

Committee on the Environment Notes – April 2019

City of Takoma Park, Maryland adopted

April 1, 2019

Attending: SJ, John, Hellen, Kirsten, Sharon, Denis, Kopal

Public attendees: Calan; Emmanuel (via the phone line)

John moderating

Denis taking notes

The draft agenda was approved, with the deletion of the Department Update since no one was present. The March minutes were adopted, and the March Action Items were reviewed (all completed).

No initial public comments.

The COE Project Activities document was reviewed, alongside the Green team priorities document, which had been updated and priority-ordered. John recommended a COE leader for each item. The ensuing discussion incorporated the discussion of Zero Waste/compost. Kopal suggested considering the issue of waste that is not actually recyclable (rather, gets incinerated). SJ proposed moving Stormwater to top priority (and including Brashear's Run, Road Salt, and the SW private land issue). Issues around the specific metric for greenhouse gases/climate change, and an alternative to "solid waste" – namely, a consumer-based inventory/metric) and associated production/activity costs – were discussed. Issues around the City's use of single-stream recycling (versus Mont. Co. two streams) were discussed, along with the idea of bringing Daryl B. back to further discuss recycling.

Hellen suggested the change from Plastic Straw Alternative topic (since near completion for COE) to Single-use Plastics. Emmanuel (public attendee) commented that natural gas use is the area's main contributor to GHGs. He suggested the idea of allowing residents to purchase renewable natural gas, rather than fossil-based natural gas. John suggested, alternatively, paying a premium for renewable natural gas RECs, just like renewable electric RECs should be possible. Electrification of heat for new buildings was mentioned, along with associated new building codes. Elevating the Move Toward Zero Waste item on the list was also suggested. On Tree Canopy/Urban Forest, SJ and Sharon went over the report. The long-awaited report indicated the canopy was holding steady (within the margin of error of the previous assessment). Canopy covers 58% of the City, primarily on single-family lots. The new report includes numerous charts, but not on the age of trees. The LIDAR captures only canopy above eight feet tall. SJ suggested the need for an on-the-ground measure. Issues around opportunities for new trees, the heat map (incl. tracking the orange areas with newer replacement trees) were discussed. Tree maintenance is a neglected area. The overall Joint Committee/Ordinance/Canopy Goal/Education efforts were discussed, with the thought that

the Tree Commission's focus is on Ordinance revision, and the COE's focus is on Tree Canopy/Diversity. Sharon suggested an on-the-ground inventory (and indicated that Jan said he could not undertake that endeavor). Kopal volunteered to draft three bullet items (for COE members to push out to their Wards) on the upcoming Arbor Day, and both City and County

Plant-a-Tree events. Volunteering to help Jan was also suggested. SJ noted that the budget meeting is Wednesday, and he suggested checking on whether these items/ideas are on their long list.

On Committee Business, SJ has two more official meetings. The Committee agreed on, and voted unanimously for, John and Elizabeth as the new Co-Chairs beginning in May – with John serving an 11-month term, and Elizabeth a 17-month term (per the rule on staggered terms). Seth Grimes will become a new member next month.

Impervious Surfaces was very briefly mentioned at the end of the meeting, including Kirsten asking about the need for the large Franklin Apartment's lot. Kirsten will inquire with City Manager Ludlow. Kopal mentioned replacing impervious cover at Colby & Cherry Aves.

April action items:

Revise priority/order of COE Project items. (SJ)

Ask Daryl B. to come to discuss the recycling program and improving it. (?)

Create three bullets on upcoming tree events. (Kopal)

Email City Manager about options to alter impervious lots. (Kirsten)

Recruit new members. (All)