

Rockville Environment Commission

Draft Minutes of Thursday, July 9, 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; Heather Gewandter, Stormwater Manager; Rob Orndorff, Erica Shingara, Environmental Management Division Chief

Councilmembers: Monique Ashton, City Council Liaison

Guests: Hande Apaydin, Nora Kelly, Daniel Lyons, Samir Qadir, Lincoln Reed, Katie Stauderman.

Meeting Commencement: Chair Reed convened the meeting at 7:04p.m. and welcomed attendees.

Approval of Agenda and prior Meeting Minutes: The agenda was approved with no changes. The June meeting minutes were approved unanimously.

Community Forum: Guests introduced themselves. Daniel Lyons shared his concern for the environmental and health impacts of coal tar sealant, which was applied to alleys in his residential neighborhood, King Farm. Mr. Lyons asked the Commission to consider urging a ban on coal tar sealants in Rockville.

Outreach

The Commission discussed the storyboards for a short video promoting the Solar Co-op. The video would aim to dispel myths and convince viewers to join the co-op. Commission members provided positive feedback and voted unanimously to promote the video when it is finalized after a brief review via email. Councilmember Ashton suggested promoting it on Next Door.

Pesticide Law Discussion

Chair Reed shared that homeowners' associations that he had researched do not make their pesticide practices public.

Heather Gewandter emphasized that the City likely does not have the resources to support a law that differs from the County's due to limitations in legal and outreach resources.

Commissioners again discussed the relative levels of toxicity of organic versus synthetic pesticides, and some were concerned that some residents might apply additional organic chemicals which might end up as toxic as synthetics. Recognizing that the pesticide ban would have benefits of harmonizing with the County and would serve as a strong step forward in

reducing environmental toxins, the Commission voted unanimously to recommend that the Mayor and Council adopt the Montgomery County pesticide law as-is. The recommendation shall be transmitted with a statement encouraging the County to continue to investigate ways of reducing toxicity of all chemicals used in landscaping.

Chair Reed and the Commission decided to add coal tar and associated polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons to the agenda for discussion at the September meeting.

Chair Report

- Montgomery County is considering supporting an electric vehicle buyers co-op. Chair Reed shared the white paper that the Commission had developed.
- Chair Reed asked about whether the City would consider adopting Montgomery County's recently published electric vehicle charging policies for rights of way. Staff said that transportation and public works are aware of the guidelines and believe the City's process is compatible. An electricity line needed in the public right of way requires a permit and any use of the right of way requires Mayor and Council approval regardless.

Staff Report

- EMD staff is producing a Good Green Neighbor campaign
- EMD ordered more wildflower seed packets to give away due to high demand.
- Lighting upgrades at Lincoln Park Community Center are underway. Expected to save over \$7,000/year.
- Climate Action Planning presentation to M&C is now slated for September 21.
- The Commission agreed to schedule the September meeting on the 3rd.
- Staff is looking at using a Pepco program to leverage city funds for a City Hall audit.
- The City Clerk is requesting feedback on the recommendations of the Boards and Commissions Task Force. The Commission agreed to review it over the summer and discuss it at the September meeting.
- Staff reminded the Commission to look at the survey on a diversity, equity, and inclusion training through Sustainable Maryland.

Committee Reports

- Watersheds: Ted Stauderman volunteered to be the Watersheds Committee liaison. The City has received many requests for volunteer events and would like to ask if the Watersheds Committee is interested in hosting a stream cleanup. The City has developed protocols for social distancing and reducing risks from COVID-19.
- Climate Action: The committee reviewed the climate action plan materials and provided several comments which they will share with staff.
- Energy Committee: The committee met with the directors of the solar co-op video to discuss initial ideas.

New Business: Coal tar and Boards and Commissions Task Force to be discussed at the September meeting.

Adjourn: Chair Reed adjourned the meeting at 9:04 p.m.