

Piedmont Conservation Council, Inc.
Executive Board Meeting Minutes

June 7, 2011

Members Present: Alex Ashton, Chairman (Guilford), Eddie Culberson, Vice-Chair (Chatham), Bill Alston (Randolph), Frank Green (Rockingham), Rudy Langley, Treasurer (Alamance), Hazel Puckett, Secretary (Rockingham), Stephanie Grant, Aspen Price

Members Absent: Talmage Layton (Durham)

Guests: Brenda Sutton, PCC Member (Rockingham)

I. Call to Order & Chairman Comments

Alex Ashton called the meeting to order at 6:24 p.m. on June 7th, 2011 at Town Table Restaurant in Elon.

II. Approval of Minutes

a. Approval of May 3rd, 2011 Executive Board Meeting Minutes

Minutes from the May 3, 2011 meeting were reviewed. No changes were noted.

MOTION: Bill Alston made a motion to approve the minutes. Motion was seconded by Rudy Langley.

VOTE: Unanimously approved.

III. Changes to the Agenda

- a. Brenda Sutton discussed the contract with Piedmont Local Food and Don Freedman for the Get A Taste of This event. She noted that the contract is vague, particularly regarding how revenues from the event will be distributed and what they can be used for. Alex Ashton and Aspen Price agreed to talk with Don Freedman to clarify the way that revenues should be distributed.
- b. Stephanie Grant added a budget discussion to the agenda for discussion items.

IV. Old Business

- a. No old business.

V. Discussion Items

a. Asheboro Office Clean-Out

Rudy Langley stated that the lease on the Asheboro office doesn't end until August 20th, and that the office furniture does belong to NRCS. He stated that the main issue was figuring out what to do with all of the files. Hazel Puckett and Brenda Sutton offered storage space if necessary. Alex Ashton suggested Guilford SWCD could possibly store it as well.

b. Progress on Fab Lab Project

Alex Ashton noted that they weren't seeing much progress with the Fab Lab. Stephanie Grant noted she did get an email from Tushar Mahale looking for a driver to transport a mobile lab around the state. Eddie Culberson stated that Julie Elmore had mentioned she had contacts interested in donating equipment to a permanent Fab Lab, and asked if that was still the case. Stephanie Grant said it was, and that coordinating that was part of Drew Nelson's job. She stated that she and Aspen Price had had very little response from him. She felt he needed closer oversight, and that she didn't have the authority to do that. Alex Ashton noted they had put Tushar Mahale over Drew Nelson, and that he could be a good point of contact. Eddie Culberson offered to call Tushar Mahale and check in.

c. Discuss design & layout of Quilt Trail brochure

The board discussed the layout and generally appreciated it. They suggested adding more photos to the brochure, and to make sure it specified that it was a self-directed tour. They stated that all of the photos should be loaded onto the website so that people who may not be able to physically visit the trail can see the patterns.

d. Discuss Area Plan and any necessary changes

Alex Ashton noted that he wanted to bring the Area Plan to the Full Council at their July meeting. He wanted to get a sense of the direction that PCC should go in, and felt it needed to be restructured in terms of what goals, objectives, and strategies PCC pursued over the next five years. He suggested that revenue-generating projects should be added, and others that may not be as feasible without federal support be removed. The board agreed that the Area Plan changes suggested by staff, specifically, removing NRCS references, did not need to be adopted at this meeting but should wait for Full Council input on other potential changes.

e. Other Discussion Items

The board discussed the direction they felt PCC should take going forward. Regarding a strategic planning retreat, Aspen Price mentioned there were services like Executive Services Corps who offer facilitation services for very low fees. Stephanie Grant stated that it was a matter of either investing in the future now, and dipping into savings a little bit, or holding onto what we have now and closing out. Hazel Puckett suggested they take a poll at the Full Council meeting. Eddie Culberson mentioned that facilitators he had worked with gave his board members homework ahead of time to get them thinking about what they wanted to do. Alex Ashton asked if they could find someone who could come in and volunteer their time to facilitate the discussion. Bill Alston and Frank Green suggested they ask Charles Anderson from Pilot View RC&D to come in and talk with the council. Stephanie Grant stated she felt they didn't need someone who would give advice, but someone who would come in and help foster a discussion. Alex

Ashton offered to call someone at the UNC School of Government to see if they had any recommendations.

