

Meeting Minutes
Sustainable Maryland Certified Green Team
City Hall
May 19, 2014

Attendees

| <u>Members</u> | <u>Present</u> | <u>Absent</u> |
|-------------------|----------------|---------------|
| Ben Bassett | _____ | __X__ |
| Steven Beavers | __X__ | _____ |
| P. J. Brennan | _____ | __X__ |
| Rebecca Hayes | _____ | __X__ |
| James Jalandoni | _____ | __X__ |
| Eric Maring | _____ | __X__ |
| Denise Mitchell | __X__ | _____ |
| Christine Nagle | __X__ | _____ |
| Chrissy Rey | _____ | __X__ |
| Terry Schum | __X__ | _____ |
| Loree O'Hagan | _____ | __X__ |
| Patrick L. Wojahn | __X__ | _____ |

Also Present:

William Gardiner, Assistant City Manager; Susan Barnett, Greenbelt Gardens; Suchitra Balachandran, CBE; Mary Anne Hakes, Calvert Hills Civic Association; Ingrid Hass, Christian Community Garden; Carol T. Kelly, Christian Community Garden; Mike Hunninghake, Sustainable Maryland; Ben Alexandro; Liz Schotman; Drew Hart; Gemma Evan, CBE; Robert Boone; Alan Hew, City Councilmember.

Call to Order

Mr. Beavers called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Agenda Items

Introductions

Mr. Mike Hunninghake introduced himself as the Program Manager of Sustainable Maryland.

Mr. Ben Alexandro introduced himself as a graduate student at University of Maryland who also teaches a course on sustainability at the University.

Ms. Liz Schotman stated that she will be a teacher's assistant for a capstone course on sustainability at UMD next year

Mr. Drew Hart had heard about the meeting from Ms. Suchitra Balachandran.

Ms. Gemma Evan introduced herself as one of the Chairs of the city's Community for a Better Environment (CBE).

Ms. Terry Schum introduced herself as the Planning Director at the city.

Mr. Robert Boone stated that he has been gardening about 1/8 of an acre in the city and also helped start a farmers market.

Councilmember Denise Mitchell introduced herself as a City Councilmember, the Mayor Pro Temp and member of the city's Green Team.

Presentation on Community Gardens

Mr. Hunninghake started the meeting with a presentation on community gardens. He reminded the others at the meeting that the City of College Park was certified as a Maryland Sustainable Community last year. He also mentioned that having a community garden in the city is one of two, out of a list of six, priority actions that a community needs to complete in order to obtain the sustainability certification. Sustainable Maryland hopes to incorporate a tier system into their program. Mr. Hunninghake also mentioned that Sustainable Maryland is funded by grants and not by the state, and that it is run out of the Environmental Finance Center at the University of Maryland. Currently 12 communities, including the City of College Park, have attain the sustainability certification.

Mr. Hunninghake went on to enumerate the various reasons the city may want to pursue the establishment of a community garden, including having access to fresh local food and establishing programs that engage and educate residents.

Mr. Hunninghake suggested involving members of the local government, nonprofits, master gardens (certified by the agriculture program at the university), community organizations, local businesses, schools and faith-based congregations in the process of establishing a community garden.

Mr. Hunninghake stated that the city will have to consider the organization and management of the gardens, define who the gardens serves and determine the target audience for this project. In addition, the role of local government could range from running and managing the garden to simply assisting in providing the land for the garden. The community garden could be funded from grants or from directly from the local government. The city will also have to consider the nature of an application for potential gardeners, rules for the gardens, and perhaps establish a committee to decide those rules and regulations. Providing insurance is also a consideration.

Using the Facebook page for the Annapolis Community Garden as an example, Mr. Hunninghake explained that marketing the project would depend on who will manage the garden and the resources available.

Mr. Hunninghake described how the community garden in Annapolis started out as a non-profit that later contacted the city to establish the garden. Recently, they announced the opening of a second community garden in Annapolis. Greenbelt has three gardens with approximately 25 plots per garden and is overseen by the Greenbelt Gardens Club. Mr. Hunninghake was impressed by how they participate in various local festivals. Mr. Hunninghake also covered the history of the establishment of the community garden in Brunswick, Maryland. Finally, Mr. Hunninghake mentioned that members of the green team can access other communities' applications from the Sustainable Maryland website from where they can learn more about those communities' activities and gain inspiration for future action items. Mr. Hunninghake also announced that the City of College Park has just become a member of the American Community Gardening Association.

Mr. Beavers inquired from Mr. Hunninghake about the types of documentation that would need to be submitted to Sustainable Maryland in order for the city to earn points for a

community garden. In response, Mr. Hunninghake said they would like to see the rules and regulations for the garden, the management structure of the garden and the 300 word overview that would describe the process of establishing the garden. He also suggested uploading pictures of the garden onto the site.

Greenbelt Community Gardens

Ms. Barnett, as a representative from the Greenbelt Community Garden, stated that their garden had gone through many changes over its 75 year history. The gardens consists of Henry's Hollow, Hamilton Gardens and Gardenway Garden, which together total to about 70 plots. They continued to describe some of the issues the garden currently faces include trapping of animals, spraying of pesticide and regulating gardening practices. She advised dealing with such issues ahead of times. She also suggested contacting the Chesapeake Education Arts and Research Society (CEARS) as a resource for information about managing community gardens. Mr. Beavers was thankful to the representatives for presenting ideas for water access using a cistern and rain barrels.

Christian Communities Garden

Ms. Hass and Ms. Kelly, representatives from Christian Communities Garden, describes how they started their garden after removing a hay bale labyrinth they built for Halloween caused a large patch of dirt in the area that the grass was killed off. After setting up the garden, they invited community members to participate. She also described how they started the Chesapeake Bay Biodynamic Network, which she described as a step up from organic.

Questions and follow up on community gardens

Councilmember Patrick Wojahn asked about the relationship between the City Council and Greenbelt Garden, to which Ms. Barnett said that since the garden predated the city for the most of its history there was no engaging with the city. However, the city become involved when the garden faced problems involving water access.

In response to an inquiry about getting the community involved in the community garden, Ms. Barnett said that she often gets calls from people interested in joining, but she does not know exactly how the word spreads about the garden. She indicated that knowledge of the garden probably spread by word of mouth. In response to Mr. Gardiner's question, she said that Greenbelt residents get preference, but they do have others who also have plots.

Mr. Gadiner remarked that his concern revolved around placing the city in a position, either through a partnership or incentive structure, that would help acquire land for the garden or perhaps provide the infrastructure for the set up for the garden, but with the goal of a community association that would formulate the rules and regulations, recruit member and manager the daily activities of the garden. He suggested running this as a grant program or potentially partnering with an apartment building or church that has extra land and the willingness of establishing a community garden.

Ms. Schum said that the city is still not sure about the nature of the demand for such a project. Mr. Boone suggested contacting the community garden on Cherry Hill Road run by MNCPPC that may have information that would assist the city in determine the demand for community gardens.

Mr. Hunninghake mentioned that there are a fair amount of grants available for the City of College Park to consider.

CBE mentioned that they are looking to start a permaculture edible garden along the College Park trolley trail. The proposal will be going to the City Council on June 3, 2014. Mr. Beavers suggested that part of the next steps will be to construct a detailed survey in order to get a better gage of the community demand, including connecting with schools. He also suggested gathering charters and other documents from established gardens with the idea of focusing on organic growing practices. Mr. Beavers also suggested partnering with the county.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 PM by consensus. The Green Team's next meeting will be in July.

Minutes prepared by Faheem A. Mahmooth