

Durham Environmental Affairs Board 2017 Annual Report



Prepared by the Durham City-County Environmental Affairs Board
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Executive Summary

During 2017, the EAB continued work on sustaining a healthy urban forest in Durham, reviewed and provided input on NPDES permitting, monitored legislative activities regarding environmental issues, supported the Durham Golden Leaf Awards, studied sustainability issues in Durham and considered solid waste issues and projects. In 2017, the EAB added two new members, Jessalee Landfried and Matthew Kopac and three members left the board, Nancy LaPlaca, Stephen Senter, and Barrington Ross.

EAB Mission and Duties

The Durham City-County Environmental Affairs Board (EAB) is an advisory board that consists of eleven voting members and seven non-voting, ex-officio members. The EAB's mission is to recognize the importance of local cooperation and advise both the City and County on environmental issues. The eleven seats on the EAB are water resources, public policy, solid waste, energy, biological science, education, air quality, public health, law, engineering, and soil and water conservation. The EAB considers topics such as air and water quality, the environmental impacts of development and pollution, energy conservation, environmental education, climate change, green building design and greenhouse gas reductions. The Board advocates environmental accountability, in both the private and public sectors, and meets the first Wednesday of every month at 6:00 p.m. in the Committee Room on the second floor of City Hall. The board's official duties are:

1. To advise the Durham City Council and the Durham County Board of Commissioners on environmental issues;
2. To perform other duties, such as special environmental studies, as assigned by the City and/or County;
3. To facilitate citizen education and participation in environmental matters, laws and regulations, and the local government's consideration of matters involving the environment;
4. To promote intergovernmental and public/private cooperation and coordination; and
5. To adopt Rules of Procedure, for the orderly dispatch of its business, and on an annual basis meet with the Joint City-County Planning Committee to report on past activities and develop priorities for the upcoming year.

A key part of fulfilling the EAB's public outreach and educational duties is achieved by freely exchanging ideas and commenting on proposed ordinances, while hearing other issues that may affect the citizens of Durham or impact the environment. The EAB provides a mechanism for communication with the local governments on environmental issues in Durham. The EAB encourages residents to attend and discuss issues by having City and County staff and others share information related to the environment.

Accomplishments for 2017

In 2017, the EAB provided feedback on the environmental impact of the items summarized below:

1. Ellerbe Creek Watershed Improvement

In January 2017, Chris Dreps presented about the watershed management efforts being led by Ellerbe Creek Water Association (ECWA). The ECWA would like The City of Durham to consider green infrastructure to help control storm run-off. The EAB's May meeting was used to go on a green infrastructure tour of several key sites in Durham. These projects are improving the Ellerbe Creek watershed and getting residents more active in community-based environmental improvements.

2. County-Wide Open Spaces Presentation

In January 2017, Laura Woods presented the county-wide open spaces database for the Durham Strategic Plan. Laura explained how the data is used for future land use mapping and planning.

3. Durham City Budget

In February 2017, Ben Kittelson shared info about the FY2018 budget. Kittelson shared and explained the survey that was taken by Durham residents to help prioritize expenditures.

4. Durham Urban Forestry

In February 2017, Alex Johnson from the Urban Forestry Dept. presented the results of the street tree inventory. A contractor was used to inventory and assess condition of the trees. A canopy assessment was underway, and the board hopes to have an update in 2018.

5. NPDES permitting with Durham Stormwater

Starting in March 2017, the EAB began helping the stormwater department review different areas of the permit for the upcoming renewal. Michelle Woolfolk provided overviews of the permit sections she was seeking review on. EAB members were able to provide feedback, comments and questions to help clarify and strengthen those sections. These section reviews stretched across the year of 2017, and consumed a good deal of the EAB's time.

6. Bull City Workplace Challenge

In April 2017, Tobin Freid presented info for the Bull City Work Place Challenge. This is an effort to incentivize local employers/businesses to adopt environmental sustainability best practices. EAB agreed this was a good idea and would do what they could to inform others of the challenge.

7. Watershed Protection/ Land Conservation

In June 2017, the EAB was given a presentation by Sydney Miller from Water Management about the The City of Durham's plan to acquire land around Lake Michie and Little River watersheds as a buffer to protect water quality. The goal is to create and a 300 ft buffer to protect the watersheds. The acquisition and methods were approved by City Council in April 2017. The EAB supports this in any way they can.

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The project compliments the Ellerbe Creek watershed improvement projects mentioned earlier in the year.

8. Energy Sourcing and Government Resolutions

Starting in September 2017, the EAB had its first presentation from Donald Addu of Citizen's Climate Lobby about carbon fee and dividend. In October, Tavey Capps and Tim Profeta of Duke University presented on their sustainability and carbon neutral goals. In November, the board was asked to help the City-County governing bodies consider a resolution on renewable energy. Tobin Freid provided draft resolutions from other North Carolina municipalities that had already resolved to use more or all renewable energy by certain dates. In December, Nancy LaPlaca (former EAB member) presented Clean Path 2025; a plan to use no fossil fuels by 2025. Matt Kopac used all the information to create a draft resolution for City-County government to consider and the board decided to make the vote January 2018.

