

**Committee for a Better Environment
Council Chambers
City Hall, College Park
January 28, 2013
7:00 PM**

<u>Members</u>	<u>Present</u>	<u>Absent</u>
Suchitra Balachandran	X	_____
Gemma Evans	X	_____
Alan Hew		<u> X </u>
Stephen Jascourt	X	
Benjamin Mellman	X	
Janis Oppelt	X	
Kennis Termini	X	_____
Ballard Troy	X	_____
Donna Weene	X	_____
Richard Williamson		<u> X </u>
Macrina Xavier	X	_____

Guests Present: Councilmember Patrick Wojahn; Grace Sweeney, University of Maryland; Stephen Brimer; Loree Talley, Department of Public Works; Jonathan Brown, City Liaison; Denise M. Palmer, Contract Secretary

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 p.m.

Mr. Jascourt introduced Grace Sweeney, College Park organizer for Food and Water Watch, who did a presentation on fracking. Ms. Sweeney circulated handouts, summarized the definition of fracking, discussed current efforts to ban fracking within College Park, and presented a petition to ban fracking. Mr. Jascourt recommended that the committee take a position to support the measure. Anyone interested in signing the petition should do so individually, but not as a CBE member. The petition could also be signed by going online. It was suggested that Ms. Sweeney leave the petition for those interested.

Ms. Balachandran reported that there are currently two bills before the General Assembly on this topic. The Food and Water Watch bill is a ban prohibiting fracking and the moratorium would only delay the fracking process. Mr. Jascourt suggested the ban is the best way to go and CBE could support the ban. If that is not possible, the committee should support the moratorium. In that regard, Mr. Jascourt suggested drafting a letter to City Council to take all steps toward banning fracking in the state of Maryland. Ms. Balachandran agreed to take on the task of drafting the letter. Mr. Jascourt made a motion to approve a letter that will request Council to notify legislature to prevent fracking in the state of Maryland because it negatively affects the drinking water and the College Park residents approve of such action. Mr. Troy seconded the motion and it was unanimous.

Mr. Jascourt turned the floor over to CouncilmemberWojahn who introduced the College Park Community Foundation and reported that it is establishing a Board of Directors and are looking for additional members. There are currently nine board members and that number can go up to 15. Each board member must donate \$100, which will be used for fundraising efforts. Councilmember Wojahn indicated there are a number of environmental issues that need support and, therefore, he wanted to speak to CBE on the issues. Mr. Jascourt expressed interest in Clean Currents, which he thought would be a vehicle for CBE to participate. Councilmember Wojahn indicated the next College Park Community Foundation Board meeting is scheduled for Monday, February 4, 2013. Ms. Oppelt agreed to contact the Clean Currents representative to see what events the company has scheduled in the future.

1. Review of minutes from Oct. and Nov. 2012

After review of the October 2012 minutes, Mr. Jascourt made a motion that the October 22, 2012 minutes be approved in the current revised version. For the November 26, 2012 minutes, Mr. Jascourt made a motion to approve the minutes with Mr. Troy's revisions. Mr. Troy seconded the motion and it was unanimous.

2. Compost workshop, compost bin storage, and beyond

Ms. Balachandran reported the workshop will be held on March 2, 2013 in City Hall.. A total of 35 bins were ordered per Mr. Jascourt. This first batch of bins will be given away during the workshop. Discussion centered on how to extend this program beyond the workshop. Ms. Talley suggested that Public Works may be able to schedule two compost bins giveaways during the year coincident with the spring and fall clean-up weekends in April and October. Mr. Jascourt suggested that the committee discuss the topic again at the next scheduled meeting. Mr. Jascourt inquired about the honorarium for the speaker as well as an allocation for food if we have a group of 35 people. Mr. Jascourt made a motion to allocate up to \$250, including the honorarium for a maximum of 45 participants and up to \$100 for refreshments for combined workshops. Ms. Oppelt seconded the motion and the vote to approve was unanimous.

