

MINUTES FOR THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY  
MEETING AND GREEN TEAM MEETING  
Tuesday, April 27, 2021 - 7:30 pm – Virtual Meeting

**Members present:** John Lippert, Erica Hernandez, Ron Bjorkland, Rhema Bjorkland. Xochitl Zamora-Thompson, Larry Hilliard, Michael Hartman, Matt Dirksen, Jane Young, Steve Skolnik  
**Liaisons:** Luisa Robles (staff liaison). Colin Byrd (council liaison).

**Visitors:** Tom Taylor, Ben Fischler, Bill Orleans (arrived at 8:40)

**Excused Absences:** Josh Hamlin,

**Absent:** William Manico,

**Call to order: 7:34 pm**

1. Earth Day Events? All events were very well attended. Electronics and Styrofoam 308 people; plantings at Buddy Attick Park had 24 attendants; the drum circle at the Roosevelt Center had 57 people; the Democratic Club presentation on all things green in Greenbelt went well too; and the EnviroSeries presentation on EVs went well as well. No build option for the MagLev letter writing table, Larry helped out fill out letters.

John asked about Stacey King and the PGC Commuter information she was going to share. She will come to another meeting.

Letter recommending to City Council on support to ask MD to join the Transportation and Climate Initiative, based on the Regional Greenhouse Gas initiative. Cap and invest program. Cap on power plants (emissions given off). It is market driven. Need the group to voice if they are ok with sending this letter to Council. Like REGI. The group voted, everyone present agreed to send the letter.

2. Updates from **Sustainability Framework / Green Team Circles.**

- a. **Energy / Solar Circle** – the solar energy system on the COOP made 1.2 MWh today! Yay! (20,000 ft<sup>2</sup> roof is covered in panels; that will cover at most 20% of their use. R30 insulation now and on the edges it is R90, we hope this will make a difference).

Good progress with Standard Solar on the solar farm for the City, it is a long process, we will have a 2 MW station in 2022 in the Fall. The Environmental study of the piece of farmland is being developed so there is the least environmental impact from the project. GHI has a solar project at the offices, waiting for permits from County and Pepco, we hope it will come online soon.

Amount of Coal in our fuel mix is dropping! About half used to be coal and now it is about 22 %. Fracked gas has taken a big portion of electricity production. NY and PA are starting to put regulations on fracking, this might help raise the cost a bit and reduce its use.

Black liquor finally deleted from paper plants as a renewable energy resource. It was removed from the renewable energy mix. And a third is nuclear.

- b. **Food Systems / Sustainable Land care Circle.** Pollinator circle met last night. Erica gave a synopsis. Went over the draft mission, vision and strategic plan. This is a sub-circle of the Green Team. Bee City USA certification, and Monarch Joint Venture, generate more habitat for pollinators. Native plant sale in the fall, Kevin will work with the nursery. Identify new pollinator habitat opportunities.

- c. **Green Building.** Update on the US mint? No one has heard about it. What about Green Ridge House project. Steve is in touch with the project manager to see about installing solar panels. It is time to replace the roof. Looking into owning the system vs a PPA.

APB meeting to renovate Goddard Space Flight Center. Comments on making it green, net zero energy, LEED. Time frame is from now to 2039. Also talked about transportation that can be all electric. Everything was very vague.

- d. **Land Use.** Ben F reported on the PRAB meeting that is suggesting to install an artificial turf playing field, probably at Schrom Hills Park. The presenters (a group of Greenbelters that are into sports) were good, but the board is skeptical. Sierra Club MoCo group had a talk on artificial turf. They are expensive and polluting, need to have a ton to a ton and a half to replace the infill, which is ground up tires that wash out and pollute the storm water runoff. Carpets last about 8 years and then it goes to the landfill. Money comes from Program Open Space. Several wealthy jurisdictions have the artificial turf so they feel Greenbelt needs to keep up. BASF has a study that supports the artificial turf (said was supported by the NSF but not really, it is NSF International, a different organization and not the National Science Foundation). Rema says that NSF is for standards for drinking water. Steve mentions that the underlaying of the artificial turf is concrete!!! What happens to the habitat for all the critters that live in the turf? And once you go with the artificial turf it is very hard to go back.

- e. **Transportation.**

New ad hoc group EVIPG – trying to develop a framework to run by Green ACES and push to City Council. Members of APB are participating as well. Trying to get new apartments and condos to include the electrification for EVs. Next meeting on May 27 at 7:00 pm through Google meet.

Trying to come up with a new charging structure for the DC Fast charging station at the Municipal Building. We are just trying to break even.

Schrom hills park has 4 new EV chargers, SHL Rec center has one, thanks to Pepco. An EV costs about half less than ICE for fueling/charging. As of today, we have about 119 EVs in Greenbelt.

New EVs are coming out on the market, pickup trucks.

Deadline for comments on the DEIS for MagLev is May 24 – Please make comments. Write to legislators, etc.

- f. **Local Economies - Time Bank Circle.** Michael says it is doing well, people are exchanging hours. Planning meetings are less frequently. Erica is offering to help take down invasive plants from people's yards.
- g. **Waste Management / Zero Waste Circle.** Legislation victory at the MD assembly, businesses have to source separate and compost if within 30 miles of a facility. This also incentivizes food rescue. Dan Gillote of the Food COOP is interested in food recovery as well. ZWC is meeting on the 5<sup>th</sup> Thursday (April 29) at 7:00 pm,
- h. **Water.** No updates here. We lost Bill Duncan founder of Friends of Still Creek. He died of Covid. There are broad planning things at the County level (MS4 permits?). For those who want more information on the watershed systems you can access the COG website on this topic. PGC Dept of the Environment also has good information on stream restoration and Indian Creek watershed. Some things might be happening at the Greenbelt Station.
- i. **Invasive plant-pull** on May 15 at 10am -1pm at Greenbelt Station by the Shell Station on Cherrywood lane. Kevin and Xochitl will be doing a flier soon.

### 3. Events:

- a. Enviro series of GCC and City Green Team. On the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the month. Next one is cancelled: May 23, 2021 – we want to work on MagLev issues.
- b. June 5—13 is Chesapeake Bay Awareness Week promoting outdoor activities.
- c. June is Pollinator month too!

- d. Mosquito topic on a radio show - 1A NPR, Florida will be releasing genetically modified mosquitoes to get rid of them. Mosquitos came in the 1600 on Portuguese slave ships.
- e. Zoom presentation on mosquitos and ticks. Vaccine developed for Zica.
- f. The Cicadas are coming!!! How can people protect young trees? GHI had a seminar on the topic. Pat H. and Ed James, and Ben F are all part of the Woodlands Committee.
- g. The azaleas and lilacs are blooming at the National Arboretum!!!

Adjournment: Michael. Larry. 8:53 pm