

Hyattsville Environment Committee
April 13, 2021

Participants: Theresa Goedeke, Rich Canino, John Fisher, Janet Nackoney, Brie Welzer, Dawn Taft, Danny Schaible, Ben Simasek

Invited guests : Greg Smith, Mark Graham

Agenda Items:

1. Welcome, Committee Roll Call, & Guest Orientation
 - Raise hand when you want to speak and use chat for comments
2. Approval of meeting minutes: Approved unanimously
3. "MD Amendment for Environmental Rights" - Guest presentation from Nina Cardin, [Maryland Campaign for Environmental Human Rights](#) (T. Goedeke)
 - Wants Hyattsville endorsement and support
 - Everyone has a right to a healthy environment, but not everyone has equal access to this right
 - Proposal to add this fundamental right as an amendment to the Maryland State Constitution
 - Duty of the gov't to preserve, protect and enforce this right
 - Three goals: Env health, public health, env justice
 - Maryland Env Policy Act (MEPA) of Maryland 1973: Policy, not law. Limited application, not enforced and remains unenforceable.
 - Many states have constitutional amendments for env laws and env health, promote env justice and strengthens enforcement
 - Env justice is an extremely important issue in Maryland and nationwide. Not all communities have equal access to legal mechanisms to protect themselves from env pollution and harm, disproportionate access to env health.
 - Other states pursuing env constitutional amendments: KY, OR, NJ, NM, VT, WA, WV, NY
 - PG County has endorsed this, and local municipalities are beginning to show interest (College Park is one)
 - RC: what type of legal support does this amendment provide, for example for a community living on a SuperFund site?
 - Amendment's power lies in strengthening legal claims and cases involving env justice

- JN: What are the next steps to get Hyattsville support?
 - Hyattsville mayor would endorse the resolution. We still have a lot of time as it won't come up till 2022. Nina could send us info to make a recommendation to the City Council in 2022.
 - GS: How does this work from a legislative point of view?
 - General Assembly would pass a bill that would go to the State of Maryland to pass this amendment. Would then appear on the ballot.
4. New Hyattsville Committee Handbook (L. Reams) -- [item cancelled]
 - Bylaws and HEC info needs to be updated for the Handbook, these are currently out of date
 - Goal: draft these collectively by June HEC meeting. **ACTION (Theresa):** Theresa will follow up by email.
 5. Review of Draft Hyattsville Watershed Implementation Plan (D. Taft)
 - <https://docs.google.com/document/d/18rDMN5qjzSleoX0tZ7X5217rLan3Eb3f2jTfgSFaUZs/edit?ts=60410a41>
 - Guest: Katerina Bouselis (Univ of Maryland)- helping us with the implementation plan.
 - One of the proposed 80 projects at UMD's Campus Community Connection aimed to help expand sustainable programming in the region.
 - Supports the Clean Water Act to promote healthy waterways for the Anacostia River.
 - Prioritizing stormwater mitigation activities (yearly CIP budget)
 - Stormwater best practices (buried wetland area around Armentrout)
 - Tree planting
 - Silvacells around the roots of trees to give roots more space to breathe in compacted soils
 - Retrofit and upgrade storm drains
 - GS: Kudos to this work. Floodplain protection really important in Hyattsville.
 - **ACTION (all):** Review the draft by end of next week (April 23), send any comments to Dawn
 6. Vote: Phased-in Gas Powered Leaf-Blower Ban (D. Schaible)
 - New Construction Stormwater Management memo
 - <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1VGINZw8fFAvlxrMI9G86piZXQrOjGDkH/view?usp=sharing>

Recommendation to Address Noise and other Impacts from Gas-Powered Leaf Blowers (GPLBs)

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1U5hOr1GLyoLsk0nnpn20oJQMRHnNetPpPQs9TUYq54g/edit?usp=sharing>

DS: Phased-in approach. Warnings, not citations for enforcement. Buy-back program managed by the City during the phase-in (residents and contractors can trade in gas-powered leaf blower for electric coupon covering $\frac{2}{3}$ of cost for residents; max \$150 covered. NOTE that battery-powered cordless electric equipment more expensive than corded. This would support folks wanting to buy)

Timeline has been pushed back 6 months. First phase-in is Jan 1, 2022. Full ban in effect Jan 2023-2024.

JN: Thank you for all of your work on this and for taking all of our committee's concerns into account. Was unsure at first but supportive of the changes. Will be interesting to see what the City Council thinks. This is the direction that we need to be going to move away from gas-powered equipment.

JF: Have other communities had success with this ban?

-BW: California, DC-- can send more info. DS: DC, Village of Chevy Chase, Town of Somerset, new interest from Mount Rainier. Event in Sept 2021 to showcase electric blowers.

TG: Important to consider that the City Council will probably have more thoughts about this and might recommend an adaptive management approach.

VOTE: Passed with majority (1 nay)-- Danny will bring to the City Council for further consideration.

7. Vote: New Construction Stormwater Management memo to council (T. Goedeke/Fmr. Member, J. Groves)

- GS: Has sent some corrections
- JF: Unsure of the overall intent?
- RC: Can we clarify which items we might prioritize?
- TG: Unsure; we haven't had a lot of committee discussion around this yet
- JN: Agree, we haven't really discussed this.
- GS: This issue goes back a while. Major stormwater issues with big rain events in Hyattsville. Sends a strong signal to the Council that this is an issue that needs attention.
- TG: **(ACTION)**: Not yet ready for HEC vote. We can put this on the agenda for more discussion at the next meeting-- and see when we might be able to vote on it. Aim to get to Council for a vote in June.

8. [Plastic Bag Reduction Act](#), discussion on takeout waste reduction (B. Simasek)
 - Looks like this will likely be passed in the MD legislature. Aim is to reduce plastic waste in takeout containers. Unsure if an ordinance approach, or awareness campaign would be best. Styrofoam clamshells now banned by MD. But plastic clamshells are being used a lot in takeout, esp during COVID. Plastic utensils are not always needed-- food businesses should ask if they are needed rather than assuming they are.
 - BW shared a news link about plastic bag ban advancement for MD:
<https://www.marylandmatters.org/2021/03/02/statewide-plastic-bag-ban-bill-advances/>
9. Announcements or Notices
 - Anacostia Watershed Society Earth Day cleanups on April 24th:
<https://www.anacostiaws.org/what-we-do/river-restoration-projects/earth-day/earth-day-cleanup.html>

10. Adjournment