

Town of North Beach
Environmental Committee Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, April 4, 2023
7 PM at Town Hall

Attendees: Guy Stone, Lisa Garrett, Mary Healey, Jeff Noyes, Herb Wolff, Allan Creamer

Note: There was no EC meeting in March, 2023

Agenda and discussion: This meeting included defining a quorum for the EC, electing a vice chair, Nature Center ribbon cutting and Earth Day planning, and discussion of the next recycling contract.

Definition of Quorum/Election of Vice Chair

- Lisa explained that there was a need to have a quorum if a meeting and its minutes are to be considered official and appropriate for posting on the town website where anyone can read them as public record.
- Guy questioned whether a quorum was necessary at all, as the committee has always acted in an advisory capacity. Allan asked if the EC was part of any town ordinance (as is the Tree Committee). Guy and Allan were officially sworn in under Mark Frasier (after several years of committee membership), and Jeff was also sworn in under Mark Frasier. Herb joined under Mayor Benton, and was not sworn in.
- Allan recommended that there be a Vice Chair in addition to the chair to ensure someone can run the meeting in the Chair's absence.
- Roberts rules define a quorum as 50% of the members being present. The EC has four members (Guy, Allan, Jeff, and Herb), with staff liaison Lisa and council liaison Mary. Therefore, *a quorum will be defined as 3 members present, inclusive of either the Chair or Vice Chair*. If additional members are added, this will be adjusted.
- Jeff nominated either Allan or Herb volunteer as Vice Chair, as he is the secretary and Guy is the Chair. Allan volunteered to be Vice Chair. The team voted him in unanimously.

Future Direction of the Environmental Committee

- Guy relayed a discussion he had with the mayor regarding the future direction of the EC. With regard to Sustainable Maryland, the mayor indicated that the program had value as it was one criterion evaluated on grant applications, but that the level of the award: Bronze, Silver, or Gold did not matter. In short, the program requires too much time of staff and volunteers to continue to pursue the next higher level award, but is worth maintaining at the Bronze level. Lisa agreed with how much time the program takes, reflecting on the 2022 Sustainable MD effort.
- Guy recommended that the committee re-focus its efforts on its original purpose: to pursue activities that benefit the residents of North Beach, within

the committee's budget (of \$0), and within the reasonable scope of the committee's abilities. He recommended that the committee focus on improvements that would be visible to citizens as they walk around the town.

- Guy stated that the NB recycling program essentially boils down to the terms of the contract awarded by the town, and how well those terms are communicated to the residents. Mary recommended that once the new contract is awarded, the town work with recycling company representative to create a training video for residents to go over proper recycling procedures and materials, possibly including the residents in the production.
- Mary talked about the questionnaire that was going to be sent out to residents to support the drafting of the next comprehensive plan. She suggested that asking the residents what they would like to see regarding the environment would be beneficial for the committee. Allan agreed, relating his experience working with NB code enforcement on protecting the environment during construction projects in the town. Mary suggested that Allan and the committee work on drafting some questions to be considered for inclusion in the survey(s).
- Lisa discussed how valuable public input can be; she discussed the upcoming meeting the Flood Committee is holding (April 20th, 7PM at Town Hall.) They will be talking to the public, taking questions from the public and following up with a questionnaire.
- There was a lengthy discussion of part of the critical area adjacent to Burnt Oaks and deeded to the town being zoned for development, but it wasn't specifically a committee issue.
- Allan reiterated that the Environmental Committee should play a role in shaping the draft Comprehensive plan by providing comments as a advisory committee. Guy mentioned curbs and sidewalks as a possible focus area.

Tree Committee News

- Lisa talked about the Tree Committee having free trees available via Signup Genius, those being Red Bud, Flowering Plum, Arrowwood Viburnum, Bayberry River Birch, White Pine, Redozier Dogwood., and Beautyberry The link to sign up for these trees is clickable here: [North Beach Tree Committee: Earth Day Event at the Wetlands Overlook Park Tree Adoption \(signupgenius.com\)](https://signupgenius.com). These will all be small trees that will not grow to a huge size. Burnt Oaks is adopting 35 trees. The focus is, "right tree, right place." If Signup Genius worked well for this program, Lisa will use it as a tool for signing up for other Nature Center programs.
- The Tree Committee is also launching another program to provide resources for who to call regarding pruning and other tree related questions.

Earth Day/Ribbon Cutting for Nature Center

- Lisa discussed the ribbon cutting for the Nature Center Saturday, April 22nd, from 1-4PM to accommodate cleanup day activities in the morning. Jeff, Herb, and Allan from the EC will be manning a table, as will the Watershed Stewards and the Tree Committee.
- Invites include North Beach Town Council, Chesapeake Beach Mayor and Town Council, Margaret Lasher or a rep from DNR, Senator Jackson, Delegate Jeffrie

Long, County Commissioners. Mayor Benton and Lisa will speak. Master Gardeners will present Wetlands Overlook Park with its Bay-Wise certification.

- Earth day events will begin at 1:30PM following the ceremony, to include tree pickups, kids' activities, recycling giveaways. Lisa has a new volunteer (Mary) that will be helping out with the event, and on a routine basis with other Nature Center kids' activities.
- Lisa will also have a paid part-time staffer. She is writing up a job description and will then make the hire.
- Hours of the Nature Center will be Thurs-Sat, 11A-4P. In the summer, there may be a volunteer working Sundays, along with a waterfront person that will also assist with lockup and security. She added that the waterfront staff is adding patrol people with uniforms.
- Lisa added that she will soon have a new job title; instead of Director of Eco Tourism, she will likely be called the Community Conservation Outreach Coordinator.
- The Nature Center sign will be installed soon. She has some new animal ambassadors: A box turtle, and a mud turtle. The Chesapeake Bay Oyster Cultivation Society gave her oysters, which will be set up in a tank soon with a miniature oyster reef ball. She will have frogs and 4 walking sticks as well.

The Next Recycling Contract

- Jeff reiterated the need for the next recycling contract to include monitoring and reporting of compliance (by the contractor) so that the town and Environmental Committee can better educate the public on the actual impact of not following the recycling rules. The EC needs to understand the next contracted recycling process, as well as the impacts (both cost and environmental) when residents don't comply as these things are missing in the present program.
- Herb suggested ride-alongs for the EC on recycle days might be useful as well.
- Mary indicated that 4 contractors are competing for the next contract, and that there were good discussions regarding what didn't work with the last contract. It is not yet known what the new contractors would be capable of doing.
- Lisa mentioned that compostable straws are largely available in restaurants now, and that she'd like to see green awards for businesses revisited as a goal for NB.

Meeting adjourned

The next Environmental Committee meeting will be May 2, 2023.