

Environmental Review Advisory Committee (ERAC)

2016 Report

ERAC 2016

Report period: January 1, 2016 through December 31, 2016

Meetings held: 9

Membership in 2016:

- Terry Schmidt, Chair
- Sherri Steuwer, Vice Chair
- Ray Bode
- Elaine Chiosso
- Jerry Cole
- Vic D'Amato
- Fran DiGiano
- Luke Groff
- Mary Beth Koza
- Dave Mattison
- Graham Swift

ERAC Mission & Goals

- The mission of the Environmental Review Advisory Committee (ERAC) is to:
 - Advise the County Commissioners on matters affecting the **environment and the protection of natural resources** in Chatham County.
 - Advise the County Commissioners on **environmental policy and county ordinances**, including the watershed ordinance and long-range planning updates.
 - Assist County staff with peer review of required state and federal **environmental permits** for projects in the county.
 - Review State and Federal **environmental projects** and monitor data on development projects as needed.
 - Conduct **special projects**, as requested, to protect the environment.
 - **Recommend initiatives** on advancing good environmental stewardship.
 - Work with the municipal governments of Chatham County and other jurisdictions to cooperate on **environmental issues of common concern** as appropriate.
- The Environmental Review Advisory Committee also serves as the **Watershed Review Board (WRB)**.

Accomplishments and Activities

As the ERAC

- Presented information on SolarBee technology to the BOC (Feb 2016), leading to preparing the **SolarBee Resolution** which was adopted by the BOC. This action supported the removal of the SolarBee devices from Jordan Lake.
- Performed two **EIA reviews**: Extra Garage IV and Golf Cart Guys.
- Reviewed implications of **land applied sludge** regarding 1,4-Dioxane entering the Haw and Deep Rivers.
- Reviewed coal ash air, water and biosolids **sampling reports**.
- Reviewed **coal ash monitoring** reports.
- Provided inputs to the **Comprehensive Plan**.
- Presented information to ERAC and the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee on new approaches to **wastewater management**.
- Reviewed Sanford **WWTP notice of violation** on Charah's self-sampling of coal ash leachate.
- Resolution urging state action to effectively **improve Jordan Lake Water Quality**, May 2, 2016.

Accomplishments and Activities (continued)

As the WRB Revised the Watershed Protection Ordinance (WPO) for these additional uses:

- **Solar Farms** that: (1) Disturb tree cover less than the built-upon area percentage for the corresponding watershed (i.e., Solar Farms in WS-III can disturb less than 12% of existing tree cover), and (2) Use only crystalline silica photovoltaic solar panels.
- **Office** – Business and Professional requirements.
- **Events Centers** Limited requirements.

Revision to WPO allowing a special non-residential intensity allocation (SNIA) for WS-IVPA to WPO for the **Moncure Megasite**.

Provided a revised **Text Amendment Request Application** to County Planning Staff for consideration.

Barriers and Challenges

- Need process to **define triggers** that refer Environmental Impact Assessments to the ERAC.
- Need to seek approaches, possibly through local media, to **raise the profile** of Environmental Resources in Chatham County.

Recommended Changes

In addition to its assigned responsibilities, the Committee wishes to continue its monitoring activities of the following issues of environmental interest to Chatham County:

- **Hydraulic fracturing** impact on neighborhood and county-wide environments.
- **Chatham Park** and other large-scale development and infrastructure projects.
- **Water quality** issues in Jordan Lake.
- **Coal ash** fill at the Brickhaven Mine site.
- Pending revisions to the Chatham County **land use ordinances** that impact the County environment.
- Options for County incentives for **innovative wastewater management** infrastructures.
- Implementation of **priority environmental recommendations** in support of County staff.