Eddie Culberson asked the Executive Board for their feelings on it. Alex Ashton stated that he was cautiously optimistic; he felt that we have an opportunity now, being unclenched from the federal government, that allows PCC to do more contract-type work. He said he'd like to see things move along in a positive direction, and he would like to see PCC make money. Rudy Langley noted that they needed personnel; Alex Ashton suggested finding people who already have a business plan, and inviting them in to work on their business under the umbrella of PCC. He stated that we should plan to take an hour at the Full Council meeting to discuss the future of PCC.

Alex Ashton mentioned the lobbying letter that Stephanie Grant had sent to the board earlier and noted that even though it was moot for this fiscal year they should still send it for next fiscal year.

Hazel Puckett noted that the resolution passed by the Executive Board in April, against closing the Upper Piedmont Research Station & Chinqua-Penn Walking Trail, was successful, and that the trail had been removed from the funding cut list.

VI. Decision Items

a. Approve & Adopt Area Plan with changes incorporated

Deferred to Full Council July meeting.

b. Approve & Adopt PCC Personnel Policy

Alex Ashton stated that this was a basic policy that covered all the bases. He asked for clarification on whether it would also cover contractors. Stephanie Grant stated that no it wouldn't, it was for employees hired directly by PCC only. A couple of typos were pointed out. Aspen Price agreed to check for edits.

MOTION: Bill Alston made a motion to adopt the PCC Personnel Policy. The motion was seconded by Rudy Langley.

VOTE: Unanimously approved.

c. Consider Hiring A Bookkeeper

Alex Ashton noted that PCC was anticipating a yellow book audit in FY 2012. Stephanie Grant said that an accountant she talked with estimated a yellow book audit would cost \$6,000 - \$8,000. She expressed concern that it was expensive, and that PCC might not pass the audit. She suggested having a professional bookkeeper come in and tutor staff on how to do the bookkeeping now would likely make the yellow book audit cheaper at the end of the game. Alex Ashton asked if staff was 100% sure PCC would need a yellow book audit. Stephanie Grant said yes, she was positive. Alex Ashton asked if there were

any funds to help organizations like PCC with doing audits like this. He suggested that perhaps the Clean Water Management Trust Fund would have resources.

MOTION: Hazel Puckett made a motion to hire a bookkeeper to provide training up to 10 hours, not to exceed a cost of \$600.00. The motion was seconded by Bill Alston.

VOTE: Unanimously approved.

Alex Ashton asked if there was anything else in the budget discussion to consider. Stephanie Grant noted that county dues were important for PCC balancing its budget in FY12. She stated that it would be helpful if each county could follow Durham County's lead and pay \$2,000.00 in annual dues. Stephanie Grant suggested that if council members advocated in their counties to secure PCC dues, and ideally to increase them, that would help PCC stay afloat in the coming years. She encouraged members to stress the value that PCC is providing to the counties with their projects.

d. Selection of contractor for Alamance Community College Stormwater Project (sign Notice of Award and Agreement)

Stephanie Grant gave an update on the Alamance project. Two contractors submitted bids, and they were both more than twice the construction budget. The community college is not willing to move the construction schedule. Stephanie Grant and EcoEngineering have been working one-on-one with the lowest bidder to figure out how to do the project for the money that is in the budget. If those revised numbers meet the budget, PCC needs to act immediately to get the contract signed and get construction started. Grant and EcoEngineering will approach the college on Monday to see if they can contribute any more money to the project, and will also talk with the Clean Water Management Trust Fund to make sure they are okay with any changes made. Stephanie Grant stressed that decisions would need to be made fast, and that she needed to have a way to do change orders and approve things in the field without needing to come back to the board each time. Eddie Culberson asked how the bids could be so different from the budget. Stephanie Grant noted that the engineer had provided specifications for things before the project was completely planned, and then the school had requested specific design elements that cost more. She also noted that the grant was applied for in 2008, and the construction climate had changed since then. Eddie Culberson noted that in the future they may want to use turnkey engineers to mitigate issues like this.

MOTION: Rudy Langley made a motion to allow Alex Ashton to approve the contract documents for Alamance Community College, as long as they meet the budget. The motion was seconded by Frank Green.

VOTE: Unanimously approved.

e. Selection of contractor for CW Stanford Stormwater Project (sign Notice of Award)

Stephanie Grant gave an update on the C.W. Stanford project. Bid proposals from the contractors were due Friday June 2nd; only one bid was received and it was well over the construction budget. Kimley-Horn (engineer) was now working on finding out why the other pre-qualified contractors did not submit bids. The project will be re-bid with a mid-July deadline. Stephanie Grant and the engineer will also ask the school board to submit more money as match in order to have some of the nicer features that have been engineered. The project will now run into the fall; the principal is okay with that as long as the bioretention area is complete by the start of the school year because it is located in the bus parking lot. Because of the schedule change, there weren't any decisions that needed to be made.

f. **Determine protocol for change orders made during CWMTF project construction without full board approval.**

Alex Ashton said this was to account for a very fast-paced dynamic construction schedule that would require approvals in-between meetings.

