

Rockville Environment Commission and Watersheds Committee Joint Meeting

Draft Minutes of Thursday, May 5, 2022

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: Heather Gewandter, Stormwater Manager

Watersheds Committee: Chuck Woolery, Paul Havlinka, Steve Chesterton, Karl Van Neste

Meeting Commencement: Chair Reed convened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. and welcomed attendees.

Approval of Agenda and Prior Meeting Minutes: The agenda was approved unanimously.

Community Forum: None

Rockville's Stormwater Program Update

Rockville covers 13 square miles and 3 watersheds which all drain to the Potomac River.

- Approximately 35% impervious surface
- Almost 1000 Public and Private stormwater management (SWM) Facilities
 - 984 SWM facilities total ranging in type from ponds, to underground sand filters and storage chambers to green roofs, bioretentions and pervious pavement.
 - 214 are owned and maintained by the City
 - All inspected on a triennial basis – city requires maintenance and carries out enforcement if needed.

Rockville's long history of protecting stream valleys from development has resulted in fewer instances of stream-related flooding. Rockville established SWM requirements during development for flood control in the late 70s, followed by Maryland. SWM techniques evolved to better protect water quality, driven by Chesapeake Bay regulations and enforcement from EPA and Maryland. The City's 2003 Non point-source Discharge and Elimination System (NPDES) permit was extended until 2018. Starting in 2008, a stormwater fee has been assessed to all properties: homeowners; businesses; houses of worship; governments; and schools. The fee is based on the amount of impervious area for each property, which represents the demand placed on the stormwater system. Single family residential pays a flat rate. Base rates are set annually by Mayor and Council. The fees fund the SWM program.

SWM Program Operations involves permit implementation, infrastructure maintenance, SWM & floodplain ordinances, and flood mitigation assistance. Capital Improvement Programs include SWM Facility Retrofit and Rehabilitation, Storm Drain Maintenance and Capacity Upgrades, Stream Restoration and Spot Repair, and Flood Resiliency (New). Ms. Gewandter provided an overview of planned projects including stream restorations at Anderson Park/Plymouth Woods, Croydon Creek/Calvin Park Tributary, planned stormwater management facility improvements.

In the Climate Action Plan, actions C-21 (Update FEMA flood maps), M-12 (advocate for updated State infrastructure standards), M-13 (develop a flood resiliency master plan), and C-20 (incorporate flood and climate resilient design features) involve stormwater and flood resiliency. The County and Rockville are in the middle of a multi-year effort to update FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps. Maryland is also looking to update Infrastructure Design Standards to accommodate the changing climate.

The purpose of the Flood Resiliency Master Plan is to identify scope of problem and individual flood prone areas and identify and prioritize mitigation options. The Plan will help meet future State requirements and ensure the City has a strong foundation for grant eligibility. Phase 1 of the study involves flood risk analysis and mapping, and prioritization of projects. Part of this work will involve reviewing ordinances and regulations. Grants for flood mitigation on private property will include options to assist renters and low-income residents and businesses.

Comments on the presentation include implementing more storm drain art, sharing salt monitoring results, and how the Commission and Committees can further support the City's stormwater program.

Chair Report

- The meeting minutes were approved with one abstention.
- Chair Reed announced Scott Fazekas was stepping down from the Commission and suggested people apply. The group thanked Scott for his service.
- Clark discussed the need for volunteers for 1) Hometown Holidays, 2) farmers markets and, 3) the environmental awards. Clark asked for a 6 hour commitment over the course of the summer for the farmers markets. Ted volunteered for the awards.
- The July 14 [now TBD] meeting will be joint with the Transportation Commission.
- Clark mentioned that Metro wants to install solar at four stations and asked if the REC wanted to recommend to the M&C to suggest Rockville. The general consensus was yes, with the caveat that Metro should have criteria to maximize the amount of energy generated from the site and if they can get appreciably better generation from different locations, that should be considered.
- The Commission discussed their budget allocations. Staff explained that they had purchased seeds, frames and trash grabbers and respectfully requested that salt testing kits be purchased after July.

