This meeting was conducted through simultaneous communication pursuant to NCGS 166A-19.24. All votes were taken by roll call vote unless otherwise noted.

Participating through simultaneous communication via Webex for the entire meeting.

Others present: Council Liaison Jack Smith, Staff Liaison Emily Barrett, Director of Special Projects Danna Widmar, Marie Cefalo, Water Resources Outreach Supervisor, Matthew Flynn, Stormwater Development Manager, Sarah Schubert, Assistant Clerk.


1. **CALL TO ORDER**

   Savage called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m.

2. **ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

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<td>SECONDER:</td>
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3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

   3.1 Environmental Advisory Board - Advisory Board Meeting - Mar 10, 2020 6:00 PM

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4. **PUBLIC COMMENT**
Schubert shared with the board that they received six comments for the Public Comment period for this EAB meeting that were collected through email since Friday, August 7, 2020. These emails had a variety of topics and all board members were sent a copy verbatim of each email we received.

Schubert summarized the six comments:

Mary Ann Borisow expressed concern about our Tree City USA status and tree recommendations. Her remarks are captured in her email, attached to and incorporated herein as Exhibit A.

Mary Collins wrote in support of the tree recommendations and requested to update the Town ordinances. Her remarks are captured in her email, attached to and incorporated herein as Exhibit B.

Janet Couture wrote regarding issues related to the development on the corner of Urban Drive and Chatham Street. Her remarks are captured in her email, attached to and incorporated herein as Exhibit C.

Nick Borisow wrote in support of the tree canopy recommendations. His remarks are captured in his email, attached to and incorporated herein as Exhibit D.

Neela Patel wrote on the topics of climate change, loss of trees, and a request to update the Town ordinances. Her remarks are captured in her email, attached to and incorporated herein as Exhibit E.

Andrea Rushing wrote in regarding composting and the tree canopy recommendations. Her remarks are captured in her email, attached to and incorporated herein as Exhibit F.

5. OLD/NEW BUSINESS

5.1 Council Liaison Welcome Back

Smith welcomed the Board Back wants the staff and board to focus on the importance of accurate information coming from the Town of Cary and that having priorities will be very important for the Board during Covid-times.

Chair Rick Savage welcomed the board back as well.

5.2 Staff Introductions

Widmar shared that Council member Jack Smith and her have been working together over the past few months when the board was not meeting due to the Covid-19 pandemic, which paused meetings following the March board meeting. She also noted that the pandemic has changed
the Town of Cary’s course due to sales tax revenue loss. Because of this, the Town of Cary has been looking at everything they do closely to identify areas where they can realign work to focus on the highest priorities. Widmar wants the EAB’s help with identifying the highest priorities as they relate to the environment.

Widmar introduced three new staff members, along with sharing what expertise they bring to the EAB meetings, which included Marie Cefalo, Water Resources Outreach Supervisor, Matthew Flynn, Stormwater Development Manager, and Sarah Schubert, Assistant Clerk.

5.3 EAB Goals, Citizen Discussions, and Virtual Approach

Widmar shared that we are sensitive that we are working in a different, virtual environment and will remain in one for the foreseeable future.

Widmar discussed the following areas of focus; all of which are at a different place.

**Stormwater:** The stormwater work group exists and will remain but broadened and will update the EAB each month.

**Trees:** There is a need to shift to have staff and the EAB work on this together rather than as a separate work group due to the amount of detail the group could get into.

**Carbon Recommendations:** Our current base information is helpful, but a lot more information is needed to move forward. Emily Barrett is starting to work on a virtual approach for a work group for the Cardon Recommendations. With carbon, so much of the change in behavior in carbon is outside of Cary’s regularity control.

Widmar shared the two goals that the EAB has identified:

#1. Existing and Emerging Issues

#2. Environmental Awareness

Widmar shared the goals are quite integrated and need to be talked about collectively. It is the awareness aspect that Widmar thinks the group has a lot more work to do. She noted that the EAB’s list of existing and emerging issues has 14 items.

Widmar noted that most citizen comments are focused on climate and trees. She shared that this should be the group’s marker of what they should be focusing their work on and make a priority.

Board discussion following Widmar’s comments included:

- Members felt Widmar raised a lot of important, urgent matters that the EAB needs to prioritize and focus on.
- Members felt it is important to tack and come up with a communication strategy.
- Members discussed their thoughts on moving forward with work
groups or not.

- Members discussed pausing the idea of work groups during the pandemic and then returning to them once it is appropriate to engage more in person.
- Members advocated for moving forward with work groups virtually and adapt to the current times.
- Members want to be respectful of Cary staff and be sure the board can support them.

