Mr. Tagnesi asked Jim why the current ozone testing equipment couldn't be moved to another site if the current site isn't accurate. Jim said that the sites are determined by the EPA. He said that it is easy to install a new one but it is difficult to move one that is already installed because they want continuity of record. He said that it came up in City Council several years ago. He said that the one at Rest has been there for 18 to 20 years. Jim said that the current testing site doesn't give bad data; it just isn't representative of the entire area. Jim said that if another testing site was installed the location would be determined through negotiations between the EPA, the Virginia DEQ and the Air Quality Task Force. Jim said that there was a two year study done by the University of Virginia that back traced the air from where it came. He said that the study showed that there are some very interesting things that go on here with the air flow as opposed to the rest of the valley. He said that there was also a six month DEQ study during the ozone season

that gives air flow measurements as well. He said all of this information could be used to select a reasonable site. Dave said that the NRAB wants to present this to the City Manager as a recommendation for next year's budget. He said that because they know there have been some budget constraints, they have only recommended the \$15,000 level of support. Jim said that it might be a good idea to put the links to the information on the city website once it is decided what they are going to do. Woody said that it will be informing the public where they can get more information about natural resources decisions and programs that relate directly to living in this area. Woody made a motion to approve the sending of the letter as discussed pending the boards final approval by email; seconded by Gerald Crowell, motion was approved. Woody said that the letter could be sent by Monday, December 6, 2010.

- VI. Tree Growth Regulator: Gerald said that there was a discussion about using the regulator about 20 years ago and there was a big outcry about it. Gerald said that since then the technology has improved. He said the great concern originally was implanting it into the trees by drilling a hole into the tree trunks. He said that it was determined that this didn't work well because the tree would develop callus tissue around the tablet which prevented it from working. He said that he has found very little negative information on the current growth regulators. He said that it actually has positive affects on the trees such as increasing root mass which will help it absorb more water. Gerald said that originally Tom asked him if the chemical would move through the ground. Gerald said that according to the Purdue University study and the Material Safety Data Sheet it binds to the soil so tightly that it won't move unless the soil is moved. He said that it shouldn't affect wells. He said that the trees are treated once every two or three years. He said that a city in California that is using it has reduced their tree trimming from once every six months to once every three years. Gerald said that a representative for Shenandoah Valley Cooperative will be at the January meeting of the Tree Commission to give a presentation on their procedure.
- VII. Tree Commission Liaison Report: Gerald said that the meeting was short but he did want to report that Tim Stern had a hip replacement and he is doing well.
- VIII. New Items: Dave said that he noticed on the NRAB website that Gerald's name isn't included. Clint said that he would check with Rob Shambaugh to have that fixed. Dave said that he also noticed that Les Veach is still listed on there as the City Council liaison. Woody said that he thought it should be removed. Clint said that he would speak with Tom to see if it needs to be removed.

Woody said that the Shenandoah University Environmental Studies Department has a pledge that he thinks will be able to be used to do the tree cutting that they have wanted to do in the Abrams Creek Wetlands Preserve. He said it is part of the management plan. He said it will require a lot of volunteer labor but some of the labor will be contracted out. He said if nature could take its course then fires would take care of the problem but the landscape is fragmented and we fight fires. He said that the marsh

is gradually getting shaded by the natural growth. He said to protect the natural values of the area which are the rare plants, the rare communities and the birds; the trees have to be cut. Woody said that in putting together the management plan they worked with game, land and fisheries to identify the time for cutting the trees when the birds aren't nesting. He said the idea is to cut the trees and spray a pesticide on the cut stumps by hand that is approved for use over water not harming amphibians to reduce the growth that comes back and then every few years neighborhood volunteers could cut it down. Woody said the idea is to get some funding and then volunteers can haul the cut wood to the edge of the road so that the city can pick it up and chip it. He said there will be some education needed. He said that he has an Environmental Education class next semester. His students have to do two projects, one with schools and one with the general public. He said the project may be educating the public as to why trees are being cut down in the nature preserve. Woody said that the plan has been approved and he is just presenting it for information.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:02 p.m.

NO.	ACTION ITEM:	ASSIGNED TO:	TARGET DATE:	STATUS:
1	Add Gerald Crowell to the NRAB website.	Clint	11/19/10	
2	Complete the No-Mow summary page and flyer drafts for City Council	Dave Worthington	12/16/10	
3	Work on sign designs for Whittier and Friendship parks.	Jim Lawrence	1/27/11	
4	Pilot Project: Write a letter to Tim Youmans concerning the Comp Plan, how to get the air quality and no-mow information in the plan and what it is.	Dave Worthington and all NRAB members	1/27/11	
5	Send letter to Brad Veach about assuming an advising role for the city's two preserves	Woody Bousquet	12/1/10	
6	Pending revisions, send Valley Air Now letter to Jim O'Connor.	Dave Worthington	12/6/10	
7	Meet with Jim O'Connor to discuss Valley Air Now letter.	Jim Giraytys and one other member	After Jim receives the letter	