



**ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS
BOARD
MINUTES**

January 7, 2025

6:00 – 8:00PM

In Person City Hall 2nd Floor Committee Room

Voting Members in Attendance: Tom Campbell (Chair), Sherry Taylor (Vice-Chair), Taylor Price (Secretary), Corie Hlavaty, Mark Waller (Soil & Water), Sandra Howell, Carina Barnett-Loro, David Barron, Meech Carter, Jonathan Chan, Astrid Cook-Dial, Anna Byers, Mark Radin, Lena Tonkin, Lola Chafatelli

Not in Attendance: Chukwuemeka kanu-Oji, Larry Hall, Zora Lentz (Excused)

Ex Officio Members/Staff: Annette Smith, Laura Webb Smith, Scott Whiteman, Jonathan McNeill, Ryan Eaves, Rachel Toker, Dave Crum, Craig Reed, Tobin Freid, MeixinWang, Bo Dobrzenski, Council Member Matt Kopac, Commissioner Wendy Jacobs,

1. Call to Order and Roll Call Adjustments to the Agenda

- a. 6:02 PM Call to order
- b. Roll Call and Centering

2. Approval EAB Minutes and Centering

- a. Approval of November meeting minutes passes

3. Adjustments to the Agenda and Announcements (including any Conflicts of Interest)

- a. Introduction of new youth member Lena Tonkin, Rachel Toker the new Sustainability Division Manager for the City, and our new City Council Liaison Matt Kopac
- b. Soil and Water Updates: Durham SWCD staff and supervisors spent the last few days at the NC Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (NCASWCD) annual meeting in Cherokee, NC. Staff and District Supervisors from all 96 districts gathered for policy development, training, election of the NCASWCD officers and networking with partners to better serve landowners and protect NC's natural resources.
 - i. Congratulations to Lisa Marochak and Sherry Scully from our Durham County Soil and Water Conservation District for being honored at the North Carolina Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts. Lisa was honored for

her service to the NC Envirothon, an environmental education competition for middle and high schoolers. Sherry was honored as the NCASWCD Outstand Technical Employee of the Year.

- ii. Durham County was also given an award for our balance of urban and rural conservation at the statewide meeting.
- c. Next Meeting: February 4th, virtual via Zoom

4. New and Continuing Business (See below for notes)

- a. New Committee Meeting Requirements
- b. Urban Forestry USDA Grant
- c. County Sedimentation and Erosion Control Suggestions for the new UDO
- d. UDO: Review of ad-hoc committee's questions and suggested changes
- e. Vote on Letter of Support regarding upgrading the city's yard waste composting facility to enable it to accept food waste
 - i. Motion to approve the letter of support drafted in support of upgrading the City's composting operations to incorporate food waste. Moved by Meech Carter, seconded by Mark Radin. Motion carried, with one abstaining, and others in favor.

5. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 7:57 PM

New and Continuing Business Notes

Topic: New Committee Requirements

- Any time that 3 or more members of Council or Commission appointed board members are together those are classified as public meetings.
- As a result the schedule of meetings, including committee meetings, and a contact for each committee will need to be published on the EAB website beginning in 2026
 - In addition, minutes and/or summaries of these meetings will also be needed and can be stored in the EAB Google Drive.
- Annette has established a new EAB@durhamnc.gov email address that can be used for all correspondence. Please cc' this address on any official EAB correspondence.

Topic: USDA IRA Grant Quarterly Update

- There are three major components of the USDA IRA Grant: right-of-way tree planting, tree canopy assessment, and the development of the tree inventory and urban forest management plan.
- Durham still has the goal to increase tree canopy to 55% of the city's area by the year 2040.
 - Tree Inventory is a key next step. This will be an in-depth identification of all of the trees within the city and the urban growth boundary right-of-way. They will not just be counting trees but doing a full assessment for health, age, etc.

