

Rockville Environment Commission

Draft Minutes of Thursday, October 7, 2021 - Revised

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, Chief, Environmental Management Division

Council Liaison: Monique Ashton

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

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

Community Forum: No guests.

Chair Report

Chair Reed shared that the Electrification Coalition was chosen to run the Montgomery County Electric Vehicle cooperative purchase program. The EV buyer co-op may not get underway until 2022 after market engagement and other groundwork is completed. A bird walk will be held at RedGate park Sunday 1-2pm and 2-3pm.

Mayor and Council Report

Councilmember Ashton said that the Mayor and Council are discussing how ARPA funds could be used and developing the FY23 city budget. She is looking for transformational action on climate, such as fleet electrification and solar installations. She is considering proposing an electric vehicle resolution. Councilmember Ashton praised the city's flood damages survey and urged Commission members to share the availability of grants for damages. She would be interested in seeing the flood-prone hot spots that a flood study would reveal in addition to the survey results. There are walk to school events associated with Walktober programming.

Climate Action Plan

Staff presented a brief overview of the contents of the action descriptions in the Climate Action Plan. Staff clarified that several building code cycles -- 2021, 2024, 2027 -- occur before the Climate Action Plan proposes the net zero code in 2030, and additional green building compliance and support staff will be needed in the interim. Ideas shared included other

incentives for reaching or exceeding code, using the EPA Home Energy Yardstick as part of the home point of sale energy disclosure action, and ways to promote plant-based food. Staff planned to integrate some food choice guidance in the “What You Can Do” section.

The Commission voted unanimously to endorse the current draft Rockville Climate Action Plan as written and that it reflects well-researched and comprehensive list of actions, noting that the Commission plans to provide more in-depth comments by the first week of December coinciding with the public comment period.

Environment Commission — Annual Report Preparation

Members suggested that the Annual Report could include some facts and figures such as the solar-co-op chart showing Rockville’s success and number of volunteer hours. The main focus of next year will be supporting the Climate Action Plan adoption and implementation.

Rockville Pike Plan Update

The Traffic and Transportation Advisory Commission has not yet heard and update on the Rockville Pike Plan as some changes were still being worked out between the state, City staff and the applicant to ensure that the proposal results in continuity along the right of way. There is not a date set for a Mayor and Council presentation. The Commission will continue to follow this issue.

Committee Reports

Climate Action Committee: CLAC discussed the Climate Action Plan and the flooding resulting from the remnants of Hurricane Ida. The committee discussed the need for building codes to reflect flood risk, such as requiring HVAC equipment be raised or relocated out of flood-prone basements. Erica Shingara shared that staff is looking to other cities such as Alexandria on ways to promote and provide grants for home weatherproofing.

Energy Committee: The Energy Committee discussed the equity map and the Climate Action Plan. Staff clarified that the Social Vulnerability Index map will be used in the Climate Action Plan since it more clearly reflects social vulnerability geography in Rockville.

Watersheds Committee: The Committee discussed plans for 2022 as well as reviewing potential bills going before the Maryland legislature. The Committee debriefed the results of the stream clean-up in response to Hurricane Ida that took place in September. The Committee is holding an additional stream cleanup Saturday, October 9.

Staff Report

Project Updates

- Building Tune-up for City Hall: Staff is working with the contractor to implement the proposed measures to optimize energy use. Energy reductions from reduced occupancy during the pandemic were offset due to increased ventilation needs.

- City Hall energy efficient lighting update: Staff submitted the 2nd floor project plan to MEA and work will begin as soon as a budget amendment is approved. Staff is applying for grants to do the 3rd floor lighting upgrades in the next round in FY23.
- City staff is looking to schedule a site visit as soon as practical with the Maryland Environmental Service engineers as part of the solar/microgrid technical assistance award. The main data and document request has been transmitted; follow-up questions are expected in October.
- Seven to ten Pepco EV chargers at five locations were approved. A few more sites are being evaluated, all located within the right of way.
- The FY 2023 Budget Calendar and a budget public hearing is scheduled for October 25, 2021. Other public hearing dates are to be determined.
- Post-event analysis and near-term mitigation activities in response to Hurricane Ida flooding continues. The Climate Action Plan contains several items related to hazard mitigation and preparedness. A new [flood resources webpage](#) is activated and includes a form to apply for flood damage compensation.
- Stormwater staff is working to develop an app to evaluate invasive species coverage in natural areas as a proxy indicator for forest health.
- Montgomery County Green Bank is launching a low-moderate income solar financing program beginning in January.

Outreach Campaigns and Events

- Tree Giveaway, Saturday, October 16 – Registration is FULL.
- October is Energy Awareness Month. Bring up to three incandescent lightbulbs and receive LEDs at the [Rockville Memorial Library Lightbulb Exchange](#) Tuesday, October 26th, 1-3pm. Other events posted on the Montgomery County calendar: <https://mygreenmontgomery.org/events/list/>

The Mayor and Council

- November 15: Rockville Climate Action Plan briefing
- December 6: Rockville Environment Commission Annual Report

New Business: No new business.

Adjourn: Chair Reed adjourned the meeting at 8:53 p.m.