

# Rockville Environment Commission

## Minutes of the Meeting of Thursday, February 6, 2020

Black-Eyed Susan Conference Room, City Hall  
111 Maryland Avenue, Rockville, Maryland

### Meeting Attendance

Commissioner	Present	Absent	Reason, If Given
John Becker, Chair	X		
Scott Fazekas	X		
Susan Koester	X		
Clark Reed	X		
Monica Saavoss	X		
Steve Sprague	X		
Pavitra Srinivasan	X		
Ted Stauderman	X		

**City Staff:** Amanda Campbell, Staff Liaison; Erica Shingara, Environmental Management Division Chief

**Guests:** Danniell Belay, Will Ollison, Steve Cardon.

**Meeting Commencement:** Chair Becker convened the meeting at 6:59 p.m. with all EC members present. Attendees introduced themselves.

**Approval of Agenda and Meeting Minutes:** The agenda was approved. January meeting minutes were approved. Environment Commission will take up December meeting minutes at the March meeting.

**Community Forum:** No community members participated in the Community Forum.

### **Chair Report**

- Please submit nominations for the 2020 Environmental Excellence Awards by February 29 in preparation for the March 5<sup>th</sup> REC meeting discussion. See Rockville website for details (<https://www.rockvillemd.gov/629/Environmental-Excellence-Awards>)

### **Recycling Market Changes – What it Means for Rockville**

Ms. Shingara presented the market changes that are leading the city to consider changing to dual-stream recycling services. Dual-stream will save the city money over time compared to continuing business as usual. China is no longer accepting materials and many recyclable materials are less valuable to the point that many do not provide revenue (such as mixed paper) and some are no longer accepted (glass). As the city is needing to purchase new recycling vehicles for other reasons, purchasing dual-stream trucks would not cost appreciably

more. Waste hauling distances also factor into cost. The City is counting on Montgomery County being able to accept recyclables.

Commissioners all agreed that given the potential cost savings, moving to dual-stream recycling was the best option and supported the city in doing so. Commissioners also recognized that it is a temporary solution and encouraged the city to focus some efforts on reducing waste and educational opportunities centered on developing a circular economy.

### **Committee Reports**

Watershed Committee – The WS committee expressed their recommendation that Redgate remain a park, that the Commission provide comments on the I270 environmental impact statement, that a tour of watershed restoration facilities be organized, and that the commission should follow the bromide in drinking water issue. Commissioners considered these recommendations.

Climate Action Committee (CLAC) – The CLAC is following the Montgomery County climate action planning process. An open house will be held on Thursday February 27 6pm-8pm. A link will be shared. Montgomery County's workgroups are proposing several actions including upzoning near transit, opposing I270 widening, conducting a parking study, and promoting renewable energy. Staff is also following and will leverage the County's work.

Energy Committee – The Energy Committee had no report.

### **Maryland Legislative Session Environmental Bills**

Commissioners discussed several relevant environmental bills and reviewed the white papers on the Clean Cars Act and the Community Choice Energy Act.

Several bills were considered including one banning the release of balloons, state building energy and bird-friendly requirements, an environmental rights amendment, packaging plastics reduction act, municipal streetlights optional purchase, pesticide regulations, a green certification program, electric vehicles, and community choice energy.

Commissioners discussed the Clean Cars Act based on Commissioner Srinivasan's white paper and discussion points shared. The state has a goal of 300,000 electric vehicles in operation by 2025.

Commissioner Reed presented an overview of the Community Choice Energy Act. This bill has support from the Maryland Municipal League and Montgomery County. Some were concerned about wording in the bill referencing a penalty (upon further research, the penalty applied to accounts that withdrew from community aggregate energy service after a six months grace period).

The Commission voted 7-0 to support the Community Choice Energy bill and voted 5-2 to support the Clean Cars Act. Those opposing were concerned that the bill is a continuation of subsidies for purchasing individual cars rather than public transit and the equity implications of that.

## **Spring Outreach**

### *Upcoming events:*

- Earth Day Proclamation at Mayor and Council meeting March 23 – all REC encouraged to attend.
- Green Happy Hour Campfire followed by REC meeting at Croydon Creek Nature Center, April 2, 6:30-7:30 (REC can start at 7pm): Chair Becker agreed to share a description of REC roles and accomplishments at the event.
- Potomac Watershed Clean up – April 18 – The Commission discussed hosting the Maryvale site and possible 2<sup>nd</sup> site at Redgate.

## **Budget Items**

Commissioners agreed to schedule a conference call to decide about time-sensitive Earth Day purchases.

## **Staff Report – written report**

- Earth Day – Communications Plan, Channel 11, Rockville Reports and Social Media
- Staff responding to M&C request on climate change and sustainability in Rockville, composting memo.
- Environment & Sustainability Newsletter – submit any events/items for consideration.

**Adjourn:** Chair Becker adjourned the meeting at 9:15 p.m.