MINUTES FOR THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY MEETING AND GREEN TEAM MEETING

Tuesday, July 27, 2021 - 7:30 pm – Virtual Meeting

**Members present**: Erica Hernandez, Xochitl Zamora-Thompson, Michael Hartman, Larry Hilliard, Tom Taylor, Lore Rosenthal, Rhema Bjorkland, Ronald Bjorkland,

**Liaisons**: Luisa Robles (staff), Colin Byrd (Council),

**Visitors**: Bill Orleans, Michael Zeliff, Kevin Carpenter

**Excused** **Absences**: John Lippert (chair) & Jane Young

**Absent**:

**Call to order:**

1. Updates from Sustainability Framework / Green Team Circles.
   1. Energy / Solar Circle
      1. Lore Rosenthal, on behalf of GCAN, the Greenbelt Climate Action Network: (a) GCAN Moving along- awaiting on permits. GHI is waiting to hook up panels. (b) Greenbelt passed Climate Emergency Resolution. The Resolution lacked specifics, but a wonderful step forward- to treating climate change as an emergency. PG County has adopted COB goals. The state has stricter requirements, which are exceeded by Federal ones. Propose that we borrow Montgomery County’s goal of 80% by 2027 and 100% by 2030. Revised targets would demonstrate a greater sense of urgency to the climate crisis.
      2. Luisa: In response to question on impact on City’s goals- the city manager’s goal for 2021- is in line with the goals for a 20% reduction by 2020 and 80 % by 2050.
      3. Xochitl: Supports a comprehensive policy.
      4. Ron: Argued that there is need for a more aggressive goal such as 100% by 2030, and identification of strategies to achieve this.
      5. In response to a question regarding Greenbelt’s plan to lower fossil fuel consumption, what would the contribution of the plans for solar be to the city’s goals: Lore noted that electricity is 21% of use, so even if this were met 100 %, a considerable gap would remain.
      6. The question- can we ask developers to do more than they are doing and hold them accountable solicited the **proposal that Green ACES and APB develop a common set of goals for review**. This could be accomplished using the current EVIPG platform and extend the collaboration on the EVIPG to a broader sustainability agenda.
      7. Luisa: responding to the question on the process to set new targets and for the city manager to create a modified work plan, noted that Green ACES would have to submit an agreed-on recommendation. This **recommendation could be developed over a work session**.
      8. Mayor Byrd: Reported on County Commission discussions on climate action.
   2. Food Systems / Sustainable Land care Circle.
   3. Green Building.
      1. Can Green ACES make a recommendation to council to generate a rule/ordinance with more stringent building codes? Demand that buildings be all electric? That they have chargers for Electric Vehicles? Some form of renewable resource (solar panels, geothermal, wind)?
      2. Q: Are the county’s efforts on building codes adequate? The county has a committee that is drafting a climate action plan for release in September. The draft has two recommendations on buildings.
   4. Land Use /
      1. Sustainable Land Care/ pollinators: Recent activities include Pollinators’ Week Booth at the Farmer’s Market, with a scavenger hunt for kids and milkweed seedlings giveaways. Noted that tomorrow- Four Cities meeting to discuss coordination Bee City USA affiliate. Greenbelt will help Berwyn Heights and New Carrollton to get Bee City affiliate status. Some coordination will be done through the Sustainable Maryland program.
      2. New pollinator habitat -write a proposal to Council on possible locations. Coordinate with the Forest Preserve Advisory Board.
      3. Also recommend updating guide to the City’s mowing practice. Perhaps have a no-mow Spring?
      4. Will hold native plant sale on September 25.
      5. Outreach to the Greenbelt Museum to work with the pollinator groups- research and natural history.
   5. Transportation.
      1. Electric Vehicles: Greenbelt currently has 4 stations at Schrom Hills Park; 1 at Springhill Lake Rec Center; and 1 at the Municipal building.
      2. EVIPG has been meeting regularly. Will provide an update when EVIPG report is completed, which is expected shortly.
      3. GHI is conducting a survey on Electric Vehicles charging station needs.
      4. Question on EV charging station use at Schrom Hills park: PEPCO could probably supply that information.
      5. Bicycle
   6. Local Economies - Time Bank Circle.
      1. Held regular meeting. Recent article in the News Review outlined the increased use of the Time Bank.
   7. Waste Management / Zero Waste Circle.
      1. City recycling drop off centers are having issues with contamination. Work to generate awareness. **Bring to Zero Waste meeting**
      2. **Xochitl will share list** of recyclers of clothing/denim
      3. Composting: CMON (Composting Municipalities Organizing Now) has been meeting and found a location in a church that is interested in composting (they have a food donation program and have materials for composting often). Compost Crew is willing to help. Perhaps with the addition of the church’s composting site, some nearby cites could have their food waste dropped off there. Three of the Four Cities in the Coalition have drop-off locations picked up by Compost Crew.
      4. Maybe Greenbelt could seek Federal funds from Covid stimulis to support composting infrastructure. **Propose bringing this to upcoming Town Hall**.
      5. PG Country- round table to discuss composting.
      6. Coop and Café have an agreement on composting. To be discussed at the next meeting July 29
   8. Water / Stream –
      1. Anacostia Watershed Society’s Festival is in October. Informal, family oriented. Sustainable MD asking members if we want to participate. Xochitl and pollinators groups will be participating. Questions raised about public health implications
      2. GHI and City Council discussed stormwater runoff by underpass. GHI has hired a green infrastructure expert
      3. A curated collection of environmental books for the library? Can Green ACES discuss a proposal to **outreach to the library to establish an environmental/sustainability section?** It was noted that the County’s Outreach and Engagement Committee will likely include this in the Climate Action Plan. Also look at whether other groups are engaged in similar efforts. Generating a Book Club selection for library was also raised a possible mechanism.
2. Other business
   1. Members supported the view that the current Green ACES website does not reflect the committee’s extensive activities and involvement. Xochitl offered to help with updating the webpage. **Additional volunteers welcomed**.

Adjournment: 9:10 pm