

**Hyattsville Environment Committee**  
**January 12, 2021**

Participants: Brie Welzer, Eli Webster, Theresa Goedeke, Dawn Wright, John Fisher, Ben Simasek, Jared Messinger, Rich Canino, Danny Schaible  
Guest: Joseph Jakuta, Mount Rainier (guest for #6 on agenda)

Notes taken by Rich Canino and Janet Nackoney

**Agenda Items:**

1. Welcome, Committee Roll Call, & Guest Orientation
2. Approval of meeting minutes
3. Committee vote for HEC Secretary
4. City contracts - electric leaf blowers (D Schaible and B Weltzer)
5. GPLB Ban Proposal Review (D Schaible)
6. Prince George's Climate Parents letter of support (D Schaible)
7. Announcements or Notices
8. Adjournment

**2. Approval of December meeting minutes**

- Approved unanimously Welzer/Canino

**3. Committee vote for HEC Secretary(self-nominee Janet Nackoney)**

- Approved unanimously Webster/Fisher

**4. Phasing in a ban of gasoline leaf blowers in Hyattsville: (D Schaible and B Welzer)**

- Idea to propose a phased ban of gasoline leaf blowers and replacement with battery-powered leaf blowers city-wide. Focus on anyone being paid by our tax dollars to protect their health.
- Response from City uncertain as of now; battery-powered leaf blowers potentially haven't worked out as well as gas-powered. Bigger piles of leaves might be tougher to move with battery-powered motors. Battery-powered might be better suited for smaller jobs, residential use

**ACTION:** get data on when the city battery-powered blowers were bought (how old is the technology?), brands and models to enable better understanding of what has been tried.

- DC has a complete gas ban going into effect in January 2022. Residential, businesses included. Has found the technology can support this. Perhaps ~20 cities around the nation have begun these bans.
- We have connections to some direct contacts who have done this in DC & Chevy Chase to ask what models they use for their City staff.
- Intention is to be sensitive to City staff and contractors
- Dawn: A list of pros and cons could be helpful

## 5. Phased-in ban proposal review (D. Schaible)

- Danny walked through a write-up summarizing the economic impacts of a citywide ban.
- Timeline:
  - Effective July 1, 2021 - the use of gas-powered leaf blowers by the City will cease entirely, including city staff and city contracts.
  - Effective January 1, 2022 - the use of gas-powered leaf blowers will be prohibited on Sundays.
  - Effective July 1, 2022 - the use of gas-powered leaf blowers will be prohibited on weekends and federal holidays.
  - Effective January 1, 2023 - the use of gas-powered leaf blowers will be prohibited permanently.
- Is this schedule sensitive to people who just bought a new blower in the past year?
  - Danny: contractors' blowers are usually replaced every ~4 years
  - Battery prices are dropping about 10%/year. The estimate is that 4 batteries are needed to complete a full day's work.
- 'Cash for Clunkers' Trade-in program: residents can trade-in 1 gas powered unit for  $\frac{2}{3}$  the cost of a new replacement unit.
  - Contractors can get half of the cost reimbursed for up to 3 gas-powered blowers.
  - \$60K of city funds estimated needed over 3 years (approx. \$20K per year)
- Ben asked if anyone in DC or Chevy Chase considered banning the sale of gas powered leaf blowers. Danny stated that there isn't a ban at hardware stores but requires them to clearly state via signage that they cannot be used in the city.
- Question about enforcement: weekends/holidays don't have enforcement.
  - Meet with code compliance to understand?
  - Brie: the spirit is to simply show that the City supports this move. We will need outreach and education about this initiative for it to be successful. Not intended to be punitive.
- Some residents are using contractors outside of Hyattsville that aren't following these rules. Are they liable for fines?

- Warnings/citations would be shared with both the contractor and the property owner
- Share a list of quiet service contractors with property owners (cost comparison of clean and quiet service vs gas service?)
- Danny would like to set up a workshop with reps from quiet companies to do demonstrations for DPW Staff and answer questions. Also interested in having a panel discussion about the technology.
- Negative effects of gas blowers
  - Excessive noise
  - Pollution impacts: typical carbon emissions, plus hydrocarbons for some that contribute to ozone, smog and particulates
  - Health impacts
  - Wildlife
- Concern about how to design the policy approach that doesn't promote abuse? How to best ensure that folks are not taking improper advantage of the trade-in program. More help needed around this?

**ACTION:** Danny and Brie will share the document with the committee-- get more input from members and City, as well as run it by more different types of groups and residents.

## **6. Prince George's Climate Parents letter of support (D Schaible and Joseph Jakuta)**

- Presentation of letter to PG Board of Education
- Aim of initiative is to set goals to phase out the use of fossil fuels in schools in PG Co, 100% clean energy
- College Park and a few other municipalities have signed on with their support already
- Joseph has been working with Climate Parents via Sierra Club
  - Working with schools around the DC area to shift to 100% clean energy
  - PG would be the first in MD to adopt if passed
- Timeline: If we can vote to approve tonight, it can get sent to City Council for a vote. Needs to get back to the county by Feb 12.
- **VOTE:** Approved unanimously (Nackoney/Canino)

### Links:

Sign the petition: <https://climateparentspg.org/get-involved/sign-the-petition/>

Prince George's County Board of Education, Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP)  
Focus Work Group Proposal:

[https://go.boarddocs.com/mabe/pgcps/Board.nsf/files/BX4VZL832C7A/\\$file/CCAP%20Resolution.pdf](https://go.boarddocs.com/mabe/pgcps/Board.nsf/files/BX4VZL832C7A/$file/CCAP%20Resolution.pdf)

Tasks for the letter: Replace the greeting and address header, update the cc list (see below), replace 'school board' with 'Board of Education'.

To: Dr. Juanita Miller

CC: Edward Burroughs III, Vice Chair, District 8

David Murray, District 1

Joshua M. Thomas, District 2

Pamela Boozer-Strother, District 3

Shayla Adams-Stafford, District 4

Raaheela Ahmed, District 5

Belinda Queen, District 6

Kenneth Harris II, District 7

Sonya Williams, District 9

Paul Monteiro, Appointed

Sandra D. Shephard, Appointed

Curtis Valentine, M.P.P., Appointed

Ninah Jackson, Student Member of the Board