



ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS BOARD MINUTES

May 3, 2023
Virtual Meeting (Zoom)

Voting Members: Juilee Malavade (chair), Wilson Salls (vice chair), Chi Vo, Jennifer Carrigan, Corie Hlavaty, Anjali Boyd, Torrey Swain, Cooper Norris, Wafa Khalil, Ben Goldberg

Excused Absences: Sherry Taylor (Secretary), any others...?

Ex Officio Members/Staff: Mary Tiger (Water Management), Paul Cameron (General Services), Michelle Woolfolk (Stormwater), Summer Alston (General Services), Heidi Carter (County Commission)

Tobin Freid (Durham County Sustainability Manager), Jane Korest (County Open Space Program), Tania Dautlick (Keep Durham Beautiful, General Services), Summer Alston (General Services), Jonathan Baker (Public Works), J. V. Loperfido (Public Works), Vicki Westbrook (Water Management), Scott Whiteman (City & County Planning), Michelle Woolfolk (Water Management), Wayne Fenton (Solid Waste), Commissioner Heidi Carter

Attendees & Panelists Total: 21

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- I. Call to Order at 6:05 PM
 - II. April Minutes not ready yet.
 - III. Announcements
 - a) Next EAB meeting is scheduled for June 7th, 6-8 pm, **in person**.
 - b) Paul: Green Source Advantage program moving forward with 35 MW solar project in NE Alamance County June-December 2025. It will help Durham City, County, and Public Schools reach their clean energy goals.
 - c) Cooper: Monday night Durham City Council voted to preserve the Ellerbe Creek Heron Rookery as a Nature Preserve!
 - d) Summer Alston: Thanks and congratulations Paul Cameron for initiating the Green So

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IV. **New and Continuing Business**

a) **New Topic: City Greenhouse Gas Inventory**

Presenter(s): Paul Cameron (City of Durham General Services)

- Goal: achieve significant reduction in GHG emissions by 2030 (to 30,000 metric tonnes), and carbon neutral by 2040.
- Steady progress toward that goal so far.
- Decrease in transit fleet carbon emissions, likely due to two electric buses. Six more will be added soon. 22 hybrid buses added in 2011 also contributed to progress.
- Decrease in electric use in facilities, likely due to reduced occupancy in buildings due to COVID-19 pandemic. Slight rise back up in 2022, but still below 2020.
- Decrease in electric use in traffic signals due to LED streetlight conversion project completed in late 2020.

Comments:

J. Carrigan: Where do emissions from water category come from, and how do we reduce them?

- **Paul:** Buildings and operations related to freshwater and wastewater department and processing—e.g. treatment plants. Have worked on improving efficiency of processes. Using by-product methane to power sewage digesters to reduce usage of natural gas used to heat digester and possibly generate electricity.

B. Goldberg: How did you measure all this data?

- **Paul:** Electric and gas bills from utilities, and liquid fuel usage in vehicles tracked; use this data to calculate metric tonnes of CO2 equivalent.
- **Mary Tiger:** GHG emissions come from moving water (pumping), about 80% of wastewater treatment emissions; aerating waste basins also a large source.

J. Malavade: Also accounting for indirect emissions?

- **Paul:** Using IGLI calculator, which prescribes measurement methodology. Have chosen not to track, e.g., vehicle emissions from employee transit.

b) **New Topic: Plastic Bag Fee Resolution**

Presenter(s): Matt Kopac, Jennifer Carrigan (EAB), Nancy Lauer, Crystal Dreisbach (Don't Waste Durham), Michelle Nowlin (Duke ELPC)

- **Nancy:** Don't Waste Durham has been advocating for a plastic bag fee for last 4-5 years. Solid Waste Dept. has made two budget requests for budget going into effect July 1:
 - A position for education and outreach on programs for reusables and waste reduction, and solid waste more generally in the city.
 - A code enforcement officer necessary to oversee fee enforcement.
- Jen and Matt have put together a letter of support.
- **Michelle:** SWM Dept. has requested education and outreach position for each of last four budget cycles and it wasn't funded

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- This is an important part of city's GHG reduction efforts—both at manufacturing and disposal stages.
- *Crystal*: City Council passing this is no more important than having staff time to actually do it.
- *Michelle*: One council member had a concern about dignity on requesting fee exemptions. Also interest in broadening scope beyond fee and considering other provisions such as requiring customers to opt-in on retail products (e.g. straws, take-out containers, etc.). CM Caballero has said first step is to get the positions funded, and then bring the ordinance back up for a vote.

