

**ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL ADVISORY BOARD**

**MINUTES OF  
October 21, 2020**

Item No. 1 being:

**ROLL CALL**

The Environmental Control Advisory Board of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met in a Special Session at the City of Norman, in the Executive Conference Room, Norman Municipal Building, 201 West Gray Street using Zoom Technology for video conference due to COVID-19 on October 21, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. Notice and Agenda of the meeting were posted at the Norman Municipal Building at 201 West Gray, 24 hours prior to the beginning of the meeting.

MEMBERS PRESENT	Matthew Rom (Chair) Amanda Nairn (Vice-Chair) Dane Heins Deborah Cretsinger James Harp (arrived at 5:35) Robert Vollmar Traci Gold Courtney DeKalb-Myers
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MEMBERS ABSENT	N/A
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STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT	Debbie Smith, Environmental Services Manager Carrie Evenson, Stormwater Program Manager Jerry Gates, Environmental Services Asst. Manager Nathan Madenwald, Utilities Engineer Gay Webb, Utilities Admin Tech IV
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Item No. 2 being:

<b>INTRODUCE GUESTS</b>	None
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Item No. 3 being:

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF September 16, 2020 MEETING**

Nairn made a motion to approve the September 16, 2020 minutes. Cretsinger seconded. There being no further discussion, a vote was taken with the following result:

YEAS	Matthew Rom (Chair) Amanda Nairn (Vice-Chair) Dane Heins Deborah Cretsinger
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Robert Vollmar  
Traci Gold  
Courtney DeKalb-Myers

NAYS None

The motion passed by a vote of 7 to 0.

Item No. 4 being:

**APPROVAL OF PROPOSED MEETING DATES AND TIMES FOR THE 2021 CALENDAR YEAR**

Rom said that the only thing he can think of is that they typically move the March meeting back a week because it lands on the week of Spring Break. He asked Nairn if they move it up or back and she said they normally move it up because they are usually judging the posters and need the extra week and asked Smith if that was correct. Smith said that was correct so they could order the shirts and everything. Nairn is still inclined to move it since the public schools are probably still going to have spring break and thinks better to be safe than sorry. Rom stated that would move it to March the 10<sup>th</sup>. Rom asked if that was ok with everyone and if there were any other date issues. Everyone said no.

Harp made a motion to approve the proposed meeting dates with March being changed to the 10<sup>th</sup>. Nairn seconded. There being no further discussion, a vote was taken with the following result:

YEAS Matthew Rom (Chair)  
Amanda Nairn (Vice-Chair)  
Dane Heins  
Deborah Cretsinger  
James Harp  
Robert Vollmar  
Traci Gold  
Courtney DeKalb-Myers

NAYS None

The motion passed by a vote of 8 to 0.

Item No. 5 being:

**DISCUSS GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

Rom asks Nairn to give a brief history of what the board has been tasked with in the past. She states that when her and Harp joined the board, they were tasked by the mayor to concentrate on water quantity and quality issues and give public education related to water issues. Over the years they were asked to do other things such as looking into Red Cedars. Occasionally they are asked by council or the mayor to look into certain issues but not always given direction so it's not like they can't look at anything else. They have done some recycling stuff based around public education. Mostly around water but not restricted to that. Nairn said that Smith might have additional info and Smith said that they have mainly done the mayors climate agreement they have worked on mold issues, a lot of recycling and that contamination was a big focus for a while.

Harp said that they dabbled in light pollution, noise pollution and that they have had things on the table before that weren't water related. Rom says that ultimately they don't have the power to govern the legislate but they can make suggestions to the city council. Rom says that one of the biggest objectives is public education but in terms of goals he thinks Nairn is right, there hasn't been any direction or challenges brought to the board for them to go in one specific direction. He thinks it can open discussion amongst the board of what their interests are and where they want to see this thing go. Rom then opens it up for discussion. Harp states he is still on commercial recycling and he doesn't know how the roofing material recycling would go or who would take it but thinks they should contact other communities about it. Thinks it is time to reach out and see what others are doing as far as construction material recycling. Smith suggested individual composting education. Myers said that they had mentioned a social media compost campaign promoting at home individual composting. (what if they don't have social media) Vollmar said the mayor had an excellent power point presentation that they could adapt from. His only reservation is that composting season is going to be over soon so maybe they figure it all out in the winter season and roll out on social media in February which is a good time to start thinking about composting. Cretsinger said while she knows it is on the agenda the sustainable yard is something that she would like to see continued going forward. Vollmar expresses his concern for the environmental issues and doesn't feel that we as a city are acting as if it is an emergency but he feels that it is an emergency. Says there are a lot of good initiatives out there that could offer us a good frame work for us to explore the issues because it isn't a matter of if but when. He would rather our city be prepared for it. Smith said that the city did just put some solar panels on the disinfecting facility at the waste water plant. Myers said that something else to consider is the issue of urban sprawl with all of the new developments, what toll does that take on our environment and how can we do it in a more responsible way to the eco system. Thinks we need to look at the issues of public transportation and offer other options such as walking paths. Rom questioned about a committee in the past that came so close to finishing and then just stopped. Nairn said she was a part of that committee and doesn't know of any plans to finish it and that it's been so long ago that she couldn't even tell them what they were moving towards on that committee as far as final recommendations. There were discussions about the issues Myers said as well as walkability, even redevelopment of certain parts of the city. She thinks that they went over budget and asked for more money and the council denied it. From there she thinks it became political and fell apart. Smith said she would check into it. Harp said he did his master thesis on sprawl and the majority goes back to density or population. Harp states that he thinks, them being sensitive to this is a good thing and asks Nairn if she thinks it will kick back up or if she thinks it died. She said that honestly she hasn't even thought about it in almost 2 years so she thinks it's dead. Harp said if its dead then maybe our group shouldn't bother. Nairn expresses that it was a very complicated process. It is not a simple discussion at all. Smith said that she would find out what their plans were and asks if it is something that maybe instead of giving recommendations they just ask them to reconsider going forward with it. Nairn said maybe they check into it and study the draft, then make a recommendation after that. Rom thinks we need to invite Scovil back because he is curious to know how recycling markets have changed in a COVID environment. Rom asks the board if the discussion today has helped throw some things out there of possible areas of main focus for the board. Nairn explains that if we feel passionately enough about what we are studying or trying to educate people on then they can move forward and send a request to council because a lot of the ordinances set forth came out of ECAB. Vollmar asks if the board would be ok with him doing research into the transition town organization structure and maybe make a presentation in December? Talk about what the goals are. Harp said that he would like to know more but not to the point of a presentation, maybe a paragraph or so. Vollmar just wants to give the board current goals of the program because what he knows is dated.

