

Rockville Environment Commission

Minutes of the Meeting of Thursday, May 2, 2019

Mayor and Council Chambers, City Hall,
111 Maryland Avenue, Rockville, Maryland

Meeting Attendance

Commissioner	Present	Absent	Reason, If Given
Chair John Becker	X		
Sy Garte	X		
Susan Koester	X		
Clark Reed	X		
Monica Saavoss	X		
Steve Sprague	X		
Pavitra Srinivasan	X		
Ted Stauderman	X		
Fedon Vayanis	X		

Council Liaison:

City Staff: Lise Soukup (Staff Liaison); Erica Shingara and Mark Charles (DPW Environmental Planning Division); David Levy (Department of Community Planning & Development Services)

Guests: Steve Chesterton, Watershed Committee representative; Will Ollison, resident.

Meeting Commencement

The meeting convened at 7:06 p.m. by Chair Becker.

Approval of Agenda

The Environment Commission voted 8-0 to approve the agenda.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

The Commission voted 7-0 to approve the April 4 meeting minutes. Commissioner Garte abstained.

Community Forum

Guest Will Ollison explained that he is considering applying to be an REC Commissioner candidate. He wanted to attend an REC meeting first.

REC review and discussion of comments for Draft Comprehensive Plan

The REC started reviewing its ongoing list of comments for the Draft Comprehensive Plan, which was released by the Planning Commission in March for public comment. The Planning Commission held three public hearings in May and early June. The REC may submit written

comments to the Planning Commission at any time during the public hearing period. The Planning Commission will review all comments after the public hearing stage and make its decision about final changes prior to sending the plan to the Mayor and Council.

Several commissioners had done full or partial reviews of the Plan, discussed the Plan with the REC subcommittees, and contributed comments already. Most of these comments were discussed, but the REC will need until the June meeting to complete its review. The REC agreed to finish entering their comments in the shared spreadsheet by Monday, May 20, and will indicate their agreement or disagreement with each comment by Tuesday, June 4. The REC will review all submitted comments and set its final priorities and comments at the June 6 meeting for submittal in writing to the Planning Commission in June.

REC presentation at West End Citizens Association (WECA)

Commissioner Sprague is organizing a presentation on REC activities for the May 9 WECA meeting. Chair Becker and Commissioners Saavoss, Srinivasan and Sauderman also volunteered to participate in this presentation.

Committee Reports and Requests to REC

Watersheds Committee (WC):

Steve Chesterton reported that the Maryvale Stream Cleanup on April 13 had 50 volunteers, and another 20 stream cleanup volunteers attended the Brewshed Meet-up afterwards, which had a Watershed Committee educational table. Fifteen people have registered for the Hike with a Brewer at the Croyden Creek Nature Center on May 4.

The Watershed Committee requested additional materials (more trash-grabbers and extra-small work gloves) for stream cleanups from the REC budget in lieu of the previously approved Brewshed Stickers, which the REC agreed to.

Climate Action Committee (CLAC):

The CLAC reviewed and prepared comment on the Draft Comprehensive Plan at its April meeting.

Energy Committee (EC):

Commissioner Reed is investigating the set-up process for a non-profit. He discussed the logistics of creating a separate non-profit group to forward environmental initiatives that do not mesh with City workplan priorities. This was discussed in April as an alternative path for the Rockville Community Conservation Corps effort, along with Brewshed events or other activities that may be vetoed in the future by the City or subject to time-consuming oversight.

In April, Commissioner Reed had asked for a meeting with City senior staff to discuss the non-profit concept further. Ms. Soukup discussed this with the Deputy City Manager. The meeting

is pending a more comprehensive look at the structure of the City's boards and commissions, City staff is also awaiting input from the Boards and Commissions Task Force.

Chair Report

Chair Becker reminded the REC to follow the REC meeting decorum guidelines, and that these will remain on the monthly agenda for several months.

The REC agreed not to participate in the Hometown Holidays parade, but will man its booth on Saturday. The shifts and order of coverage were discussed, with Watershed Committee covering set-up and early hours, Energy Committee covering the middle of the afternoon, and Climate Action Committee covering the evening hours and tear-down.

Commissioners Sprague, Saavoss and Stauderman agreed to read the Environmental Excellence Awards at the May 6 Mayor and Council meeting, with Chair Becker and Commissioner Vayanis also planning to attend.

Environmental Management Division (EMD) Report

The City has introduced revisions to City Code Chapter 24, "Water, Sewers and Sewage Disposal", to the Mayor and Council and in April. The draft ordinance has been distributed to the REC. Commissioners Vayanis and Stauderman expressed interest in reviewing this ordinance. Commissioner Vayanis requested an opportunity to discuss his questions with staff before submitting comments. Ms. Soukup announced there will be several public information sessions in May to discuss this with staff. Since the Watershed Committee does not have a sitting Commissioner participating with it, the Watershed Committee needs to work with Commissioner Vayanis to express their opinions on this ordinance through the REC.

The Rockville Solar Co-op is again offered between May 3 to July 31. Rockville will host an information session on May 7.

Ms. Soukup updated the REC about the status of its proposal for the City to join the EPA Energy Star program. After internal deliberations between the Departments of Recreation and Parks and Public Works, and discussion with Montgomery County government, the City has agreed to become an Energy Star partner. Staff will file the online paperwork to enter into this agreement.

Ms. Soukup covered upcoming items for REC meetings, including an REC annual planning session for July, and a review of planned energy-related City facilities improvements in the CIP schedule in September. Due to other more time-sensitive items filling the agendas through September, the REC's review of the environmental content on the City website will be postponed to the Fall.

Old/New Business

New Business: Commissioner Garte announced that he is resigning from the REC after the June 6 meeting. He will submit his resignation to the City Clerk before then.

Adjourn

The Commission adjourned by acclamation at 9:40 p.m.

Next Commission Meeting

The next Commission meeting is scheduled on **Thursday, June 6 at 7:00 pm.**