

## Hyattsville Environment Committee (HEC)

### Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, January 10, 2023

7:00 pm to 8:30 pm

**HEC members:** Thaddeus Waterman (chair), Janet Nackoney (meeting minutes), Dawn Taft (staff), Ben Simasek (Council), Jared Messinger, Melissa Schweisguth, Joseph DeMarco.

**Guests:** none

### Agenda Items:

1. Welcome, Committee Roll Call, & Guest Orientation.
2. Approval of [November meeting](#) minutes: **APPROVED**
3. Acceptance of new [Meeting schedule](#): **APPROVED**
4. New Stipend and Committee Seats
  - \$40/meeting not to exceed \$600 for the year
  - Objective to promote greater diversity, equity and inclusion
  - If you want to decline the stipend, please officially decline it via the website
5. HEC 2023 Elections
  - Vote for Chair: Nominee Thaddeus Waterman **APPROVED**
  - Vote for Secretary: Nominee Janet Nackoney **APPROVED**
6. Standardizing evaluation process for legislation recommendations to the City (Thaddeus)
  - We have a valuable role in helping to voice our support for legislative recommendations to the City
  - Would be good for HEC to develop a set of criteria or standards for bringing ideas up to the City for consideration
  - Some important factors: 1) timeliness (enough time to get on the Council agenda and a letter potentially drafted), 2) tying the issue to Hyattsville's strategic goals and objectives, and 3) consider the intended effect of City action on issues (is there much of a chance our efforts will be effective? Does the recommended action have much chance of passing? appropriate?)
  - City open to recommendations on both county and state level legislation
  - At state level, a bill is usually introduced within the first 90 days of general assembly. HEC might consider
  - Planning committee also makes policy recommendations to City Council (generally County level). Likely there aren't other City committees doing

this. Note that making legislative recommendations to Council is built into HEC's goals. There is a favorable attitude on the Council to initiatives that proactively respond to climate change, promote tree canopy, reduce carbon footprint, promote stormwater mgmt and increase City resilience.

- Deadline for council members to submit budget initiatives is the end of this month (Jan). Current focus is on affordable housing agenda, also City's 5-year Sustainability Plan (draft currently in progress).
- Next steps: Thaddeus to draft a set of guidelines for HEC consideration at a future meeting.
- [Comments on 5-year Sustainability Plan](#) close soon

7. [Plastic Bag ordinance](#) (Ben)

- Motion to ban plastic bags in the City of Hyattsville and mandate a charge for the use of paper bags to encourage people to bring their own bags.
- City would distribute free bags with a special design at local events and pickup at City building.
- HEC members are invited to add any input to the document by next week.
- There will be several steps to approving the ordinance. It would be helpful for HEC to draft a letter of support– if so, aim for the Feb meeting
- Part of the challenge is that people need to change their routines to remember to bring their bags to the store. Recommend integrating a type of education campaign to promote behavior change– keep bags in your car etc. A bag visual could be a simple pyramid [similar to the waste prevention hierarchy](#), with categories of most preferred to least types of bags.
- ACTION: JN and MS to draft a letter of support for HEC's February meeting

8. [Multifamily Property Improvement Green Grant Program](#) (Ben)

- New grant program through the city to provide up to \$70K to provide rebates to older buildings that could be upgraded in ways to make them decrease their energy impact and be more environmentally sustainable.
- A new housing specialist will be hired by the City and there is a possibility that applying for this program could be considered as part of their duty.
- Important that cost savings in energy reduction is passed on to tenants living there.
- [Energy auditors approved by Pepco](#)
- No action on this yet. But please send any feedback or resources that you think could be helpful to Ben.

9. Zero waste facility: What will it accept and when will it open? (Melissa)

- City received a grant to establish a recycling depot for electronics and hazardous waste products like oil, antifreeze, etc. Preliminary design and

proposal submitted to City Council– waiting for approval on funding the design. Next step will be to decide where it will be situated and then get it started.

10. Nine Pond Project (Joseph)

- Proposed [new stormwater project in PG Plaza with condo and townhome development](#) at the intersection of Adelphi and Belcrest Roads.

11. Announcements

- Upcoming Audubon Yard Assessments presentation on January 18.
- Upcoming Casey Trees presentation “Trees 101” (tree maintenance) on Jan 30/
- Gas-powered leaf blower total ban takes effect Aug 2024. Trade-in events for landscape contractors have been announced (March 25, May 20); 75% reimbursement toward the cost of electric leaf blowers.
- City council approval of compost/yard waste toter purchase (12/5 meeting)
- Ivy grant proposal with CCAN submitted – we should hear back by the end of March. Lots of support from other local groups including Sierra Club.

12. Adjournment.