Widmar challenged the group to not spread themselves thin and focus in on the heart of what needs to be discussed. If the board does too many things, we are undermining our own work. Composition of any work group is critical; EAB would need to have a strategy and intent in place for selecting members for the work groups to have the highest value.

5.4 Board Discussion

Topic tabled due to time.

6. COUNCIL LIAISON COMMENTS

Council Member Jack Smith provided several updates, attached to and incorporated herein as Exhibit G.

7. CHAIR ANNOUNCEMENTS

Savage talked about wanting the board, staff, and Council to have a positive attitude and have excitement. All we want is to work together to help solve problems.

8. STAFF LIAISON COMMENTS

Widmar clarified who the group should reach out to with questions, agenda needs, etc.

9. MEMBER SHARING

None

10. ADMINISTRATIVE ANNOUNCEMENTS

None

11. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.
RESULT: ADJOURNED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER: Khara Grieger
SECONDER: Shweta Nanekar, Partner
AYES: Merkle, Savage, Nanekar, Cervenka, Falk, Grieger, Daly, Cozzolino, Shouse, Gupta
To The Members of the EAB,
I understand the town allotted 150k for trees this year. TOC has long held the title of Tree City USA from the Arbor Day Foundation. A criterion for this title is that the town implements a community forestry program with an annual budget of at least $2/capita. With ~170k residents, that would require $340k for a forestry program. Based on this, Cary no longer qualifies for the Tree City USA title. The decisions of what type of trees will be purchased with this money, and how and where they will be planted are critical. There already seems to be a loose plan in place per a discussion I had with Matt Flynn and Danna Widmar recently. I feel it’s critical that the EAB and the EAB’s tree work group collaborate on these decisions. This is an excellent opportunity to use town-owned land that has been deforested by development for adequate and proper restoration, such as medians and buffers. It’s my hope that the town is utilizing this EAB Board to make the best decisions for this project for the biggest bang per buck. Per the community plan, advisory boards exist to for this reason. Additionally, the Cary community plan is touted as having an unprecedented amount of public input to develop it. Keeping that in mind, Cary citizens then, and even more so now, are focused on the environment. We continue to urge the Town of Cary to implement the EAB’s tree recommendations by using the ACTs per chapter 9 in the community plan, as well as focusing on public owned land and buildings, creative means, and/or negotiations with builders.

Sincerely,
Mary Ann Borisow
121 East Johnson Street
Cary, NC 27513
Cary EAB,

Thank you for your continuing efforts to support a sustainable environment in Cary. I see Cary as having a safe, clean, shade tree filled, and walkable community as a big contributor to the bottom line financial strength of Cary as a place to live and work.

It has been a long time since the EAB created the Tree Recommendations and it is town for this to be adopted and made part of the process for planning and zoning and development in all ways now, not later.

As a 21 year homeowner in Oakwood Heights I would love to walk downtown, but because we have no sidewalk and cannot cross the railroad tracks except by being in the road that has no shoulder area on Old Apex going East to West Chatham we cannot do this safely. It is unsafe to be a pedestrian or to be on a bike headed to downtown. Traffic travels above the speed limit in our neighborhood, and also on Old Apex, frankly in much of Cary. I would love to have fewer cars and more attention to walkable living.

I took part in all aspects of the Vision Cary programming beginning many years ago and I feel in many ways unheard and blindsided by what continues to happen in development that is not sustainable or consistent with best practices. I would ask that the TOC review and update our town ordinances to be consistent with the Cary Community Plan goals stated in Chapter 8 of that plan. It was and is my expectation that those elected officials and staff that are responsible for day to day operations of our town understand and act in good faith to live up to the goals of this Cary Community Plan.

Sincerely,

Mary Collins
211 Howland Ave.
Cary, NC 27513
919-621-1255
Corner of Urban Drive and Chatham last Friday the developer removed the most beautiful very old oak tree for a driveway for the planned building parking lot. When I looked at the large stump where the tree stood it appeared to have been on the side if the drive not in the area of the drive.

This parking lot and driveway will allow access for cars to park behind the structure and and aim headlights directly at my neighbors home. She will also have car lights pointing at her from the open parking lot under the condo building being built across the street. The condo building has been under construction for at least 2 long years if not longer.

Seems to me the Town regulations should protect residents from light, noise and red dust pollution. Also the trees, especially 80 to 100 year old trees, in an established neighborhood should be protected or developers should change their plan to accommodate the trees!

Janet Couture
113 Urban Drive
Dear EAB,

The recent change to the designation of internal roads within a development from a privately-owned road managed by the ensuing HOA, to a public road managed by the Town of Cary, provides a great opportunity for the EAB tree canopy recommendations to be administered as part of every rezoning request proposed in the Town of Cary. As a matter of course, the EAB should propose to Town Council that all development requests, where internal roads will be built, should adhere to the EAB tree canopy guidelines.

