

Committee for a Better Environment
Davis Hall, College Park
March 23, 2015
7:00 PM

| <u>Members</u> | <u>Present</u> | <u>Absent</u> |
|-----------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| Phil Aronson | | X |
| Suchitra Balachandran | X | (arrived at 7:30pm) |
| Matt Dernoga | X | |
| Gemma Evans | X | |
| Janis Oppelt | X | |
| Kennis Termini | X | |
| Donna Weene | X | |

Guests Present: Steve Beavers, City Liaison; Mayor Andrew Fellows; Bill Gardiner, Assistant City Manager; Maria Machie; Sheryl DeWalt, Contract Secretary

Ms. Evans called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

1. Review and approval 2/23/15 meeting minutes

Ms. Oppelt made a motion to approve the draft minutes from the February 23, 2015 meeting. Mr. Dernoga seconded the motion. All in favor; no opposed.

2. Budget

The current budget shows a balance of \$5459. These monies should be spent by the end of the fiscal year, June 30, 2015.

Mr. Beavers mentioned that there will be a budget work sessions for the next fiscal year on April 11.

3. Ongoing Business

a. Canning & Preserving

Eleven people participated at the canning workshop at the Old Parish House on March 21, 2015 that was coordinated by Ms. Termini. Ms. Christiane Williams lead the group through the entire process and made it a very fun, learning experience. They would like to have an additional workshop in October.

b. Birding Workshop

Fifteen people attended the workshop on March 14, 2015. The guest lecturer was a recent Ph.D. graduate from the University of Maryland. The lecture was dynamic and interactive. The group had some other thoughts and ideas for another birding workshop. Ms. Oppelt stated she would be glad to organize another.

c. Commemorative plaque. The plaque is in production to commemorate Dr. Amelia Murdoch at the Arbor Day celebration on April 25. The cost of the plaque is \$563. Ms. Oppelt made a motion that the cost of the plaque should come from the CBE budget. Ms. Termini seconded the motion. All in favor; no opposed.

d. Green Awards. As previously discussed, the Green Awards will be presented at College Park Day in the fall. Ms. Evans suggested that a sub-committee be created for the purpose of nominating people/entities for the awards. Ms. Oppelt volunteered to be head of the sub-committee; Ms. Termini and Ms. Weene volunteered to be members of the sub-committee. Ms. Balachandran reminded everyone of the student who created the rain garden as a candidate for the award. Ms. Termini mentioned the property owners of the Hollywood Shopping Center as a candidate; they allow the Farmers Market to be held there each week.

e. Movie nights. There were about 20 people at the movie on February 27. Afterwards a discussion took place among most of the attendees. Some of the attendees were from Greenbelt who mentioned that they would like to partner with area neighborhoods on showing “Symphony of the Soil” at the Greenbelt Theater once it re-opens.

4. New Business

- a. Good Neighbor Day.** Scheduled for March 28. There will be beautification along the Trolley Trail, but nothing will be done to the permaculture. University Gardens apartment building will have plantings done and lead by the DPW crew.
- b. Community Garden.** The group wanted to know if it was possible to have a community garden in Branchville by the post office. Mr. Beavers responded that it is not City property; it’s either private land or County land.
- c. City Fence Ordinance.** Ms. Maria Machie wanted to discuss the verbiage of the fence ordinance. Currently it states that a fence can only be around a garden during planting season. Most people assume that planting season is from about April – October and in October Code Enforcement is knocking on doors reminding people that they have to take down their fences. Winter planting is not taken into account. Mayor Fellows stated that this is a subjective subject and recalls when the ordinance was put into place by the City. He stated that new verbiage could be suggested by the CBE and sent to City Council for review. Ms. Evans stated that a sub-committee would be formed: Ms. Balachandran will head the committee and Mr. Dernoga will also be a part of the committee. They will work on recommended verbiage and submit to the CBE as a group for approval and then it will be forwarded to City Council.

- d. **City Strategic Plan Framework.** Mr. Gardiner stated that the deadline for comments is April 10. The group discussed the following areas with comments:

Goal 3: Environmental Sustainability: The City is a leader in the protection and restoration of natural resources and the implementation of energy efficiency and renewable energy programs, technologies, and plans.

- i. **Objective #1** – Is it city operations or residents sharing best practices?
- ii. **Objective #3** – Should be deleted and re-stated “More attractive growth.” Route 1 is just a concrete monster. The Council should have had more impact into making it more environmental friendly as well as more attractive to the community. There needs to be more green spaces.
- iii. **3c. Partner with agencies to fund and implement stormwater management improvements.** This needs to include verbiage about covering the storm water drains.
- iv. There does not seem to be anything about energy usage and reducing it or using a certain percentage of clean energy. Where are the metrics for measuring?
- v. Nothing is mentioned about increased and improved lighting in College Park.
- vi. Underground wiring.
- vii. What does the Council mean by “Natural Resources?” There are several definitions.
- viii. PALS – is it going to succeed? When will we see the results?
- ix. Circulator bus
- x. Tree plantings
- xi. Zero Waste/Pay as you throw
- xii. Solar lighting
- xiii. Emissions report has been completed.
- xiv. Complete streets are due April 8.

Ms. Evans made a motion that the discussion on the Strategic Plan and comments will continue through email and once a final email list of comments and suggestions, based on consensus will be approved by the CBE and submitted to City Council. Ms. Weene seconded the motion. All in favor; no opposed.

- e. There is a Coal Tar City Council hearing on Thursday.
- f. CBE Charge/Code – There are items that need to be amended. Everyone should read through the document and there will be further discussion at the April meeting.
- g. CBE & Green Team. The Green Team could potentially be dissolved, per the charter, since they have achieved Sustainable Maryland certification. If the Green Team is dissolved, their projects will continue through CBE and members of the Green Team may be joining CBE.

h. Bike to Work Day will be Friday, May 15. Mr. Beavers passed out flyers.

5. Next meeting date

The next regularly scheduled meeting will be Monday, April 27, 2015 at 7:00pm.

A motion was made by Ms. Evans to adjourn the meeting and seconded by Ms. Weene. The meeting was adjourned at 8:55pm.

Minutes recorded and submitted by Sheryl DeWalt, Contract Secretary