

# **Rockville Environment Commission**

## **Minutes of the Meeting of Thursday, January 3, 2018**

Mayor and Council Chambers, City Hall,  
111 Maryland Avenue, Rockville, Maryland

### **Meeting Attendance**

<b>Commissioner</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Absent</b>	<b>Reason, If Given</b>
Chair John Becker	X		
Sy Garte	X		
Alicia Hosmer	X		
Larissa Johnson		X	Resigned position
Susan Koester	X		
Clark Reed	X		
Monica Saavoss	X		
Steve Sprague	X		
Fedon Vayanis	X		

**Council Liaison:** Mark Pierzchala

**City Staff:** Lise Soukup

**Guests:** Pavitra Srinivasan

### **Meeting Commencement**

The meeting convened at 7:05 p.m. by Chair Becker.

### **Approval of Agenda**

Amendments to the January 3, 2019 agenda to add a discussion item were made by Commissioner Reed on behalf of the Energy Committee. Commissioner Sprague moved and Commissioner Saavoss seconded the motion to approve the January 3, 2019 agenda. The motion passed (8-0).

### **Approval of Meeting Minutes**

Commissioner Hosmer moved and Commissioner Saavoss seconded the motion to approve the December 6, 2018 minutes. The motion passed (8-0).

### **Community Forum**

No speakers.

## **Process and Expectations for Staff Availability and Responses**

Ms. Soukup discussed some challenges in handling the influx of communication and action items from the REC and its committees, and offered proposed guidelines to help plan agendas, address questions and prioritize requests. These guidelines will be modified as needed, and it is hoped the Boards and Commissions Task Force will formulate more standardized ones that can apply to all commissions.

Ms. Soukup will use the REC Action Item log, distributed each month with the draft agenda, to record action items or inquiries and the staff responses or commissioner responsibilities from month to month. This will also be useful to the Chair in drafting the end-of-year annual report.

## **2019 REC Strategic and Budget Planning**

Chair Becker asked the REC to submit budget requests as soon as possible to use up the available \$815 allocation by June 30. Most will be used for materials for spring events. Council Member Pierzchala and Ms. Soukup explained that, due to City budget shortfalls this year, there is no opportunity to ask for additional funds for REC activities.

- Action Item: For help with budgeting, staff will send the REC a list of materials already on hand for the Spring outreach events and Hometown Holidays, and include a list of possible items the REC might purchase to augment the current supply.

## **Committee Reports and Requests to REC**

### Watersheds Committee:

Steve Chesterton is the new chair of the Watershed Committee, effective immediately. In conjunction with the Croyden Creek Nature Center, the Watershed Committee has planned two more Brewshed events for local Rockville breweries to promote watershed information and outreach. These are:

- Meet-Up at Saints Row Brewing on April 13, following an REC stream cleanup that morning.
- Hike with a Brewer event on May 4. Event starts at the Nature Center and concludes at the True Respite Brewing Company.

### Climate Action Committee

Commissioner Saavoss presented proposed REC testimony language to submit to the Mayor and Council for a Jan. 22 public hearing regarding the Adequate Public Facilities Standards changes under consideration. CLAC had requested that the REC submit this testimony to support increased density and smart growth planning near transit centers to reduce transportation and residential energy emissions. The REC debated the language and a recommendation by Commissioners Saavoss and Sprague to list the pros and cons of changing the APFO standards for school capacity to allow continued redevelopment in Rockville and recognize community tradeoffs beyond environmental issues. Councilmember Pierzchala encouraged the Commission to limit its testimony only to environmental issues in its testimony. The REC voted 7-0-1 to submit the testimony drafted by Commissioner Saavoss. Commissioner Sprague abstained.

- **Action item:** The REC will receive via email the proposed final testimony to be submitted by Chair Becker prior to the Jan. 22 public hearing. If the recommendation is unchanged and the content is similar to the language reviewed at the Jan. 3 REC meeting, it does not need another vote by the REC.

### Energy Committee

- REC follow-up on the EPA Energy Star program discussion requested by Commissioner Reed was postponed to the Feb. REC meeting due to time constraints.
- Commissioner Reed presented a proposal to create an Electric Vehicle Buyer's Co-op, similar to the Rockville Solar Co-op, to help private individuals purchase electric vehicles from local car dealerships at a substantial discount. The proposal described other communities in Colorado that had established such co-ops and suggested a time frame for City of Rockville or another agency to create one. Ms. Soukup explained that the City government's role in the Rockville Solar Co-op was limited to outreach and marketing to connect homeowners to the Co-op, which was run by a non-profit agency selected by Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG). Ms. Soukup agreed that this intriguing proposal should be forwarded to MWCOG, since the City government does not engage directly in facilitating private purchases. If another non-profit model for electric vehicles was started for the D.C. region, many communities could benefit from this. The REC discussed this and voted 8-0 to have it investigated further.
  - **Action item:** Ms. Soukup will forward the proposal to MWCOG, and will discuss the proposal with the Department of Public Works Director and City Attorney's office. Commissioner Reed will also speak with a contact at MWCOG.

### **Chair Report**

Chair Becker reported from the Boards and Commissions Task Force that the City is trying easier ways to share pdf and Word files between members of a commission. Dropbox and Microsoft 365 were mentioned as possibilities.

Chair Becker suggested that the REC move from planning on a calendar year basis to organizing on the City's fiscal year schedule (July 1 – June 30), which matches the REC's budget allocation. No vote was taken on this yet. Chair Becker also suggested aligning the REC Chair election with the fiscal year. Currently, the Chair position is up for re-election in March, 2019.

- **Action item:** Ms. Soukup will check with the City Clerk's Office about whether the Chair's term may be extended from April 1 to July 1.

The 2019 Memorial Day Parade guidelines were again mentioned and the REC will need to decide at its February meeting on participating in the parade.

### **Environmental Management Division (EMD) Report**

If commissioners expect to step down, please send an email or letter to Chair Becker, Ms. Soukup and the City Clerk's office as soon as you decide to resign and before your term expires.

City staff expects to brief the REC on the draft Comprehensive Master Plan at the March meeting. Staff will send out the link to the Public Hearing draft document prior to this briefing. REC comments will likely be due in April.

The City will introduce revisions to City Code Chapter 24, Water, Sewers and Sewage Disposal, in February, for tentative adoption in April. The draft ordinance will be sent by email to the REC members for comments in February.

The Maryland State Legislative Session starts in mid-January. The REC may suggest comments to the City Manager's office on proposed legislation pertaining to environmental issues. REC comments should be submitted to the Chair prior to the Feb. 7 REC meeting so the REC can approve what will be transmitted. Please specify the ID number and title of any bills in your comments.

The City's Proclamation for Earth Month will be made at the March 25 Mayor and Council meeting. The Chair and two commissioners are requested to attend. Chair Becker confirmed that he would be available. If feasible, the 2019 Environmental Excellence Award(s) will also be presented at that meeting.

The City will celebrate Arbor Day with a Tree Giveaway of 300 trees on Saturday, April 6. Rockville residents may apply now online for trees.

Rockville Science Day will be on Sun, Apr. 28 noon-5pm at Mont. College. This is an opportunity for REC outreach.

### **Old/New Business**

None.

### **Adjourn**

The Commission adjourned by acclamation at 9:37 p.m.

### **Next Commission Meeting**

The next Commission meeting is scheduled on **Thursday, February 7, 2019 at 7:00 pm.**