

# Rockville Environment Commission

## Draft Minutes of Thursday, September 3, 2020

WebEx Meeting

### Meeting Attendance

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

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

**Councilmembers:** Monique Ashton, City Council Liaison

**Guests:** Will Ollison

**Meeting Commencement:** Chair Reed convened the meeting at 7:05p.m. and welcomed attendees. New Commission member Hande Apaydin introduced herself.

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

**Community Forum:** Guests introduced themselves.

### **Chair Report**

The solar co-op outreach was a success. The video developed by Lincoln Reed and Katie Stauderman had over 200 views. Numerous media posts and shares by the city and Commissioners helped reach more people online. Several local and state public officials shared the social media posts too. Katie handed out fliers at the farmers market. The county's solar co-op wrapped up with 184 members – the highest of any co-op thus far.

*Discussion:* Attendees praised the video and everyone's outreach efforts. Councilmember Ashton shared that she will recognize the video producers at the next Mayor and Council meeting. Staff will report back on the number of co-op registrants from Rockville.

Councilmember Ashton said that the Maryland Municipal League identified climate change as a priority this year.

### **Boards and Commissions Task Force**

The Commission discussed their comments on the Task Force recommendations. Councilmember Ashton shared that the City Clerk is exploring bringing back a training or orientation to the city for board and commission members. Commission members discussed ways to track issues that other boards and commissions are considering that have crossover

with the environment. Members discussed exploring which members have interest in tracking the agenda topics of related boards, starting after the climate action planning outreach this fall.

The Commission voted unanimously to share the following feedback with the City Clerk regarding the Boards and Commissions Task Force report and recommendations, Environment Commission recommendations and responses:

Topic that the comment refers to	Comments
Increased diversity	The Environment Commission would like to emphasize that increased socioeconomic and viewpoint diversity would be beneficial for any of the boards and commissions and that the bigger obstacle probably isn't Mayor & Council's approvals, but in self-selection. If there is a dedicated staff member in the City Clerk's office working on Boards & Commissions, targeted outreach and public relations that help bring in wider constituencies would be a valuable use of resources.
Increased diversity	The Maryvale stream cleanup volunteers are a very diverse group, apparently drawn primarily from the neighborhood. These type of events, or others, could be an option for outreach for boards & commission volunteers.
Crossover issues	The Environment Commission is interested in finding ways to connect Boards and Commissions on crossover issues -- REC plans to identify which boards and commissions they would like to monitor, ex. Planning, Bike Ped, Human Services, Housing, Rec & Parks, and consider ways to coordinate on issues that fall under Environment Commission subject matter, starting with the Climate Action Plan outreach this fall.
Training and Access to Commission History	The Environment Commission requests improvements to the website to address the need to access past documents to build on past work, assist newer members with knowledge and understanding of Commission initiatives, provide continuity, improve efficiency, and improve transparency.
Training	The Environment Commission would benefit from training for Boards and Commission members, especially new members, such as the Rockville Academy; City clerk orientation training

**Coal Tar Sealants and Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons**

Several residents, including at King Farm, have raised the issue of coal tar pavement sealants that are used to seal cracks in driveways and alleys. As the material contains polycyclic aromatic

hydrocarbons which the United States Geological Survey describes as toxic to people and stream biology, several other counties including Montgomery County have banned it.

Commissioners decided to take up the issue and conduct some research. Will McClain and Hande agreed to compile some research and findings, which they plan to present draft findings in December and a final white paper in January.

### **Staff Report**

- Rockville will submit comments on the I270 Environmental Impact Statement. Environmental staff contributed to the draft comments.
- Recreation and Parks department submitted a grant application for an access to nature/youth conservation corps program.
- The contractor completed lighting upgrades at Lincoln Park Community Center.
- A contractor completed a walk-through lighting audit in preparation for grant applications. The city is working on joining the Pepco Building Tune-up program in order to double the funding for the project.
- The Climate Action Plan project webpage is up with links to the survey and newsletter. The climate action survey opened September 1 -- please complete it and share widely. Staff is presenting to the Mayor and Council September 21 and is setting up meetings with the Boards and Commissions this fall. An Open House virtual event is planned for November. The Commission is invited to assist.
- The Tree Giveaway is October 10, 9am-2pm; all trees are claimed. Staff is working with the Watersheds Committee to plan a Stream Cleanup at Maryvale.
- The pesticide law is being looked at internally through the Recreation and Parks facilities division. Currently, Garrett Park, Somerset, Washington Grove, and Gaithersburg have adopted the law in their jurisdictions.

*Discussion:* Councilmember Ashton shared that the National Association of Landscape Architects contacted the Mayor and Council with concerns about the Pesticide Law, claiming that it was bad for their business and not needed. Staff responded that the issue is working through an internal process and that at some point, the city could choose to hold an information session and invite input from a broad range of perspectives.

### **Committee Reports**

- Watersheds: No update.
- Climate Action: No update.
- Energy Committee: The committee discussed successes and lessons learned from the solar co-op video and outreach efforts.

**New Business:** No new businesses other than those identified under other agenda items.

**Adjourn:** Chair Reed adjourned the meeting at 8:40 p.m.