10. Golden Leaf Sustainability Award

In Spring 2016, the EAB agreed to again partner with the Durham City-County Appearance Commission for the Durham Golden Leaf Sustainability Award. The EAB drafted a description and criteria for the Sustainability Award:

The award for Sustainable Design is given to projects creating a sustainable environment by incorporating green building principles in planning and development. Projects must document these principles in the areas of energy, design, site, water and building materials. Projects should meet at least two of the below criteria.

1. Increase energy efficiency
2. Increase use of environmentally preferred transportation options
3. Improve water quality
4. Change behaviors to decrease environmental impact
5. Protect open spaces and preserve rural character

The EAB chair Rachel McIntosh-Kastrinsky was the judge for the EAB sustainability award and presented the award at the Golden Leaf Awards reception on April 14, 2017 to Durham County Health and Human Services Building. In December 2017, EAB agreed to continue the partnership for the 2018 awards.

11. EAB Retreat

In November 2017, the EAB held its annual retreat to discuss current and future EAB projects and issues. All members were thanked for their work on the EAB.

Many issues and projects were discussed including:

1. STAR certification GAP analysis;
2. Assisting the Sustainability Department in reviewing the regional climate resiliency and sustainability plan;

3. More involvement in Durham Public Schools, possible involvement in science fairs;
 4. Gray water recycling;
 5. Input for the Comprehensive Plan;
 6. Creating orientation materials for new members; and
 7. Energy Resolution to include renewables, carbon pricing, energy efficiency, etc;
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EAB Goals for 2018

1. Work on Durham's Climate Resiliency

The EAB is very interested in investigating the potential effects of climate change in Durham. The EAB is particularly interested in improving Durham's climate resiliency. The EAB plans to do this in conjunction with the Sustainability Office.

2. Involvement in Durham Public Schools

The EAB would like to work more with DPS to help students learn about environmental issues in their community. The EAB can continue to support recycling and energy efficiency in schools and would like to work with schools on science fair awards and possible recognition of students by elected officials.

3. Increase Community Outreach and Involvement

The EAB plans to increase community outreach projects to better involve local residents in environmental issues. Specifically, the EAB would like to interact with residents about the recent energy resolution and possible incorporation of Climate Resiliency into the strategic plan for Durham.

4. Sustain a Healthy Urban Forest in Durham

The EAB intends to continue supporting the goals of maintaining the current level of canopy coverage and safely removing dead and dying trees in Durham. EAB plans to raise public support for tree replacement in Durham and serve as a conduit between Durham Urban Foresters and local officials. The EAB also plan continued involvement in researching urban forest issues.

5. Sponsor the Sustainability Award at the Golden Leaf Awards

The EAB will continue to sponsor the Sustainable Properties Award at the 2018 Golden Leaf Awards ceremony, to promote and publicize the building of environmentally sustainable properties in Durham.

6. Support the Downtown Durham Open Space Plan and the Urban Open Space Plan

The EAB intends to support the Downtown Durham Urban Space Plan, to increase the look, feel and environmental-friendliness of Downtown Durham.

7. Support Don't Waste Durham initiatives

The EAB plans to continue supporting the activities of the Don't Waste Durham, such as the Durham GreenToGo Initiative.

8. Improve EAB recruitment, retention, and onboarding

The EAB plans develop a welcome kit for new EAB members to better ready them for what is expected from their volunteer service on the EAB. Better prepared members will be more productive and more likely to regularly attend meetings. The EAB would like to use some increased community involvement to recruit and inform citizens of the EAB and what its purpose is.

EAB Membership for 2017

2017 Durham Environmental Affairs Board Members

Matthew Herman (Chair), Matthew Pait (Vice Chair), Mark Koegel (Secretary), Elizabeth Chan, Mark DeWitt, Matthew Kopac (Sep-Dec), Tyjuanna LaBennett, Jessalee Landfried (Mar-Dec), Nancy LaPlaca (Jan-Nov), Rachel McIntosh-Kastrinsky, Barrington Ross (Jan-Jun), Stephen Senter (Jan-Nov),

2017 Durham Environmental Affairs Board Staff Support

Laura Woods, Planner, Durham City-County Planning

2017 Durham Environmental Affairs Board Ex-Officio Members

City Solid Waste Management, City-County Planning Director, City Public Works Director, City Water Management Director, County Health Department, Durham County Environmental Health Department, City-County Sustainability Manager

2017 Durham Environmental Affairs Board City Council Representative

Councilman Eddie Davis (Jan-Nov)

2017 Durham Environmental Affairs Board County Board of Commissioners Representative

Commissioner Heidi Carter
