

Hyattsville Environment Committee
May 11, 2021

Participants: Theresa Goedeke, Jared Messinger, Janet Nackoney, Dawn Taft, Danny Schaible

Guests: Maira Delao, Scott Wilson

Agenda Items:

1. Welcome, Committee Roll Call, & Guest Orientation
2. Approval of meeting minutes
3. Discussion: New Construction Stormwater Management memo to council (T. Goedeke/Fmr. Member, J. Groves)
 - Memo here:
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1VGINZw8fFAvlxrMI9G86piZXQrOjGDkH/edit>
 - Aim is to:
 - Ensure existing regulations regarding stormwater runoff are enforced
 - Where regulations are not adequate, help with updating those regulations.
 - Content is pretty basic relating to more responsible stormwater management and enforcement-- but it might benefit from more context up front to make a clearer ask of City Council members.
 - Dawn: Can we check/confirm that this isn't already being done somewhere else?
 - A recent problem with sediment released into Northeast Branch since January. TG has been documenting this incident and it culminated in a site visit to the related construction site.
 - Ben: Unsure if Hyattsville has the jurisdiction to enforce this unless it is written into the City code
 - **Next steps:** Theresa and Janet will look into some more background and potential solutions and present back at next month's meeting.
4. Discussion: Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plan (using Mount Rainier as an example, D. Schaible)
 - Mount Rainier recently passed a municipal Greenhouse Gas Resolution (proposed by the Green Team). Focuses on electrifying the vehicle fleet, buying carbon offsets, efficient city lighting, city buildings more energy efficient-- alignment with Paris Climate Agreement.

- City of Hyattsville has said that we want to meet the Paris benchmark (committing to 1.5 deg C temp increase or less). Might Hyattsville be interested in passing a plan like this?
- Danny could bring this Mount Rainier example to City Council and see if they are interested in having HEC pursue this.
- TG: Would be good to understand the gaps between a plan like this and the Sustainable Maryland initiative. What do we already do, and what's missing from what we could do?
- Jared: does Hyattsville have a baseline of what our emissions are today, and an inventory of where those emissions come from? Some related tools for cities and municipalities are being developed by the World Resources Institute (WRI). Jared could look into this. Also:
<https://ghgprotocol.org/greenhouse-gas-protocol-accounting-reporting-standard-cities>
- TG: also would be great to understand overlap with PG County initiatives/aspirations
- For Mount Rainier, waste management contributes the most to emissions.
- Are there any benchmarks in our City of Hyattsville Sustainability Plan?
<http://www.hyattsville.org/DocumentCenter/View/4364/Plan-Final-Copy-062017-Spread?bidId>
 - The plan only runs 2017-2021, so it's due for an update.
 - Is there budget to update it?
 - **ACTION:** Dawn will check into this
- TG: Does Hyattsville have a climate change mitigation plan? Could this be part of a larger conversation to help Hyattsville develop a climate change mitigation and adaptation plan?
- SW: are there tax breaks for solar? If there are still federal or state tax breaks for solar, the city might encourage private ownership by a senior co-op group of the solar to give tax breaks to the seniors. The whole thing could be organized through City attorney to benefit all seniors rich and poor, who might have been left out otherwise, with the break coming from the feds to come off property taxes in the city for seniors.
 - This was done in University Park for a church

5. Update on tree plantings (D. Taft)

- On Arbor Day this year, we celebrated 30 years as a Tree City.
- The Beautification Committee from PG County reached out to Dawn about a potential site to plant trees for free.
- Site is on 38th St along the east side of the NE Branch Trail
- Neighborhood Design Center also participated and MNCPCC, DNR provided deer guards around the trees

- 42 trees and shrubs planted and bumped out the “no mow” zone
- Tulip poplars, maple, river birch, chestnut oak, black oak
- Witch hazel, winterberry holly in between
- Bought “tree diapers” to protect the trees from drought
- Dawn is working on a new grant for private residential tree planting as well as one for a tree planting training
- JM: any risk of cicada damage?
- Dawn has some cicada info she can share. Mature trees should survive the cicadas. City can’t cover all of these younger trees with netting. Branches that are less than half an inch are more vulnerable. Nets don’t need to be put on until you hear the cicadas calling.
- SW: Concern about the plan to remove many trees outside of the footprint of the Middle School during demolishing. Can we protect these trees? Dawn is unsure. Might be a larger question for Lesley. Could HEC take a position on this to advocate for the trees? Has noticed their value in absorbing runoff.
 - Mandatory referral meeting on May 20th-- open to the public and you can provide public comment at that meeting

6. Announcements or Notices

- TG will send a link to the new Hyattsville Committee Handbook-- HEC should make comments and suggestions according to the context of HEC. We’ll discuss it at next month’s meeting.

7. Adjournment