

AGENDA

Orange County Commission for the Environment

December 13th, 2021

7:30 p.m. Virtual Meeting

<u>Time</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Title</u>
7:30	I.	Call to Order
7:31	II.	Additions or Changes to Agenda
7:33	III.	Approval of DRAFT Minutes – November 8th, 2021 The CFE will consider approval of minutes from the last meeting. <u>Action needed</u> (Attachment 1)
7:35	IV.	CFE Annual Report and Work Plan - Discussion The CFE will continue discussion of the Annual Report and Work Plan. Once finalized, the CFE will vote. <u>Action needed</u> (Attachment 2)
8:20	V.	Committee Breakouts The CFE will break out into committee assignments and discuss issues / ongoing projects.
8:45	VI.	Updates and Information Items Staff and/or CFE members will provide updates on the following items: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chris Hirni will discuss staff findings on meeting frequency policy• Wesley Poole will discuss new member orientation in January 2022• Kim Piracci will discuss upcoming 2022 Officer Election (Chair & Vice Chair positions) Any other new information from CFE members and staff
9:00	VII.	Adjournment <i>* Next Meeting Date: January 10th, 2022; if requested by CFE (Virtual)</i>

Orange County Commission for the Environment**Meeting Summary**
November 8, 2021; 7:30 pm
Virtual GoTo Meeting

Present: Kim Piracci, Kim Livingston, Bradley Saul, Frank Binkowski, Bill Ward, Jeremy Marzuola, Eric Scheier, Jaya Nair, Veronica Penn Beattie, Kristie Mather

Absent: James Eichel (excused), Carrie Fletcher (excused), Ulrich Hartmond (excused), Alan Parry, Elizabeth McWhorter

I. Call to Order

Kim Piracci called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm.

II. Additions or Changes to Agenda

None.

III. Approval of Draft Minutes – October 11th, 2021

Motion by Jaya Nair; seconded by Kristie Mather; none opposed; motion passed.

IV. CFE Annual Report and Work Plan - Discussion

Chris Hirni led a discussion on the upcoming CFE Annual Report and Work Plan that is due to the Clerk's Office by Friday January 14, 2022. With direction by the CFE, Chris began drafting activities that the CFE expects to carry out in 2022 along with concerns or emerging issues that the CFE plans to address. Additional items will need to be submitted by the sub-committees to complete. Bradley Saul stated that it was not too early to start thinking about the next State of the Environment Report (2024). The CFE also discussed improving procedures for bringing new members up to speed.

V. CFE Meeting Schedule and Location - Discussion

The CFE discussed next calendar year's meeting schedule, location of meetings and potential continuation of virtual meetings. Kim Piracci proposed moving the meeting start time to 7:00 PM, but several CFE members stated that keeping it at 7:30 PM allows for other duties to be completed prior to. Continuing to meet on the 2nd Monday of each month, except for July, from 7:30 PM until 9:00 PM was acceptable for everyone. Chris Hirni informed the CFE of the potential new in-person meeting facility at the Bonnie B. Davis Environmental and Agricultural Center and briefly discussed the technology that would be available there. The CFE decided to continue to meet virtually via Zoom until further direction from the BOCC.

VI. Committee Breakouts

The CFE broke out into committee assignments to discuss goals / projects for the year.

Orange County Commission for the Environment

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VII. Updates and Information Items

- Chris Hirni shared Dave Stancil's e-mail regarding the desire by the Parks and Recreation Council (PRC) to form a joint sub-committee with the CFE to assist with planning the future Green Tract nature preserve. Kim Livingston stated that she would like to serve on the sub-committee. The CFE expressed interest in working with the PRC on this topic.

VIII. Adjournment

Kristie Mather motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:05 pm; seconded by Kim Livingston; none opposed; motion passed.

NAME OF BOARD/COMMISSION- Commission for the Environment

Report Period January 2021-December 2021

**ORANGE COUNTY ADVISORY BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS
ANNUAL REPORT/ WORK PLAN FOR THE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

The Board of Commissioners appreciates the dedication of all the volunteers on their boards and commissions and welcomes input from various advisory boards and commissions throughout the year. Please complete the following information, limited to the front and back of this form. Other background materials may be provided as a supplement to, but not as a substitute for, this form.

Board/Commission Name: **Commission for the Environment**

Person to address the BOCC and contact information: **Kim Piracci**
piraccik@gmail.com

Primary County Staff Contact: **David Stancil, DEAPR Director (Christian Hirni, Wesley Poole)**

How many times per month does this board/commission meet, including any special meetings and sub-committee meetings?

The board meets once per month (2nd Monday). No meeting is held during the month of July. Committees meet as needed during regular meetings.

Brief Statement of Board/Commission's Assigned Charge and Responsibilities.