The fact that the tree canopy recommendations have not been adopted or have not been integrated into the LDO or Community plan with a proposed GHG reduction target for 2040 is a failure of the current Town of Cary administration, and shows the lobbying of national builders and developers is paying off. The current pace of “clear-cutting” development is (a) not sustainable, (b) does not show the town of Cary taking the GHG reduction guidelines seriously, and (c) is the most outstanding impediment to the goals and objectives of maintaining Cary’s tree canopy. The Town’s canopy is already embarrassingly lower than small cities and similar towns at 46% compared to Durham (52%), Wilmington (48%), Charlotte (47%) and Raleigh (55%). With 500+ acres currently in the rezoning process, this depletion is only getting worse. As the town builds out to its edges, it is now performing joint development with neighboring Chatham county, and creating more dangers in eliminating trees, encroaching on Jordan lake watershed, and eliminating biologically-rich wetlands.

As the Town has recently agreed that Parks and greenspace are an important part of our community (based on the recent bond approval), the tree canopy recommendations are needed to create a strategic tool for managing the planning and zoning process. Our elected officials cannot continue to kick the can on this important recommendation, stating that they “are working on it” (Mayor Weinbrecht’s most recent blog) that will have a dramatic impact in the long-term marketability, value and resilience of our community.

Thank you,
Nick Borisow
Photo of Champion tree being removed from Chatham Walk development.
Good Morning

I am a stay-at-home mother of two teens and am eager to see increased environmental action, which I firmly believe that this great, dynamic Town of Cary we live in can achieve. I also believe we can be a model for the rest of this country, if we make wise choices today.

The personal problems I have faced with climate change are most definitely minor in comparison to others whose lives have been devastated by climate change. However, I feel that someday, none of us will escape the climate catastrophes that loom large and which when they occur, will not pick and choose locations, income status etc. In fact, we already are faced with Covid which was the direct result of human activity occurring in such close proximity to that of animals.

The enormous loss of trees and the manner in which new trees (small, ornamental, never Coastal Pines) are planted, has made my neighborhood has made it decidedly NOT WALKABLE in summer. The lack of tree cover from the harsh sun has been a turn off for me and my children to walk to school, shops, libraries, etc. The most preventable loss for us was the inability to use parks and recreational facilites during summer when we most needed them due to the playground equipment being dangerously hot. When we visited Atlanta, Georgia, we were pleasantly surprised at the number of parks and school grounds that we could visit, which had enormous tree cover and permitted my kids to play outside in the peak of summer. Additionally, we drove to school more than we should have, due to the lack of shaded pathways. This added to climate woes and continues to do so as parents in luxury vehicles sit for 15-30 minutes per day with engines running and air conditioning blasting away, in carpool.

Adding to the excess heat (from few trees), is the vast, unnecessary amount of asphalt and concrete. These radiate heat in summer and exacerbate the situation. The parking minimum laws that create massive unused asphalt spaces in commercial places need to be urgently reviewed. These vast useless, used-once-a-year (maybe) spaces, radiate heat and take up valuable space that could have been used for residential areas to be built closer to commercial areas, thereby facilitating actual walkable communities. I am attaching a link to show how other cities have addressed this minimum parking law requirement.


I have numerous other examples of ways in which we have been personally affected and reasons for urging action NOW. I would be happy to discuss these if you were interested.

I urge the TOC to review and update town ordinances to reflect Chapter 8 of the Cary Community Plan, as this was the expectations that residents of Cary had when formulating the Plan.

I also urge the TOC to implement the EAB’s Tree Recommendations.

Thank you for your time in reading this and I hope to see Cary become exemplary in environmental action.

Neela Patel, 919 946 7288
Dear Members of the Cary EAB and Support Staff,

I sincerely hope that this correspondence finds you and your families well. It feels like an eternity has passed since the last EAB meeting in March when, in fact, it has only been five months. Much has changed in our lives during this time, but one thing has not - environmental protection and rehabilitation is just as, or possibly more so, important now. Why? We have now seen what a global crisis does to our lives with everything from our food supply to healthcare being pushed to limits. The pandemic has given us a quick view of what has been happening over the years as a result of humanity’s environmental impact. We face more pandemics, food shortages, and death, not less, if we do not make drastic changes to the way we look at and treat our planet’s natural resources.

