

**Committee for a Better Environment**  
**Davis Hall, College Park**  
**March 18, 2019**  
**7:00 PM**

<u>Members</u>	<u>Present</u>	<u>Absent</u>
Suchitra Balachandran	X	
Alexa Bely	X	
Pablo deOliveria	X	
Oscar Gregory	X	
Alan Hew	X	
Todd Larsen	X	
Andrea McNamara	X	
Janis Oppelt	X	
Jordan Schakner (7:15pm)	X	
Cameron Thurston	X	
Daniel Walfield (7:25pm)	X	
Donna Weene		X
Caroline Wick	X	

Also Present: David Dorsch, resident; Matt Dernoga, resident; Scott Somers, City Manager; Robert Marsili, Director of Public Works; Janet McCaslin, City Liaison; Sheryl DeWalt, Contract Secretary

Mr. Larsen opened the meeting at 7:05 pm. We welcomed Caroline Wick, Oscar Gregory, and Pablo deOliveria as new members to CBE. We officially welcomed Cameron Thurston, who was just appointed to CBE, but had been attending as a guest for several months.

1. The agenda was reviewed. A motion was made by Ms. Oppelt and seconded by Ms. McNamara to approve the agenda. The motion passed.

8:35p.m.: A motion was made by Mr. Walfield and seconded by Ms. McNamara to amend the agenda to discuss the Tree and Landscape Board CBE member to replace Ms. Oppelt. The motion passed.

2. A motion was made by Mr. Thurston and seconded by Ms. Bely to approve the January 28, 2018 minutes. The motion passed.

A motion was made by Ms. Bely and seconded by Mr. Thurston to approve the February 25, 2019 minutes. The motion passed.

3. City activities:
  - a. Ms. McCaslin stated that there was no change in the CBE budget - \$7,966.88.
  - b. An organic drop off program will begin on April 1. You can drop off your items at Davis Hall at the front door. Beginning in May, you will also be able to drop off items at both Farmers Markets. Items must be dropped off in a compostable bag or bring in a plastic bucket and drop into the receptacle. Information on the

food composting program has been posted on the City's website, will be going out via social media, Municipal Scene, and a postcard will be sent out to residents. The first 50 people to bring in their food scraps will receive a 5-gallon bucket with a lid. A question was asked about rodents and Ms. McCaslin stated that there does not seem to be an issue. The plastic containers have lids and the compostable bags seal. Compostable bags can be obtained at Mom's Organic Market and at Whole Foods when you purchase produce.

Mr. Dorsch suggested that when the students leave in December and in May, there is always canned food. Could we have a drop off for them, so the food isn't just thrown out? Ms. McCaslin stated she will speak to the director of the Farmer's Market.

- c. Compost bins are available at Davis Hall.
  - d. During the month of April, composted is discounted 25% discount off the regular price for pick-up only.
4. Mr. Larsen mentioned that CBE will be planning to host a seminar on Saturday, May 11 on how to green clean your home. **Mr. Larsen made a motion to spend \$150 on household items to make cleaning products as well as light refreshments. Mr. Schakner seconded. All in favor; no opposed.** CBE volunteers will be needed to help with this event.
  5. Solar United Neighbors Solar Cooperative will be hosting an event at Davis Hall on Wednesday, April 10 from 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm. **Mr. Larsen made a motion to spend \$50 on light refreshments. Ms. Oppelt seconded. All in favor; no opposed.** Mr. Dernoga, Mr. Larsen, Ms. McCaslin, Ms. Bely and Ms. McNamara volunteered to help with the event.
  6. Good Neighbor Day is scheduled for April 13. The permaculture garden will be a project for that day. CBE had previously approved \$2,000 to spend on trees and plants needed for the permaculture garden. Mr. Hew will coordinate with the City Horticulturalist and Ms. McCaslin on the purchasing of plants and trees.
  7. The Tree and Landscape Board requires a member of CBE to attend their monthly meetings. Mr. Gregory and Ms. McNamara volunteered to represent CBE at the TLB meetings.
  8. Discussed Bulk Trash report and the draft letter proposed written by Mr. Larsen for CBE on bulk trash. Mr. Somers began the discussion with his understanding of the Pay as You Throw program and that bulk trash was not included in the study. He also stated that bulk trash affects a small population of the City. The City decided to undertake a study on bulk trash and wanted to concentrate on four main areas:
    - a. Cost issues – tipping fees are continuously increasing. Depending on type of bulk trash, several different trucks and crews may have to be dispatched.
    - b. Fairness – costs that will be appropriate for all City residents since bulk trash essentially affects about 5% of the population
    - c. Promoting recycling and re-use of items – the landfill is 99% filled. Residents need to find other ways to re-use items outside of throwing them out.

- d. Improving safety for Public Works employees – there are injuries to the workers when they go out for bulk trash because residents are not following the procedures for proper disposal of bulk trash items.

Other concerns/issues brought forth for discussion:

- i. 20 pieces of bulk trash are permitted per year to be hauled away for free. It is covered through residential tax payments. Should the number of items be limited? Are 20 items too many?
- ii. PAYT/SMART sub-committee's goal is to reduce waste going to the landfill, including bulk trash
- iii. PAYT/SMART is being put forth as a revenue-neutral program
- iv. An overload of bulk trash happens twice a year when the university students leave in December and in the late spring.
- v. Should the City code be changed?
- vi. In 2017, 5,675 bulk work orders were generated. 2018 numbers were not available.
- vii. Mr. Marsili stated that measures need to be put in place to better handle bulk issues
- viii. Landlords are only charged \$180 a year additional for trash. Does not seem to be enough to cover all costs. Should this be increased?
- ix. A change in behavior needs to happen.
- x. Encourage residents to call Goodwill or Green Dot, put items on Craigslist or Freecycle.
- xi. Communication with residents is a must. Difficulty occurs when links on the City website are not working. Mr. Marsili asked for any link that is not working to be sent to him and Ms. McCaslin and they will have it repaired.
- xii. The PAYT/SMART sub-committee can add bulk trash recommendations back into their report.
- xiii. How do you define construction materials?
- xiv. Should bulk trash be charged by weight as opposed to number of items?
- xv. Should bulk trash be charged on a sliding scale?
- xvi. Can the City Code be changed to be more effective and fair to all residents?
- xvii. What is causing the bulk trash to increase? New residents? More students?
- xviii. Post pictures on City website of proper way to place bulk trash out for pickup and pictures of unacceptable bulk trash pickup.
- xix. Look at other towns that are university towns and how bulk trash is handled.

The consensus was decided that further work and study needs to be done on bulk trash and should not be rushed to Mayor and Council for review.

9. Ms. McCaslin is continuing to work on the Sustainable Maryland report.
10. Any ideas for Green Awards should be brought forth. The committee gives out four a year to a business or a person. We have already given out two for this fiscal year.

11. We are still waiting on translations of the approved CBE brochures into Spanish.

12. The next meeting is scheduled for April 15, 2019 at 7:00pm in Davis Hall.

Dr. Balachandran made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Warfield seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 9:05pm.

Respectfully submitted by Sheryl DeWalt, contract secretary.