

Collierville Environmental Commission Meeting Minutes

April 14, 2015

The April meeting for 2015 was called to order at 6:35 PM. Commission members present were: Sheila Bentley, Courtney Gillespie, Albert Grobmyer, Wayne Kneipp, Bill Looney, Gary Siebenschuh, Crystal Warren, and Swathi Ganesh. The Town of Collierville representative was John Fox.

We began by reviewing the minutes from the last meeting. Gary moved to accept the minutes. Albert seconded the motion. A few minor spelling errors were noted. The motion passed. Gary noted that the minutes have not been updated on the website in recent months, and Crystal informed the group that she would look into it.

Gary also brought up the fact that the Tree City USA flags are not being utilized. Crystal will notify the proper people in the town of Collierville to see about different options for displaying the flags.

Although Emily Harrell was unable to attend the meeting, she sent several updates about events from last month:

March 10 was the tree giveaway at the Crosswinds Elementary School. The kids really enjoyed this, but there were some issues with sorting and organizing.

March 12 was the Rain Garden Workshop. Although no planting took place, the session was successful and informative and participants were able to enjoy some outdoor activities. Shelia attended and enjoyed the class.

March 13 was the Arbor Day event at Collierville Middle School. After several weather-related delays, the event finally occurred. Since this was during the school's spring break, no students were present.

March 14 was the 50K Tree Planting event. There were 28 volunteers present who planted 300 native trees at Halle Park. Public services posted signs to inform visitors that the part of the park is a "reforestation area."

Swathi updated the commission on the Collierville High School Environmental Club's Electronics Recycling Drive that took place on March 28. She said that the event was a success. They collected a lot of computers, wires, VCR players, and DVD players. Wayne mentioned sending a letter to the school to thank the environmental club for their efforts at the electronics drive. He will write the letter and post it for review.

April 2 there will be an event hosted by the UT Agriculture Extension called Tennessee Smart Yards. The cost is \$35 per person or \$50 per couple and includes 2 soil tests, a canvas bag, and a rain gauge. This is the 5th year for the event and there are 20 slots for participants. Supplies are getting low, so future workshops will need to be funded by the town of Collierville.

Collierville's Fair on the Square will be held on Saturday, May 2 and Sunday, May 3. Commission members need to sign up to help set up the tent Friday evening, distribute information, answer questions, sign people up for the rain barrel giveaways, and hand out promotional items to people who answer questions correctly. The question wheel will be used again this year to encourage people to participate to receive a promotion item. Index cards with questions will be provided at the booth. Al mentioned that brochures with information on household hazard waste drop-off will be needed, and John said that he could print new brochures. Wayne will provide a ladder featuring several example items. Emily's email also mentioned that there are two rain barrels to give away to visitors who register and answer a few short questions. Emily will also make the signs to advertise that people can "Win a Rain Barrel." At the tent, Emily will supply a sample rain barrel, informational boards, and pervious concrete.

Next, we discussed the Earth Day Public Service Announcement (PSA) contest. To encourage participation, the commission would like to offer prizes. There are several stipulations and regulations on how the commission may offer prizes, so until this issue can be resolved we will postpone this contest. Our goal is to have an "America Recycles" PSA contest in November instead. Crystal will continue researching the prize options.

John provided the group with updates from the town.

The town of Collierville is giving away free compost on Saturdays at the South Street transfer station from 8 am until noon. So far, this program has been very successful. It will continue until the end of June.

During the last fiscal year, the town of Collierville collected 6,300 tons of bagged grass (or 315,000 bags of grass). This is a biodegradable product that is then wrapped in plastic and sent to a landfill. Instead of bagging, residents are encouraged to "grasscycle" or use the mulching blade of their lawnmower. The town estimates that this will save \$82,000 in disposal fees per year as well as enhancing the quality of the lawns. In comparison, there were 14,800 tons of household garbage collected last fiscal year.

Finally, Al updated the group on an article concerning the damage caused by flushing baby wipes. John said he would check with wastewater to see if this was a problem in our area and report back.

Al motioned to adjourn the meeting. Sheila seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 PM.