I was in the audience for your March meeting and watched your discussion regarding recycling. In fact, it was one of the last things I attended before my family began sheltering in place. I have been waiting since then to follow-up with the words I wanted so desperately to share during your brainstorm - Recycling is not the future; composting is! Up to 40% of the materials in the South Wake Landfill are compostable. These materials are treated like trash when, in fact, they are resources. Food waste, cardboard, and paper, which are the source of smells and methane gas in a landfill, can be composted to create rich soil that sequesters carbon dioxide. Keeping compostables out of our landfill will extend its life beyond the current expected fill date in 2040. Please help bring municipal composting to Cary.

As you know from your review of the book Drawdown, waste is just one of the ways we can reduce carbon dioxide and make Cary more sustainable. It has been disheartening to see a lack of progress in moving forward with the carbon reduction recommendations this Board made over a year ago. One of the most obvious areas of inaction, and thus citizen frustration, is the lack of implementation of the tree canopy recommendations. While it was heartening to hear the Town Council’s rejection of 19-REZ-32, the proposed rezoning of 9.56 acres of open space, the protection of the tree canopy and area watersheds is continued to be pressed by developers.

It is important to remember that waste is really intended to be a verb. Nothing can be called waste if it isn’t wasted. In nature, nothing is wasted. It is only we humans who waste. We need a paradigm shift in how we look at the things we eat and use everyday. Those things are all made out of the natural resources around us; resources we have been extracting and using for our own good for over a century and have been considering disposable for at least the last 30-40 years. Like the time and money we have been taught to value, we must treat our environment as the most important resource of all. The time for discussion has long passed. The pandemic has proven we can adapt and change when it is required. Now is time for action.

Thank you for your consideration.

Andrea Rushing-
203 Crickentree Drive, Cary
Jack’s Update to EAB
August 11, 2020

TOP THREE ITEMS:

• The EOC (Emergency Operation Center) continues to share messaging that aligns with Governor Cooper’s announcement to extend Safer at Home Phase 2 through at least September 11. Cary has created “A Help for Citizens” webpage to consolidate information on utility and rental assistance.

  Applicable to the EAB: General knowledge about how the Town of Cary is taking care of its citizens at this time.

• The recruitment period for the Town’s Boards, Commission, and Committee, ended on July 31. The total number of applicants was 150. Council is currently reviewing the applicants and may conduct interviews over the next few weeks. Appointments will occur before September 30, and the terms for the new members will begin on October 1.

  Applicable to the EAB: It is a tough year as there were so many qualified applicants who applied. As a council liaison, it is difficult to not find a way to include everyone within the limited opportunities. I hope these applicants get involved in other ways in the Town.

• The Town of Cary is seeking public input as part of the Chapel Hill Road Mobility Study to reimagine the corridor. Staff is encouraging residents to fill out the survey. Due to COVID-19, they’re moving initial public engagement activities online. This 10-question survey will be just one opportunity to provide input on the Mobility Study, which helps the Town plan for future design. This survey focuses on identifying the Priorities & Needs for the street.

  Applicable to the EAB: This is an example of how the Town is bringing the community in, even virtually, to give feedback. We look forward to the outcomes of this study to directly impact future decisions in this area.

OTHER UPDATES:

• The first virtual Zoning Board of Adjustment meeting was held last Monday to ratify a previous case and to prepare for the first quasi-judicial hearings on August 17. This week, staff is organizing presentation walk throughs with the board chair and the board attorney, as well as, the applicants of both cases, Fifth Third Bank at Searstone and Triangle Montessori Academy.

• The completed application to retain National Register Status on the Nancy Jones House (in the future location) was submitted to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) last week.
SHPO will be sending notification to adjacent property owners, the HPC, and Mayor Weinbrecht regarding the proposed move. SHPO will present the request to the North Carolina National Register Advisory Committee on October 8. The recommendation from that meeting will be forwarded to the National Park Service for final review and approval.

- Cary’s wastewater collection system infrastructure performed very well during FY20. One of the key metrics for sewer system performance is minimizing sanitary sewer overflows. Cary’s wastewater collection system includes approximately 990-miles of pipes and conveys more than 7 billion gallons of wastewater safely to one of our water reclamation facilities for high quality wastewater treatment. During the last reporting year, our wastewater collection system recorded only 6 small overflows that totaled 2,515 gallons for the entire year, making this past year the best overall performance in our recent history.

- A study is underway for alignment and design of the “Triangle Bikeway” project. The study is being led by CAMPO and the DCHC MPO. It involves a primarily commuter bike facility along the I-40 corridor from Raleigh to Chapel Hill. This is important as an alternate transportation mode for Cary; it will tie to Cary greenways and on-road bike facilities. The bikeway will hopefully also accommodate pedestrians; a cross section has not yet been determined.

- Project PHOENIX has begun reaching out to various apartment communities to give away masks as part of the Town’s COVID-19 efforts.