Comments:

J. Malavade: What does enforcement look like in other places?

- **Nancy:** Once staff member is about right. Enforcement is often done through customer complaints. First step is education and perhaps a warning, but not a fine. If complaints continue, then a fine may occur. Other cities did not find enforcement to be a huge lift. A term limited position may be enough since businesses figure it out over time, which is how SWM structured the position (5 years).

C. Vo: Are there any funding opportunities federally/statewide for any of this?

- **Michelle:** There was a bill to provide funding for such programs in the NC House, but it got skipped in the last session.

B. Goldberg: Would the positions in the letter of support still be established (if the positions are approved) even if the bag fee ordinance isn't passed?

- **Michelle:** Outreach and education coordinator would still be funded, unclear about enforcement officer.

J. Malavade: Is there anything in place to ensure equitable engagement is practiced?

- **Nancy:** Other programs have done so, and we plan to learn from them to ensure this. Nothing formal in place currently, but Equitable Engagement Blueprint could be used by City if they felt appropriate.
- **Michelle:** Have interfaced with Duke professors who specialize in equitable engagement who can help consult and support. Also, Don't Waste Durham executed a program called Boomerang Bags to distribute free reusable bags (made of reused materials) around the community, which would ideally be part of rollout process.

Heidi Carter: Would the bag fee help pay for the position for code enforcement?

- **Nancy:** Not in the first year since no funds from bag fee. Looking at other cities suggests that Durham's fee would be enough to support one or even both positions.

Motion to approve letter of support: passes 10-0

c) Continuing Topic: Retreat Overview

Presenter(s): Juilee Malavade (EAB)

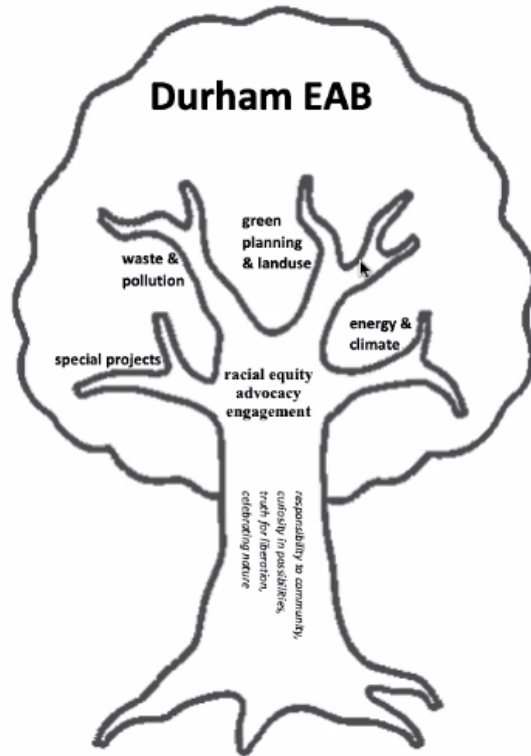
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- Retreat report provided by facilitator Tessa Thraves.
- Exercise to ground what EAB is about, leading to restructuring and renaming of committees.

Comments:

J. Carrigan: Two lingering conversations: Wording on mission and values? How do we focus our energy on community engagement?

- **J. Malavade:** Perhaps an ongoing work session to address those questions, perhaps an agenda item. Can receive guidance from city and county officials.
- Jen: Could be
- Matt: Can make it a public meeting if we want (asynchronous to normal meeting).
- Wilson: Suggest work session first and then agenda item to have more focused discussion with officials.



d) New Topic: Election of Executive Board Member

Presenter(s): Juilee Malavade (EAB)

- At-Large Executive Board member vacancy to be filled.
- W. Salls nominated J. Carrigan, who accepted the nomination.

Vote to elect J. Carrigan: elected 10-0

Adjourn at 7:19 PM

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