Committee Reports

Watersheds Committee: Chuck W. introduced a Rockville focused website that shows backyard connectivity to City Parks.

Paul Havlinka shared the success of the Brewshed, which reached over 60 residents, and the many stream cleanup events. There was discussion about how to better advertise that there are more extensive opportunities to volunteer outside of the Commission itself. Successful stream cleanup with over 40 people in attendance at Maryvale. The Fallsgrove location was also very well attended.

Energy Committee: Reviewed the Net Zero Building Code White Paper and encouraged the Commission to review it for consideration in June to discuss next steps. Work began on the Leaf Blower ban white paper. They will be submitting that to the REC soon.

Climate Action Committee: No report.

Mayor and Council Report: No report.

Chair Election: The Chair election was held and Chair Reed was re-elected unanimously.

Staff Report

- **Climate Action Plan Tracking and Metrics (C-26):** Overall, at least some progress has been achieved on a dozen actions, with four more actions initiated since January. About eight CAP initiatives are included in the proposed FY 2023 budget, and proposed staff would support many more actions. Staff developed an action status tracking method (similar to the Comprehensive Plan) and is seeking Commission feedback on tracking and the webpage ideas at a future meeting.
- **Rockville Community Electric Vehicle Readiness Planning (C-11):** Staff will be working with COG and a consultant to develop the plan to examine community and fleet charging needs and potential locations, permitting, City site electrical assessments, and code updates.
- **Building Tune-up** for City Hall: The contractor has completed the proposed tune-up measures to save energy. **(M-01)**
- **City Hall energy efficient lighting update (M-01):** The 2nd floor upgrades are installed and undergoing adjustments. Staff expects to hear about the grant application to Maryland Smart Energy Communities for 3rd floor lighting upgrades, window film and thermostats soon.
- TA Engineering requested a second site assessment to gauge roof structure as part of developing the report and recommendations for the 6 Taft Court and Maintenance Facility **solar/microgrid feasibility assessment**. A final draft is expected soon in a few weeks. Staff is identifying potential contract mechanisms for if/when suitable solar sites are identified. **(M-04)**
- Staff continues to work with Pepco to install **electric vehicle charging stations**. After much background legwork, five locations are undergoing site review **(C-11)**.

- Staff submitted a Maryland Energy Administration grant application for \$359,000 to contribute to Phase 1 LED streetlight upgrades planned for FY2023 to replace 1,799 fixtures. Staff worked with Pepco on detailed rebate calculations for pre-approval for approximately \$139,000 in addition to the grant **(M-02)**

Future Outreach Events (C-09, C-13, C-05, C-17, C-25)

- o [Solar Info Sessions](#), to include information on Access Solar – a new low-moderate income solar financing program: 5/12 - 6pm; 6/17 - Noon; 7/14 - 6pm; 8/18 - Noon.
- o EV Co-op info Sessions: 1st Wednesday of each month:
<https://mygreenmontgomery.org/event/ask-an-ev-owner-5/all/>
- o Saturday, May 7: 20th Annual Spring Festival and Native Plant Sale, 10 a.m.-noon at Croydon Creek Nature Center.
- o The next event in the Climate Solutions Speaker Series planned for this Spring is: Thursday, May 12: "[Building and Living in Montgomery County's First Certified Net Zero Energy Home.](#)" 7-8 p.m. Virtual. Additional outreach events are posted here: <https://rockvillereports.com/earth-month-all-spring-in-rockville/> **(C-25)**
- o Hometown Holidays, May 28-29, 10am-7pm, RedGate Park

New Business:

- The REC discussed the possibility of in person meetings. Some Commissioners were interested in a hybrid setup but many commissioners still felt more comfortable virtually.
- Introduced the Heat Island Impact study survey opportunity for Montgomery County.

Adjourn: Chair Reed adjourned the meeting at 9:02 p.m.