Item No. 6 being:

## **DISCUSS SUSTAINABLE YARD OF THE MONTH**

Rom turned the floor over to Gold. Gold spoke with Cretsinger and Myers about the OKC guidelines and believes that there are a few areas that can be improved but overall serves as a pretty good starting template for what they could do with the project. In the discussion it was agreed that moving away from the competitive aspect and more towards a certification aspect would be beneficial towards the goals of the project in encouraging the people in the city of Norman to be eco-friendlier with their landscaping, both residence and businesses. Gold's thoughts are to take some items from the list, consolidate some of them and there are also some that they can add. Gold thinks they should add hydroponics to the list. There are also things to consider taking out. Gold believes that the HOA's might make some requirements difficult which they can discuss later. Maybe just change up the list a little bit. Turn it into a point based system where we, as a board, can certify yards as eco-friendly. Maybe use some of the money to make signs that can be put in people's yards and stick our logo on them. Use this as a tool to encourage people to adapt healthier landscaping practices throughout the city. Rom says he likes it and they will have to come up with a catchier name since they won't be able to call it "yard of the month" if it's not a competition anymore. Rom isn't familiar with the OKC program and asks if his yard becomes certified is it forever or is there a time frame because he could do a lot of work today to get his yard certified and in 6 months say forget it. Gold isn't sure if OKC's program has a time frame in it but says that the hope is that people do things in good faith and thinks more people would than would not. Being that some of the things in the landscaping section are more of a permanent fixture, Gold doesn't have too much of a concern with that. If any issues do arise with it, maybe they can reevaluate the program at that time. Cretsinger had a question about how they would go about certifications. She explains that the OKC one mainly focuses on native plants, basically remove all non-native plants from your yard which she thinks is unreasonable. She's not about to cut out her crape myrtles just because they aren't native to Oklahoma. Says they weren't really clear but asks what kind of criteria do we establish? Maybe somebody just puts up one small garden that is all native in their yard whether it be front or back? Cretsinger asked what people's thoughts were on it. One thing was OKC has that you can't have pesticides and Gold's point was how do we know? Cretsinger volunteered to put together a new criteria list but wants to know what everyone else's thoughts were. Vollmar said that he thinks we should set up a minimum threshold such as 50% met. Smith explained that the OKC criteria was having at least 3 practices in 3 of the 5 areas. Nairn said she is not in favor of making it too steep because then we won't get anybody. That the idea behind it is to encourage. Vollmar suggested adding business specific things to include, being that a lot of them don't have grass or enough room for landscaping. Myers said that the links on OKC's list aren't exactly intuitive and require more work and reading that people might like. Suggested having an application with a separate document that is educational that we control and we govern so we don't have to rely on third party links, whether they are still active or staying up to date. Smith likes the idea of the educational document because it is difficult dealing with links. Gold will try to get a draft copy for the next meeting. Maybe they can discuss implementing the program early next year in the spring. Possibly around earth day. Nairn believes that the businesses will require a little bit different of a list and possibly a different name. Gold said we can definitely do two different lists with different criterion.