Purpose: to advise the BOCC on matters affecting the environment, with particular emphasis on environmental protection and enhancement. Other duties include:

- **Perform special studies/projects on environmental issues as requested by BOCC**
- **Recommend environmental initiatives to the BOCC, especially of local importance**
- **Study changes in environmental science and environmental regulations in the pursuit of the CFE's duties**

- **Educate the public and local officials on environmental issues**

What are your Board/Commission's most important accomplishments?

- As directed by the BOCC, provided comments and recommendations regarding a large development proposal in Efland (Efland Station 2021)
- Provided ranking and comments to the BOCC for two cycles of the Climate Action Fund program (2020, 2021)
- Signed Resolution of Support for the Eno New Hope Landscape Conservation Plan (2021)
- Submitted priority recommendations for Lands Legacy Actions Plan 2021-2024
- Ranked and submitted preferences of first recipients for the first distribution of Climate Action Tax Funds FY2019-20. Ranking Funds for FY 2020-21 will proceed through December 2020/January 2021.
- Planning the 2019 State of the Environment report and 12/4/19 Environmental Summit (2018, 2019)
- Prepared resolutions for BOCC consideration concerning: Anti-Idling Campaign, Support for Carbon Fee and Dividend legislation, Request for NC to Divest from Fossil Fuel Corporations, Roadside Wildflower Conservation (2018)
- Developed recommendations for the County's Climate Change Program scoring system (2019)
- Created subcommittee for Roadside Wildflower Conservation (2019)
- Requested the BOCC consider joining the Global Covenant of Mayors and Chairs organization concerned with global climate change (2018)
- Wrote a series of climate change articles (2017)
- Developed and posted a Facebook page (2017)
- Edited and recommended a renewable energy resolution to the BOCC (2017)
- Recruited UNC capstone students to assist with the 2019 State of the Environment report (2017)
- Provided input on updates to the Lands Legacy Action Plan (2017)
- Made recommendations to BOCC on UDO amendment to flexible subdivisions (2016)
- Initiated a series of newspaper articles on environmental issues featured previously in the Orange County State of the Environment report (2015-16)
- Made recommendations to BOCC on 2016 bond package, the use of pesticides at County facilities, and incentives for energy efficient construction (2015)
- Commented to Planning Bd. on proposed changes to impervious surface rules (2015)
- Provided ideas for Public Services Announcements for County radio spots (2015)
- Collaborated with others on energy conservation and mgmt. projects (2015-16)
- Published the 2014 Orange County State of the Environment report (reports were previously completed in 2000, 2002, 2004, and 2009)
- Convened Orange County Environmental Summit (2005, 2009, 2014)

- Made recommendations to BOCC on food waste and solid waste tax district (2014)
- Worked with Orange County Schools to introduce local environmental indicators into middle and high school science curricula (2004, 2009, 2014)
- Hosted a Solid Waste Forum with the Chapel Hill Sustainability Committee (2013)
- Co-sponsored *The Nature of Orange* photography contest (2012 - 2018)
- Advocated for ½ cent sales tax referendum for Triangle Region public transit (2012)
- Compiled annotated bibliography of the effects of forestry on water quality (2012)
- Developed sustainable landscaping and forest management policies for the administration of County-owned facilities (2010)

List of Specific Tasks, Events, or Functions Performed or Sponsored Annually.

- **Co-sponsor “Nature of Orange” Photography Contest**
- **Liaison to Intergovernmental Parks Work Group**
- **Review and comment on environmental issues (e.g., anti-idling efforts, fracking, biosolids application, water pollution, air quality, forest mgmt.) and other issues assigned by the BOCC**
- **Identify priorities for the Lands Legacy Action Plan (natural areas and wildlife habitat)**
- **Conduct special studies pertaining to Orange County environment (e.g., energy efficiency/sustainability, forestry effects on water quality, herbicides and native flora)**
- **Conduct environmental education outreach events (e.g., Earth Evening)**

Describe this board/commission’s activities/accomplishments in carrying out BOCC goal(s)/priorities, if applicable.

BOCC Goal Five: Create, preserve, and protect a natural environment that includes clean water, clean air, wildlife, important natural lands and sustainable energy for present and future generations.

- Presented findings and recommendations to BOCC on selected environmental issues: 1) roadside wildflower preservation; 2) effects of forest mgmt. on water quality; 3) effects of herbicides on roadside native plant habitat; 4) potential effects of hydraulic fracturing (“fracking”) in Orange County; 5) need for 100% renewable energy in Orange County (BOCC Priorities #1 and #12)

Stayed abreast of ongoing and developing env. issues of importance to the County, such as Falls & Jordan Lake nutrient mgmt. rules, reducing commercial food waste in solid waste stream, and permitting of biosolids on farmland (Priorities #12 and #16)

Describe the collaboration relationship(s) this particular board has with other advisory boards and commissions?

