

Rockville Environment Commission

Draft Minutes of Thursday, February 4, 2021

WebEx Meeting

Meeting Attendance

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

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

Mayor and Council: Monique Ashton

Guests: Will Ollison

Meeting Commencement: Chair Reed convened the meeting at 7:03p.m. and welcomed attendees.

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

Community Forum: Will Ollison introduced himself.

Mayor and Council Report

Councilmember Ashton attended MWCOC's Climate Policy committee and noted there were many local, state, and federal climate change initiatives under development. She is glad to see the city continue to make progress on solar, fleets, green buildings, and EV chargers, and developing a climate action plan with targets. She noted that this is the first year that climate change is included as a question in the city Budget Survey – she encouraged the Commission to share the survey widely to increase participation, including with students. One idea for the Environment Commission is to fund door hangers to promote the solar co-op.

Maryland Legislation

The Commission discussed several bills in the Maryland General Assembly and the expeditious hearing schedule, including the Climate Solutions Now Act, the Community Choice Energy Act proposing a pilot program for Montgomery County, the Clean Cars Act, the Recycling Market Act, and the Maryland Green Purchasing Committee - Food and Beverage Procurement - Greenhouse Gas Emissions. Commissioners voted unanimously to recommend that the Mayor and Council support the Climate Solutions Now Act, the Clean Cars Act, and the Community Choice Aggregation Act. Several Commissioners agreed to assist in drafting fact sheets in advance of Monday's Mayor and Council meeting. The Commission discussed

any linkages between the city and the Food and Beverage Procurement bill, and voted to recommend supporting the bill if, upon further research, it would help the city reduce its greenhouse gas emissions.

Climate Action Plan Updates

Ms. Srinivasan, the chair of the Climate Action Committee, shared the committee analysis of the areas for coordination and synchrony between Rockville and the Montgomery County draft Climate Action Plan. Many commonalities were identified including green infrastructure, meadows, carbon sequestration, multiple transportation options, equity, and outreach. Commission members might add their votes to the spreadsheet.

Ms. Campbell shared the cost benefit analysis approach. Commissioners liked the approach. The committees will look at it more closely. The consultant will be working on the analysis in the next few weeks.

Chair Report

Chair Reed shared that Pepco's tariff proposal apparently contains a cost increase of 14% for changing the Pepco-owned streetlights in the City of Rockville to energy efficient LEDs. Comments are due to the Public Service Commission by May 5th. Staff added that a consultant working for MWCOG is analyzing the proposal and its impact on local governments. Councilmember Ashton inquired about why streetlights may be on during the day. Staff responded that sometimes this is due to a faulty sensor or shading from nearby buildings or trees.

Environment Commission 2021 Work Plan

The Environment Commission reviewed and voted to adopt the 2021 Work Plan with updated pesticide meeting date and updating the Maryland bills.

Environmental Excellence Awards

The Environment Commission voted to present Environmental Excellence awards to the applicants that were chosen in 2020, whose award ceremony was postponed due to the pandemic. The awards will be conferred at a Mayor and Council meeting in April, 2021.

Climate Action Plan and Committee Reports

Climate Action Committee: CLAC worked on analyzing the county Climate Action Plan and the survey results and discussed environmental bills in the Maryland General Assembly.

Watersheds: The Watersheds Committee discussed road salt issues and asked about city policies. Staff can brief the Commission at a future meeting.

Energy Committee: The energy committee discussed the county Climate Action Plan and Maryland legislation.

Staff Report

- Update on plans for spring outreach, including partnership with VisArts, using the Saving Nature Now booklets and plogging campaign.

- In addition to the Environmental Excellence Awards at an April meeting, Earth Month and Earth Hour proclamations planned for March.
- The city issued an RFQ for City Hall energy audit project to participate in Pepco's Building Tune-Up program.
- The city's application to receive technical assistance to plan for solar and microgrid projects was submitted to Maryland Energy Administration.
- Staff is meeting with Lincoln Park Civic Association on the CAP February 10. The survey will close February 28.
- Coming soon: RedGate survey and engagement on passive use site plans. A dam at RedGate underwent emergency repairs which are now complete. Vegetation is being restored but will take time to grow.
- Upcoming events:
 - o March 15 Mayor and Council Meeting – tentative pesticide law
 - o February 8 Mayor and Council Meeting -- County Climate Action Plan

Commissioner Corner

Chair Reed shared some details about his home renovations, for which he is seeking Energy Star, Net Zero Energy Ready, and EPA Indoor Air Quality certifications. Since the home will be tightly sealed and insulated, special attention to mechanical ventilation to preserve air quality is necessary. The city's new FAST permitting system is also very efficient – permits have been approved within two weeks.

New Business: No new business.

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