

Piedmont Conservation Council, Inc.
Quarterly Meeting Minutes
April 21, 2011

Members Present: Bill Alston, Chairman (Randolph), Alex Ashton, Vice-Chair (Guilford), Larry Baker (Rockingham), George Bain (Randolph), Eddie Culberson, Secretary (Chatham, Durham), Frank Green (Rockingham), Herb Hendrickson (Guilford), Millie Langley (Guilford), Rudy Langley, Treasurer (Alamance), Janet MacFall (Alamance), Tushar Mahale (Wake), Hazel Puckett (Rockingham), Brenda Sutton (Rockingham), Stephanie Grant, Drew Nelson, Aspen Price

Members Absent: Gail Hughes (Orange), Shaunnika Johnson (Wake), Leigh Lane, Talmage Layton (Durham), Rick McVey (Caswell), Jarvis Martin (Durham), David Stancil (Orange), Dale Threatt-Taylor, C. Hester Vernon (Caswell), Norton Webster (Chatham), Brenda Williams (Chatham)

Guests: Sandra Weitzel, Area 3 Coordinator, NCDENR Division of Soil & Water Conservation; Tim Bryan, Potential Board Member

I. Call to Order & Chairman Comments

Bill Alston called to order the regular meeting of the Piedmont Conservation Council, Inc. (PCC) at 6:35 p.m. on April 21st, 2011 at Maria's Restaurant in Burlington.

Alex Ashton asked if there was a quorum. Aspen Price confirmed that there was.

II. Approval of January 20th, 2011 Board Meeting Minutes

Minutes from January 20th, 2011 were reviewed by the council members.

MOTION: Eddie Culberson made a motion to approve the minutes as submitted. Motion was seconded by Rudy Langley.

VOTE: Unanimously approved.

III. Mike Sugg Email Information, PCC/RC&D Discussion

Grant read the letter from Mike Suggs at NRCS dated April 20th, 2011 that explained that the FY2011 appropriations bill eliminates funding for the Resource Conservation & Development program and as such the RC&D program would be closed out. The letter also stated that no costs incurred after April 15th, 2011 can be honored by NRCS.

Alex Ashton read Carol Melton's letter of resignation, dated April 15th, 2011 explaining that she recently accepted a full time job and does not have enough time to devote to PCC. The letter stated that April 19th, 2011 would be her last day. The board discussed how to cover administrative tasks going forward.

Eddie Culberson noted that Stephanie Grant and Aspen Price would not be with PCC for the long-term, and that his current workload feels like that of an RC&D coordinator.

Eddie Culberson said that in a conversation with Julie Elmore the previous week he had asked her how many projects would be complete by March; she had stated approximately 75%. He noted that that left 25% of projects to finish after March. Stephanie Grant stated that there wouldn't be enough money from the grants to provide her with enough compensation.

Eddie Culberson added that as a federal employee Julie Elmore is prohibited from being involved with the councils. He stated that possibly one way around that is to rewrite PCC's bylaws to eliminate the RC&D from the bylaws so that they are no longer a federal entity. Alex Ashton noted that he had confirmed with Marshall Stevenson, the President of the NC Association of RC&Ds, that the councils are still legal 501c3 corporations without RC&D support. He added that Julie Elmore told him PCC had three projects with federal grant money right now, and the existence of those grants is what prevented her from being able to attend meetings. The three grants are Piedmont Local Foods, Clean Energy Durham, and TREES NC. Herb Hendrickson noted that if the federal government has withdrawn all of their grants then he didn't understand what the catch was. Sandra Weitzel said she would have a conversation with the NRCS state manager to determine what the catch is that prevents Elmore from being a PCC council member.

The board skipped to Agenda Item #7, Project Updates

VII. Project Updates

Stephanie Grant gave an overview of the projects.

C.W. Stanford Stormwater Project

Construction will occur over the summer and so far the project is on schedule and on budget and going really well.

Alamance Community College Stormwater Project

Alamance Community College is also being constructed over the summer, and is also on budget. The contractor bids are going out next week. Alex Alston asked about taking a tour; the board discussed having a tour at their next full council meeting in July.