Item No. 7 being:

## **DISCUSS NORMAN TRANSCRIPT AD FOR POSTER CONTEST WINNERS**

Rom said that they voted at the last meeting to present the prize packages to the winners and get the cost of the full page ad. Evenson graciously checked into it and it was approx. \$800 for a full page color ad and some ad space in the electronics section. It had to run on a Sunday....in

the sports section.... on a non OU game day. We are checking with Meyer to see if she has any recommendations on a good reporter to write the story. Maybe put a community interest piece with it as well. Rom opened it up for discussion. Rom asked Smith what we typically spend on shirts. Smith said probably \$500-\$1000 depending on how many shirts we order. Smith said there may be some other opportunities and asked Evenson if she wanted to speak on what she had been researching or discussing with the art council or is it too premature. Evenson thinks it is too premature at this point. They don't have anything firm but have been looking at some other possibilities but not there yet. Vollmar said that he feels like \$800 is a lot of money for something that is going to run in the paper one time. Cretsinger agreed and asked what other options did they have. Vollmar said that they had talked about reaching out to someone at the transcript to just write a story about it. Maybe write a story about the Earth Day shirt that never was. Smith laughed and said she likes that title. Vollmar gets that the transcript has to make money but this feels like taking money out to the parking lot and just setting it on fire. Smith said it is a large part of the budget. Rom asked if the budget was a use it or lose it and Smith said yes, it had to be encumbered for a specific thing for it to be rolled over to the next fiscal year and if it wasn't used for that specific thing then they would lose it. Rom stated that if we use the money for this then we are technically using the money for the 2021 poster contest and need to take that into consideration. Rom said we also talked about getting a poster made to hang in the library and in the schools. Have the picture as the background as we announce the next poster contest and should be significantly cheaper. Gold suggested just giving gift cards to the winners. Harp said that's a more feasible solution. Rom said he thinks at this point they have provided prizes to the winners. Smith said we have not given them to the students yet. Rom stated that we already have things for them though. Meyers asked if she could bring the gifts to her in the next week or so. Smith said that would be great. Rom said that the business for the board is, do we want to spend the money for the ad or not. He would like to see if they will just write an article for the sake of writing an article. Since the money was not encumbered he thinks it would not be a good use of funds.

Gold made a motion to table this part of the agenda till next month so they could ask about the article. Harp Seconded, a vote was taken with the following result:

YEAS     Matthew Rom (Chair)  
             Amanda Nairn (Vice-Chair)  
             Dane Heins  
             James Harp  
             Robert Vollmar  
             Traci Gold  
             Courtney DeKalb-Myers

NAYS     Deborah Cretsinger

The motion passed by a vote of 7 to 1.

Cretsinger said that she thought we could figure this out in this meeting and be done with it and that it has been long enough. She agrees that if the transcript won't do a story then come up with a different idea but not sure about revisiting this idea. Nairn said that she has an idea and she doesn't disagree with Cretsinger. She likes the poster idea so What if we have the poster made, which is the winning art work from last year with some information that is nice looking and not too big and that is what they take to the schools. If we can get the transcript to write the article then great, if we can't then at least we have still done something else. If we want to invest a little bit of money to buy some gift cards. Just some ideas. Rom said that the other thing that we can do is bring the poster with us and feature last year's winner at the second Friday Art Walk. Smith suggested we might even be able to put all the art work up if we don't get many participants this

year. Rom said it would be neat if maybe we could make a new tradition of showing past winners' art works going forward. Myers likes the idea of the gift card especially since most of the gifts are not COVID friendly. Rom questioned the rules and suggested to keep this item tabled and add an extra action item next month for the gift cards, Poster, Friday Art Walk. Nairn thinks the second motion for next month can be more generic instead of specific.

Item No. 8 being:

#### **MISCELLANEOUS DISCUSSION**

Rom threw out that we did not put City Hall info graphic on the agenda but there has been some movement on it. Smith said yes, it is now hanging above the recycle bins at city hall. Nairn asked how it happened so fast. Smith said they had it printed and framed and put it up. Very easy. Nairn asked who approved it. Smith said they sent it to the city manager & city clerk for approval. There was one small change they requested. Smith also stated that Meyer is beginning to put out posts now. Nairn said that she thinks there are some upcoming water shed cleanouts. Evenson said there are 2 upcoming and that is about it for now but they will be looking into doing another one because it is in desperate need for more work. Smith mentioned that we had an electronics collection event and collected almost 25,000 pounds of electronics in 3 hours. We will do another one in March. The last thing Smith wants to mention is that Netflix is now showing a movie called "A Brave Blue World" that she highly recommends everyone watch. She explains that WEF which is the group that started the Waters Worth is a partner on it. Rom asked if there has been any movement on the collection site. Nathan said that they are finalizing their plans now, going through permitting. They are looking to get building permits, to DEQ and out to bid in early November. Nairn asked if anyone knew why the recycling center location was moved from the fairgrounds to Westwood? Nathan said that the county is looking at adding more rv spots. He thinks there is a long term goal to get it back but for now they were asked to move it. Rom asked if there was still one over by Hobby Lobby? Nairn said as far as she knows they didn't want it anymore. She said there is one at Lindsey and McGee, Station 9 behind the east side library and the one that was just moved to Westwood.

Item No. 9 being:

#### **QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

None

Item No. 10 being:

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Passed and approved this 10th day of March 2021.

*Dane Heins*

Chair, Dane Heins