As needed. Members of this commission are also on the Planning Board and the Intergovernmental Parks Work Group.

If your board/commission played the role of an Element Lead Advisory Board involved in the 2030 Comprehensive Plan preparation process, please indicate your board's activities/accomplishments as they may relate to the Comprehensive Plan's goals or objectives.

(The Element Lead Advisory Boards include: Planning Board, EDC, OUTBoard, Commission for the Environment, Historic Preservation Commission, Agriculture Preservation Board, Affordable Housing Board, Recreation and Parks Advisory Council)

The CFE provided extensive input into DEAPR staff development of the *Natural and Cultural Systems Element* of the Comprehensive Plan—specifically the chapters on Air and Energy Resources, Water Resources, and Natural Areas and Wildlife Habitat.

Objective AE-1:

Assess and implement the current countywide greenhouse gas emissions inventory and action plan target reductions.

- The CFE helped to initiate a countywide inventory of greenhouse gas emissions (2005), and continues to advise on ways to reduce the County's "carbon footprint."

Objective AE-15:

Foster participation in green energy programs such as installation incentives for solar hot water/solar generation/solar tempering in residential or commercial construction. The County should develop programs that will link citizens and businesses with options for alternative and sustainable energy sources.

- The CFE's Energy Resources Committee has developed proposals that address energy efficiency and renewable power issues, and will pursue further in collaboration with other advisory boards and stakeholders.

Objective NA-3:

Develop a more detailed and consistent methodology for monitoring changes in forest cover throughout the County, and specifically the extent of mature hardwood forest.

- The CFE's State of the Environment report documented significant reductions in mature hardwood forest that occurred from 2003-2008 and since 1988.

Objective NA-11:

Develop a comprehensive conservation plan for achieving a network of protected open space throughout Orange County, which addresses 1) threats to important

natural areas; 2) connectivity between protected areas; 3) coordination with neighboring counties; and 4) sustainable management of critical natural resources.

- The CFE's Land Resources Committee is participating in a County effort to identify and preserve important landscape corridors that connect significant natural areas.

Objective NA-16:

Create a system of public and private open space and conservation areas, including parks, nature preserves, and scenic vistas representative of Orange County landscape.

- The CFE advises County's Lands Legacy program in its efforts to protect the most important natural and cultural resource lands through a variety of means.
- The CFE's Land Resources Committee is participating in a County effort to identify and preserve important landscape corridors that connect significant natural areas.

Objective WR-5:

Promote and participate in regional efforts to plan for use of water supplies in the region in an equitable manner, including contingency planning for water supplies during droughts. [Also Objectives WR-9, WR-10, and WR-15]

- CFE advocates for full implementation of the Water Resources Initiative to ensure planning for an adequate water supply for current and anticipated future needs

Objective WR-11:

Provide incentives and educational information to landowners to increase protection of watersheds and ground water supplies and their inter-relationships.

- The CFE distributes groundwater and surface water educational materials at Earth Evening and as part of its State of the Environment reports

NOTE: The Orange County State of the Environment 2019 identifies specific recommendations on ways to help maintain and improve Orange County's environmental quality, many of which address objectives stated in the Orange County Comprehensive Plan.

Identify any activities this board/commission expects to carry out in 2022 as they relate to established BOCC goals and priorities. If applicable, is there a fiscal impact (i.e., funding, staff time, and other resources) associated with these proposed activities (please list).

- The CFE will review and rank grant applications for the third cycle of the County Climate Action Grant
- In collaboration with staff, the CFE will finalize the County Tree Policy for County owned lands
- The CFE will work with staff to develop a Greene Tract "Headwaters Preserve" planning and development program. We would like to form a joint subcommittee

with the Parks and Recreation Council.

(<http://www.orangecountync.gov/2127/Greene-Tract>)

- The CFE will support the county plan to tackle water quality issues in the Falls Lake Watershed, with the Upper Neuse River Basin Association (UNRBA), using the Interim Alternative Implementation Approach (IAIA).
- The CFE would like to review and comment on new County development proposals and rezoning requests, as soon as the information is available to DEAPR staff.
- The CFE will begin to discuss and make plans to develop the 2024 State of the Environment Report.

What are the concerns or emerging issues your board has identified for the upcoming year that it plans to address, or wishes to bring to the Commissioners' attention?

- The CFE would like to support the BOCC and county staff to prepare a Climate Action Plan in ways that are deemed possible, while being cognizant of legal restrictions the county is under.
- The CFE would like Orange County to expand composting collection and education so our citizens and businesses will be able to further reduce food waste.
- The CFE would like to participate in developing the Orange County COVID-19 Long Term Recovery and Transformation Plan
- The CFE plans to address Equity (DEIJ) across all aspects of our environmental recommendations.