MOTION: Hazel Puckett made a motion to give both Alex Ashton and Eddie Culberson the authority to approve changes on the CWMTF projects in-between meetings. The motion was seconded by Frank Green.

VOTE: Unanimously approved.

g. **Determine protocol for signing documentation required by CWMTF projects (Agreements, Notice to Proceed, Bonds, etc.)**

Included in above motion.

h. **Approve Lassiter Mill Dam Removal project contract with American Rivers**

Stephanie Grant provided the board with an example contract and stated that American Rivers was waiting on NEPA approval before they would be ready to sign a contract. Stephanie Grant asked for the board to provide comments now that they could address when the contract was ready to be signed. Alex Ashton said he would prefer that it wait until the July 5th Executive Board meeting. Stephanie Grant expressed concern that the timeframe of the project wouldn't allow for that.

MOTION: Hazel Puckett made a motion that Alex Ashton read over the American Rivers contract, and if he was comfortable with signing it, then he should sign it if it was needed before the next meeting. The motion was seconded by Eddie Culberson.

VOTE: Unanimously approved.

i. **Consider contract options with SJ Grant Consulting, LLC to manage the Lassiter Mill Dam Removal project**

The board pushed this item to the July meeting since there wasn't a contract with American Rivers yet.

j. Six-month option period for SJ Grant Consulting contract (for August – February)

Grant explained that this was similar to the contract she was currently working under, but it applied to the time period from August 15, 2011 to February 15, 2012, as her current contract ended August 14, 2011.

MOTION: Eddie Culberson made a motion to execute the contract. The motion was seconded by Frank Green.

VOTE: Unanimously approved.

k. Approval of Invoices

Stephanie Grant presented invoices for approval for payment as:

- a. Louella Caison – Quilt Trail project: \$542.00
- b. Cyberscribe – PCC Logo: \$975.00
- c. Unique Places, LLC – Guilford Farmland Plan: \$5,475.00
- d. EYDO – Guilford Farmland Plan: \$2,638.75
- e. Aspen Price – PCC Admin: \$363.75
- f. SJ Grant Consulting - 5/17/11: \$6,601.50
- g. Reavis & Parrish – First Quarter Report: \$130.00
- h. Kimley-Horn & Associates – January 31, 2011: \$3,480.00
- i. Kimley-Horn & Associates – February 28, 2011: \$5,488.38
- j. Kimley-Horn & Associates – May 31, 2011: \$21,210.23
- k. Freedman Associates – Get A Taste of This! Event Planning: \$4,341.50

MOTION: Bill Alston made a motion that they approve the invoices as submitted. The motion was seconded by Eddie Culberson.

VOTE: Unanimously approved.

VII. Pending Projects Update

Piedmont Local Food

Brenda Sutton gave a quick update on Get A Taste of This. The event is June 30th from 6-9 pm at the Marriott at the Greensboro Airport. The website and logo are up and look great, and tickets are on sale now. She said that she had a grant from the USDA to buy a block of tickets for some of the farmers that are participating in Piedmont Local Food and providing the food that is being used. There would be educational booths there as well, like Piedmont Local Food, the 10% Campaign, the Master Gardener's program, and others. She said she was hoping for 500 participants, but that Don Freedman was expecting 300 – 400. She noted that she was hoping the board would consider sharing some of the profits with Piedmont Local Food, at a prorated rate. The board expressed support of that idea. Alex Ashton encouraged the board members to market the event as much as possible.

PCC Website

Stephanie Grant stated that it was going very well, and that staff had been trained in the content management system and that it was easy to use. She also noted that CyberScribe was wonderful to work with, and that they had provided a mobile site for free, since it was in beta and they were looking for feedback on it. She offered to pass the website address around to garner board comments.

Guilford Farmland Protection Plan

Aspen Price stated the Plan was complete, and passed around a printed copy for the board to look at. She stated that the Guilford County Commissioners were voting on the plan at the June 16th meeting at 5:30 p.m. and encouraged board members to come and show their support.

VIII. The next Executive Board meeting is scheduled for July 5th at 6:30 at May Memorial Library in Burlington.

IX. Adjournment

MOTION: Bill Alston made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Hazel Puckett.

VOTE: Unanimously approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 pm