

Rockville Environment Commission

Draft Minutes of Thursday, April 2, 2020

WebEx Meeting

Meeting Attendance

Commissioner	Present
John Becker, Chair	X
Scott Fazekas	X
Justus Getty	X
Susan Koester	X
William McClain	X
Clark Reed	X
Monica Saavoss	X
Pavitra Srinivasan	X
Ted Stauderman	

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

Councilmembers: Monique Ashton, City Council Liaison

Meeting Commencement: Chair Becker convened the meeting at 7p.m. and welcomed attendees.

Approval of Agenda: The agenda was approved with no changes.

Approval of Meeting Minutes: March meeting minutes were approved unanimously.

Community Forum: No comments.

Chair Report

Chair Becker shared that due to the COVID-19 outbreak, City Hall is closed to in-person attendance at least through April 24. All outreach events are canceled through April. Hometown Holidays is also canceled. All in person Recreation and Parks programs are canceled. The Maryland legislative session ended early due to concerns about COVID-19. The bills that Rockville supported, Clean Cars Act of 2020, the Community Choice Energy Act, and Sustainable Maryland funding, had not made it out of committee.

The Parks and Open Space Strategic Plan was presented to the Mayor and Council on March 23. The Commission is asked to review the plan and provide comments. It will be discussed at the May meeting.

Councilmember Ashton noted that there are opportunities to volunteer during the crisis.

Staff Report

- Staff is working with Croydon Creek Nature Center on social media posts for Earth Month.
- Rockville's spending and hiring (except for essential items or personnel) is now frozen due to the crisis. Before the freeze, the REC had purchased \$217 in T-shirts, \$250 in tote bags, and \$300 Saving Nature Now booklets/patches. These can be saved for future outreach events.
- The city hall audit, LED streetlights, CAP extra funding is likely not approved for this year. Staff can still work on the CAP with existing funding and staff resources.
- Staff met with Climate Action Plan consultant Cadmus on 3/26 and are gearing up to have them produce communication materials and cost-benefit analysis. Staff is aiming to send a Climate Action status update memo to the Mayor and Council in the next couple weeks.

Pesticide Ban Discussion

Commission members identified several questions that they would like to research:

- How much money does the City spend on pesticides?
- Are goats a potential alternative to pesticides or lawnmowing in some areas?
- What are the considerations affecting pesticide use at golf courses?
- Are all organic options considered less toxic than current chemicals?

Members Fazekas, McClain, and Reed agreed to work together to produce a white paper to examine the issues involved in adopting the Montgomery County pesticide ban and share it at the May meeting.

Environmental Excellence Awards

An additional Environmental Excellence Awards nomination was considered. The Commission agreed on additional award recipients to be acknowledged at a future Mayor and Council meeting.

Committee Reports

Watershed Committee – No update.

Climate Action Committee (CLAC) – The CLAC said that one option the City might explore is closing some streets to vehicles to provide more social distancing space to pedestrians.

Energy Committee – No update.

New Business

Councilmember Ashton shared that the Mayor and Council discussed the RedGate master planning process. A veteran's home is being considered, and the other three options involve keeping the area majority parkland.

Adjourn: Chair Becker adjourned the meeting at 8:10 p.m.