Piedmont Local Foods

Brenda Sutton stated that in general the first quarter year has a good start; about \$7,500.00 in sales, while last year at the same time they had about \$2,000.00. She stated they contracted with Don Freedman to coordinate the event. It will be held on June 20th, 2011 from 6:00 pm – 9:00 pm at the Marriott in Greensboro near the Piedmont Regional airport. The event is called "Get a Taste of This," and will be a ticketed event with local chefs competing to make dishes with local ingredients. Brenda Sutton said she anticipated the event will be one that the council members will all enjoy attending, and confirmed that the event should generate some revenue.

Randolph County Quilt Trail

Stephanie Grant stated that the Quilt Trail had 19 barns currently approved for quilt squares and only needed one more barn to fill the slate.

Stephanie Grant noted that Aspen Price has volunteered to manage the Quilt Trail, the Guilford Farmland Protection Plan, and the Piedmont Local Foods project. She noted also that the website was part of the Quilt Trail project.

Website

Stephanie Grant said the website was expected to be done by this summer. She said they had a kickoff meeting with CyberScribe, the web vendor, last Tuesday, and that they have a domain name set up already, and they expect to have logo proofs coming next week. The board discussed how to review the proposals as they came in. Tushar Mahale suggested doing an online survey that could get board members opinions; the board agreed that was a good idea.

Lassiter Mill Dam

Stephanie Grant stated that they received a notice that the funds for the dam removal had been granted, so she would be making contact with American Rivers soon.

TREES NC

Stephanie Grant stated that the TREES NC project was funded by a grant from the National Association of RC&Ds, which is not dissolving because it exists off of dues paid by the councils. She said she had received an invoice from them for work done so far; and she had a feeling they might close the project at this time, but she hadn't been notified of that formally. Stephanie Grant stated that the grant was for a community garden that was supposed to be done by the end of May, so it was likely wrapping up anyways.

Others

Stephanie Grant also noted that there were grants they had applied for but not yet received for the Clean Water Management Trust Fund Phase II and a few other projects.

Fab Lab Carolinas

Drew Nelson gave an overview of the Fab Lab project. He stated the Mobile Fab Lab in March was very successful, with about 400 visitors, and that they expected the Mobile Fab Lab to come back again this summer. He stated that the brick-and-mortar Fab Lab was what he was working on now, and they would have to come up with a business plan and find funding, etc. Drew Nelson stated that they currently had three location offers for the permanent Fab Lab, and confirmed that the mobile Fab Lab visiting in July would be located in Durham. Hazel Puckett stated that Home Savings & Loan in Rockingham county had offered to help financially with moving the mobile Fab Lab.

Alex Ashton noted that Tushar Mahale was the council member overseeing the Fab Lab project. Stephanie Grant introduced Drew Nelson's contract to be signed, and noted his position was being funded by a Z. Smith Reynolds grant.

RAFI Wick Applicator

Stephanie Grant stated that Mitch Thompson was their contact for the Wick Applicator project, and that the applicator had been ordered but the invoice had not been reimbursed yet.

Guilford Farmland Protection Plan

Stephanie Grant stated that Julie Elmore is incorporating the text edits, and Aspen Price would put together the graphs and send it back to the tech editor. The board discussed the steps required to complete the project. Alex Ashton and Millie Langley offered to follow up with staff.

The board returned to Agenda Item #4, Decision Items.

IV. Decision Items

A. Elections

Frank Green stated that the Nominating Committee had nominated the following people:

- 1)Chair: Alex Ashton
- 2)Vice-Chair: Eddie Culberson
- 3)Treasurer: Rudy Langley
- 4)Secretary: Hazel Puckett

Frank Green opened the floor for any other nominations. None were made.

MOTION: Herb Hendrickson made a motion to elect the officers as stated. Motion was seconded by Janet MacFall.

VOTE: Unanimously approved.

