

Rockville Environment Commission

Draft Minutes of Thursday, June 4, 2020

WebEx Meeting

Meeting Attendance

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

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 7:02p.m. and welcomed attendees.

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

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

Community Forum: No comments.

Chair Election

Chair candidates Reed and Saavoss provided statements of their vision and goals for chairing the Commission. Clark Reed received the most votes in an electronic poll.

Chair Report: No report at this time.

Staff Report:

- EMD staff is working on a Green Your Backyard outreach project
- Rainscapes projects are fully expended with a waitlist for FY21
- EMD is holding a wildflower seed giveaway of 200 seed packets as part of Community Wildlife Habitat re-certification
- 2020 Solar Coop Rockville Info Session will be held June 24 with a live-stream intro on Facebook. Register here: www.mygreenmontgomery.org/2020-4th-solar-coop

Discussion: The Commission discussed ideas for increasing the number of solar co-op participants and spreading the word and build on the City's communications push. The Energy Committee could propose some ideas.

Pesticide Law Discussion

Will McClain summarized the findings from the white paper that several Commissioners contributed to, including Will McClain, Clark Reed, and Scott Fazekas. The Montgomery County

Pesticide Law would apply to most lawn areas with some exceptions for pests and recreational athletic and golf courses. Pesticides could still be sold within the County but retailers would be required to post signage. Staff said that the City parks maintenance crews emphasize integrated pest management and refrain from using pesticides in many areas including outside of City Hall. The city spends about \$10,000 on pesticides annually including \$6,000 for contracted services. According to an analysis of satellite data, the law would apply to about 1/3 of the land in Rockville (excluding impervious surfaces, transportation, and other non-private lands).

Commissioners discussed organic pesticides and their relative toxicity and whether applying organic pesticides might lead to residents applying more than needed. Some suggested including language about golf courses for future examination, since they are exempted and probably would remain so due to economic reasons. Some wanted to know how much might be applied by homeowners' associations. Naturalized landscapes might offer an alternative. Commissioners decided to look into these matters further and research more local data and continue the discussion at a later meeting.

Climate Change Action Plan Development Presentation

Amanda Campbell presented a brief introduction to the climate change background information, initial findings, and proposal for developing the full climate action plan to be presented to the Mayor and Council on July 13. The shared attachment contains a summary of climate impacts in Rockville (more intense heat waves, precipitation, and storms), the greenhouse gas inventory for the city and community (most emissions come from buildings and a little over a third come from transportation), a detailed summary of city and community actions to date and near term planned activities. The document sketches out a roadmap for developing the plan to reduce greenhouse gases and increase community resilience. Ms. Campbell asked for feedback particularly on the stakeholder engagement plan and the list of measures to undergo cost-benefit analysis by a consultant. The initiative received a total of \$23,500 for consultant services. Staff also has support from the Council of Governments and has participated in Montgomery County's climate action working groups.

Staff will be working with the Public Information Office to develop communication plans for the effort including boards and commissions involvement, a survey and open house events, which may all be held virtually if needed. Councilmember Ashton noted many respondents supported other environmentally related programs and services in their responses to the City's annual survey, climate and sustainability were not listed among the possible choices to prioritize, and should be included going forward.

Commissioners feedback included positive feedback on the information presented and were encouraged by the progress on the plan, noting its roots in the 2040 Master Plan that many contributed to including the Environment Commission.

The Commission recommended that the city consider the societal benefits of reducing carbon pollution as it prioritizes actions. Chair Reed said he was curious to see what legislation needs might be needed to support the plan as it evolves.

Committee Reports: No reports

New Business

Commissioners discussed weighing in on the County's proposed adequate public facilities ordinance. Councilmember Ashton shared that the I270 project environmental impact statement would be released on Monday June 8, and that the City owns bridges that would be widened in the project. The County delayed upgrades to one of the High School buildings for a year. The Mayor and Council created a new Housing and Community Development department to combine affordable housing, mediation, human rights, and community services.

Chair Reed said that 1/3 of families have been overwhelmed by energy costs. One suggestion was to deploy community solar options for low-income residents. Commissioner Pavitra Srinivasan said that environmental justice, race, and equity, should be incorporated in the climate action plan and all initiatives across the city. Councilmember Ashton added that the City posted a statement condemning the death of George Floyd and committing to do more; the Mayor and Council are discussing the issue at their next meeting.

Adjourn: Chair Reed adjourned the meeting at 9:10 p.m.