- Planting for the right-of-way trees began in mid-November of 2025. To date over 450 trees have been planted of the projected 4000 that will be planted over the next three years.
 - Variety and diversity were important in the selection of the type of trees that were chosen by the urban forestry team. A balance of what grows well in Durham and what will survive and be positive within our ecosystem. All trees were sourced from within the state.
- The Canopy Assessment will use LiDAR, aerial data and photography data to collect necessary tree mortality and growth data. The results will most likely be delivered later in 2026.
- The Tree Inventory and Urban Forestry Management Plan will entail taking a full inventory of all trees located in the city-maintained and owned right-of-way (about 30,000 trees). The management plan will help to provide strategic direction for the best management path going forward. The project has kicked off, it will likely be completed in early 2027.
- Keep Durham Beautiful is a great community facing partner to promote the Urban Forestry Department's work and collaborate with other groups in the community to understand and engage this work.

Questions & Comments:

- Kudos to the Urban Forestry Team on the tree planting project. The impact is already being noticed.
- Will there be follow up on the trees planted over time?
 - For the next 4 years, the vendor planting the trees will be checking on the trees and their health. This information will be passed along to Durham so that the findings can be used to further enhance the management of these trees for the future.
- There is a tree request form where any citizen can request trees or share areas where trees are needed with the City.
 - Concerned citizens can visit durham-trees.org for more information.

Topic: County Sediment and Erosion Control

- The Erosion Control program is within the County Government, but they manage erosion control for both within and outside of the city limits.
- A main role of this team is to issue Land Disturbance Permits
 - Plans need to be submitted to their office and the office reviews if they are in accordance.
 - The office also does inspections on all permitted projects. Ensuring that the measures are proper and being maintained. When they are not in compliance there are notices of violation (NOVs) that are sent for off-site sediment.
 - This sediment must be "Scoopable" or measurable levels of sediment leaving the site.
 - Civil penalties are for those sites that remain out of compliance after NOV issues. Only issued maybe around 10 civil penalties in the past 10 years as the NOVs are pretty effective, so they rarely need to go further than that.

- The turbid water in Durham that we have seen is caused by the Triassic Soils that cover the majority of Durham. These clay rich soils remain suspended in the water column for weeks or even months.
 - 85% of Durham's current land disturbance permits have these these underlying triassic soils.
- There are only a few options to treat turbidity issues: storing the run off long enough for the sediment to settle (could take weeks to years), storing the run off and filtering it (high maintenance and expensive), or treating it with chemical flocculants.
- The new erosion control measures in the UDO try to address this problem by inducing measures for:
 - Double Row of Silt Fences along buffers
 - Adding Triassic Soil Requirements for larger basins, longer dewatering time, matting/hydroseeding on slopes, and flocculant plan and application.
 - A flocculant application plan is required that details where you will use, what type you'll use, who is responsible and also will require soil testing.
 - Additionally the Erosion Control Measures includes a revised checklist and phased development information.
- Response to EAB comments:
 - Monitoring cannot be required in the UDO as it's not within their authority to regulate due to the Clean Water Act and State Preemption. Durham can not regulate turbidity itself, but can regulate sediment.
 - There are limitations with only 5 staff to do erosion control projects. The EAB suggestion to reduce the sq ft for permit/plans would significantly increase the workload of the staff.
 - In addition, Erosion control plans also cost \$2,500-\$5,000 as they have to be completed by engineers. Therefore expanding this requirement would also likely cost and burden single family home owners who would fall into this new threshold.
 - Groundcover Topic: Permitting and state law already requires these various measures
 - Staff is seeing these sites about once a month, so the team wants to ensure that recommendations are feasible for the county's time and resources.
 - Residents can be assured that when there are major weather events the office is also working with sites directly to ensure that the sites are buttoned up to prevent further erosion. In addition, while visits may only formally be monthly there are still drive bys and other informal reviews.

Topic: UDO Continued

- The final public hearing draft is to be released by the end of January. The goal is for substantive feedback to be back to the Planning Department by the end of this month to incorporate before the release.

- Planning Commission meetings are planned for Feb 24th and March 10th for additional comments.
- April 22 is planned for the public hearing with with Joint City County Planning Committee
- Written responses will come from Scott and Team to the EAB based on our feedback