B. By-laws

Alex Ashton noted that there were two changes to the bylaws that were brought to the committee at the January 20th meeting to vote on at this meeting; but one of those changes, regarding doing additional NRCS reporting, was no longer relevant. The other change proposed was the language regarding a quorum. Currently, the quorum requirement is a majority of the membership as listed on the roster. Alex Ashton read out the proposed language: "A majority of the members in the council on the official roster, or at least one member from each county in the official area." The board members discussed this language as well as changes necessary because of the dissolution of NRCS.

MOTION: Rudy Langley made a motion to approve the suggested by-law changes regarding the quorum. Motion was seconded by George Bain.

VOTE: Unanimously approved.

MOTION: Rudy Langley made a motion to strike any reference to the federal government from the by-laws. Motion was seconded by Hazel Puckett.

VOTE: Unanimously approved.

Eddie Culberson suggested that now was the time to discuss whether to open the council area up to other counties, or keep the area as it is now. The members discussed which counties have less than three members. Sandra Weitzel noted that there were

forms that needed to be filled out to nominate new members. The board agreed to bring completed forms back at the next meeting.

Stephanie Grant noted that the next Executive Council meeting is May 3rd. The board discussed a meeting location, and noted that Maria's Restaurant is a nicer meeting space than Golden Corral. Stephanie Grant and Aspen Price agreed to work on reserving it.

C. Invoices for Approval

Stephanie Grant presented invoices for approval for payment as:

- 1) Piedmont Local Foods, Local Food Regional Deliveries: \$990.00
- 2) Piedmont Conservation Council Administrative Expenses, Piedmont Local Foods project: \$330.00
- 3) Don Freedman, "Get a Taste of This" Piedmont Local Foods event: \$2,654.72
- 4) SJ Grant Consulting, LLC, work completed for the CWMTF projects: \$6,601.50
- 5) Reavis and Parrish, PA, tax-related work: \$100.00

MOTION: Rudy Langley made a motion to approve the invoices as submitted. Motion was seconded by Eddie Culberson.

VOTE: Unanimously approved.

V. Discussion Items

A. Board Recruitment

(Already discussed earlier in the meeting)

B. Area Plan/Strategic Plan

Alex Ashton noted that Julie Elmore had said the Circle of Diamonds would likely be important to still be a part of. He said she had recommended they take the plan the Duke students had submitted and use that as their plan going forward and suggested it might be good for the executive board to discuss that going forward.

C. PCC Website

Stephanie Grant said they had the contract signed and squared away with CyberScribe. They had a kick-off meeting last week, and had graphic designers and programmers that would help with the project. She noted that the website could be a really good tool going forward to get grant funds or recruit new members, and also to display information about past projects. Stephanie Grant said the schedule went through the spring and into the summer.

D. Accounting Service & Legal Services Need

Alex Ashton noted he had found three potential accountants, all located in Durham, through the N.C. Center for Nonprofits listings. Hazel Puckett noted that Reavis and Parrish was not responsive enough, and they should find someone who was more well-

versed in nonprofit accounting. Eddie Culberson noted that an accountant could be very expensive when they first start working with PCC, because the amounts of the CWMTF grants were so high. Eddie Culberson suggested they find an accountant who can join the PCC membership. Stephanie Grant noted that an attorney would be necessary if PCC needed to close out as well.

Bill Alston asked the board to revisit their discussion about where to put PCC's equipment and files. Hazel Puckett noted that an inventory was needed. Bill Alston and Rudy Langley offered to take an inventory and help move items out. Alex Ashton noted that they also lost their printing and office supplies budget. The board agreed to take electronic copies of their agendas and minutes.

George Bain asked the Executive Board to summarize for this group what appear to be their decisions. After discussion, Aspen Price agreed to email out the minutes after the meeting. Rudy Langley stated that he felt they agreed to maintain the current projects, and to address taking on other projects at a later date. Brenda Sutton noted that there was one grant out that they haven't heard about yet; if that were to be funded, they would need to have the conversation of whether it should come through PCC or through an extension office.

VIII. Adjournment

Bill Alston confirmed that there wasn't anything else outstanding.

MOTION: Herb Hendrickson made a motion to adjourn. Motion was seconded by George Bain.

VOTE: Unanimously approved.

Meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:10 p.m.