

MINUTES: Healthy Carolinians of Macon County – Environmental Quality Task Force

DATE: December 10, 2009

PLACE: Health and Human Services Building

TIME: 9:00 – 10:30 AM

ATTENDEES: Nelse Bates, Rhonda Blanton, Dennis Holland, Matt Mason, Kathy McGaha, Jack Morgan, Barry Patterson, Chuck Seigel, Al Slagle, Wayne Swank, Kathy Tinsley and Charles Womack

TOPIC	DISCUSSION	ACTION	FOLLOW-UP
Welcome and Approval of Minutes	Barry Patterson welcomed everyone to today’s meeting of the Environmental Quality Task Force. Mr. Patterson asked the task force members to review the minutes of the last meeting. Al Slagle motioned for the approval of the minutes. Chuck Seigel 2 nd the motion, with a unanimous vote for approval.		
Erosion Control Ordinance and Water Law Seminar	<p>Matt Mason first spoke about the Erosion Control Ordinance. Mr. Mason gave a brief timeline covering the current ordinance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ January 2009 – Review of Ordinance on books at that time▪ March 2009 – Consider bonding issues▪ June/July 2009 – Talk to engineers▪ September 2009 – Develop final draft of ordinance▪ November 2009 – Held public meetings with grading contractors and homebuilders <p>Mr. Mason stated some of the goals hoped to be achieved from this ordinance revision:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Level playing field for all bidding jobs2) License requirement for all grading contractors3) Eliminating any loopholes4) Make bonding less expensive and easier to obtain <p>Mr. Mason also listed recommendations that evolved from revising of the ordinance:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Standard 25 foot buffer if not in a flood hazard area or affecting a water supply watershed2) Promote natural buffers and restoration if needed3) Compaction standards for roads4) Clean-up immediately done if slide, etc. occurs		

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	<p>5) Within a time frame of 7 days ground cover must be installed</p> <p>Mr. Mason then listed benefits that could be obtained from the revision of the ordinance:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Improve erosion control measures 2) Consistent enforcement on all sites 3) Improved regulation of enforcement on sites 4) Increase awareness of potential site hazards 5) Improve standards of constructed roads 6) Improve safety of fill slopes on private roads <p>Mr. Mason next updated the task force members about a seminar he recently attended highlighting the topic of Water Law. The seminar covered who really owns the water.</p> <p>Mr. Mason explained that in North Carolina the landowner owns the water and not the state. Mr. Mason said North Carolina abides by a “Reasonable Use Law”. Mr. Mason stated that the Department of Environment and Natural Resources is currently developing a strategic plan for water and would like to have better management of the entire water cycle.</p>		
Current EQ Issues	<p>Barry Patterson next briefly reviewed the Current Environmental Quality Issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Artesian Wells – Mr. Patterson explained that an artesian well is an aquifer containing groundwater that will flow upward through a well without the need for pumping. Mr. Patterson said the water pressure on some of these wells is very strong and could blow the well cap off. Mr. Patterson stated that current well rules require the driller and the homeowner to cap and contain the flow or get approval from the state for a “beneficial use” 		

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	<p>designation. Mr. Patterson said more information on this subject needed to be given to the general public.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Water Issues – Mr. Patterson stated that water issues is one area that he would like this task force to undertake and get more education out locally. Mr. Patterson said water issues are currently hot topics and concerns for these issues will only increase in the future. ❖ Wildflower Development – Mr. Patterson explained the current status of the Wildflower Development to the task force members. Mr. Patterson said a landslide had recently occurred at the development, with several smaller ones occurring before that. Jack Morgan gave further details on the development and problems that are occurring there. Mr. Morgan stated that the Wildflower Development came in before the Subdivision Ordinance. Mr. Slagle suggested that Stacy Guffey attend the next meeting, to give an update and show pictures of the slides in that development. Ms. Blanton will contact Mr. Guffey to attend the next meeting. ❖ North Carolina Strategic Plan – Mr. Patterson said that the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources have developed a Strategic Plan. Mr. Patterson said that they list seven strategic directions. The highest priorities of which cover water and groundwater. 	<p>Rhonda Blanton will contact Stacy Guffey about attending the next meeting.</p>	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ GPS Follow-up – Mr. Patterson said that Wes Bintz will be a doing GPS presentation to the Board of Health in February. ❖ Public Education – Mr. Patterson stated that he would like to get more educational information out to the general public. Ms. McGaha suggested inviting Colin McCandless to the next meeting, to obtain ideas and suggestions from him. Ms. Blanton will contact him. 	<p>Rhonda Blanton will contact Colin McCandless about attending the next meeting.</p>	
Other Items for Discussion	<p>Other Items for Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rhonda Blanton passed out an article titled – <i>Lake Burton Could Be Atlanta Water Source</i>. The article explained that the Governor of Georgia had formed a Water Contingency Planning Task Force to consider alternative sources to supply metro Atlanta. ○ Rhonda Blanton also stated that the Greenville TV channel had recently aired a special on dam safety in South Carolina. Ms. Blanton said the special was very informative and passed the information onto Mr. Patterson. Mr. Patterson is checking further into this topic and will report back to the task force on this topic. ○ Wayne Swank said the Coweeta Lab Visitor Guide had recently been revised and passed out copies to all the task force members. 		
Next Meeting Date	<p>The next meeting of the Environmental Quality Task Force will be held on Thursday, February 11th, from 9:00 AM – 10:30 AM in Meeting Rooms A/B at the Health and Human Services Building.</p>		