3. Recycling workshop rescheduling/repackaging-promoting

Mr. Troy gave an update and indicated that he has not been in touch with Mr. Williamson since cancellation of the last workshop and expressed concern about not being able to get the attendance for this workshop. There was discussion by the committee members with suggestions by Ms. Evans who suggested more advertising and promotion a month before the event. It was also suggested that attendees should RSVP. There would be language in the advertising indicating that the workshop will not be held unless it reaches a certain number of attendees. Ms. Weene suggested reaching out to the Girl Scouts. Ms. Talley suggested incorporating a trip to the recycling plant along with the workshop. Mr. Troy suggested sending out an email, gathering all suggestions, and he will contact Mr. Williamson for additional input.

4. Other upcoming activities:

- a. Permaculture workshop (Feb/Mar)**

Ms. Oppelt indicated the workshop is scheduled for April 27, 2013 from 1-3:00 p.m. Food and perennial food plants may be given away. Refreshments will be needed, and there is time to secure prices since the workshop is scheduled for April.

b. Birding in College Park (spring)

Ms. Oppelt indicated that the workshop is on hold for now and has not been finalized.

c. Canning preserves workshop (spring/summer)

Ms. Termini indicated that the workshop is on hold for now.

d. Green roofs or other energy efficiency/renewables topic

Mr. Hew was not in attendance and will be asked to report on this at the next meeting.

5. Updates on related City committees

a. Business recycling

Mr. Troy reported the last meeting was held on November 29, 2012 and the committee had worked on a cover letter asking businesses for their participation in recycling. The letter was discussed at the December 4th Council meeting and has been referred back to staff for revision.

b. Sustainable Maryland

Mr. Brown reported that this committee is continuing to meet and working toward certification and getting points, and he will update CBE when something substantial happens. Councilmember Wojahn also reported that they are moving forward with the action plan.

c. Tree and Landscape Board

There were two meetings held on December 5, 2012 and January 16, 2013. Discussion centered around residents in North College Park wanting to cut down trees in the city right of way because of bird droppings. Other topics discussed who is responsible for the damage Pepco made when cutting trees. The Tree and Landscape Board is pursuing an answer to this question. Councilmember Wojahn reports that Pepco cuts trees on a 4-5 year cycle and trees that Pepco cuts down will be replaced. A question was posed related to which entity is responsible for trimming around cable lines.

d. Farmer's Market

Ms. Balachandran did not have an update on this committee. Councilmember Wojahn indicated the committee is currently looking at a private contractor and no decision has been made.

6. CBE web site improvement plan

Councilmember Wojahn reported that the City has retained a contractor to design the City of College Park web site. He does not know the status, but there will be a CBE page on it. Mr. Brown indicated that CBE could have a link from the web site or be incorporated into the main web site. Mr. Jascourt says we will deal with the text for the web site for now. Ms. Oppelt sent a clean version of the web site text to the committee and Mr. Jascourt asked for additional

comments. Ms. Evans had comments that will be added to the version that Ms. Oppelt has, and she will send all changes to Mr. Hew. Mr. Jascourt made a motion to give Mr. Hew the authority to carry forward and get all changes on the web site. Ms. Termini seconded the motion and it was unanimous.

7. Other old business

There was none to report.

8. New business

Mr. Williamson has an invitation to speak at the Calvert Hills Citizens meeting and Mr. Troy indicated that Mr. Williamson did not feel he was qualified to address the group. It is scheduled for February 9, 2013 and Mr. Troy and Ms. Oppelt will also attend the meeting. Mr. Jascourt suggested that Mr. Williamson be the face and refer questions to the other CBE members. Ms. Oppelt suggested bringing bags as giveaways and brochures.

Ms. Balachandran reported on a Prince Georges' bill that requires all school fields to have artificial turf. There are health implications. Mr. Jascourt asked if we should take a position on it. The bill would make artificial turfs mandatory if passed. Safe and Healthy Playing Fields website has the details. Mr. Jascourt made a motion that we send a letter to Council urging against the bill that would mandate it and Ms. Balachandran will draft it for Council. Ms. Balachandran seconded the motion and it was unanimous.

Ms. Evans reported that on next Monday, February 4, 2013 there will be an article in *The Washington Post* on composting. Also, there is a push for a 'bottle bill' in the County being pushed by aluminum and plastic bottlers.

Mr. Jascourt made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:05 p.m. Ms. Termini seconded the motion and it was unanimous. The next meeting is scheduled for February 25, 2013 in Council Chambers.

Minutes prepared by Denise M. Palmer, Contract Secretary