

Town of North Beach
Environmental Committee Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, February 2nd, 2021
7 PM via Zoom

Attendees: Jane Hagen, Stacy Milor, Guy Stone, Allan Creamer, Lisa Garrett, Jeff Noyes. Guests: Tree Committee Members Charlie Poole, Joan Krell. Visitors included Councilmember Elizabeth Lawton, and Sandra Raviv.

Note: No Environmental Committee meetings were held in December or January 2020.

Agenda and discussion: This meeting mainly centered on trees and tree committee topics, as well as plastic straws and Sustainable MD updates.

Plastic Straw/Coffee Stir Stick Flyer Review

- Jane provided copies of a draft informational flyer about plastic straws and their negative impact on the environment to committee members via email prior to the meeting. She asked for feedback from the group. Jeff commented that information in the flyer was good, but that it lacked a call to action – it didn't directly ask residents or businesses to refrain from using plastic straws or coffee stir sticks, rather it just explained why they are bad. Jeff agreed to provide that feedback to Dawn, who did the flyer. Jane said her intent was to have committee members go to NB restaurants and encourage them to use biodegradable substitutes for these plastic products. Lisa said she would provide more compelling graphics for the flyer as well.

Tree Committee Introduction

- Joan Krell and Charlie Poole introduced themselves, as well as mentioning that the third member of their committee was Vince Antonioli. Lisa mentioned that she had several tree projects that she has discussed with Deborah Noyes, president of the NB House and Garden Club, as well as new volunteers John and Elizabeth Real. She welcomed Tree Committee support on these project as well (discussed later in this meeting).

Sustainable Maryland Update

- Lisa has not been working on the Sustainable MD application, but has been taking stormwater management training with several other sustainable MD municipalities. They take courses together and discuss how they can move from "gray infrastructure" to "green infrastructure" in the context of improving stormwater management. She is part of a group working on a DNR grant for stormwater management for Chesapeake Beach and North Beach. Once the grant is obtained, this will support development of a stormwater management plan, which helps with that portion of the SM application. This was an area identified by Mike Hunninghake (Environmental Finance Center) that needed

improvement on NB's SM application. Lisa also said that Tree City can now be revisited since we have a staffed Tree Committee.

- Lisa also mentioned that a community garden is still a critical item needed for SM. Jane asked Charlie Poole if he was aware of any place that a community garden could be located. Lisa mentioned Project Spudnik being done at All Saints Church in Prince Frederick, that perhaps two of the flower beds across from Chesapeake's Bounty could be used for a similar project in NB. The town owns the beds, it would be easy to maintain and the person that runs the program at All Saints could come up and provide guidance. All Saints grew over 400 lbs of potatoes last year. Charlie Poole mentioned the Catholic church in town (St. Anthony's) has an empty lot next to it that they own. It is between 1st and 2nd street on the east side. Lisa said she would follow up on that. Elizabeth said that it might be possible to collaborate on using the beds next to the Boys and Girls Club. Sandra asked about the library site. Lisa said that may be a possible site in a couple years. Jane said the library property is owned by the county, to which Lisa said a project there might work well as a project with the Calvert County Master Gardeners.
- Allan said that in order to update the energy usage database, he needs the BG&E records for the last 5 years. Stacy said they are working on pulling those reports together for this purpose.

Tree Committee Discussion

- Charlie asked what authority the town has when people cut down trees within town limits. Lisa explained that a permit needs to be issued, which includes a fee that funds a replanting/mitigation effort. He said with a little siting work before construction, many of the large oak trees that were cut down could probably have been saved. He said that saving those larger trees would be his main goal. A problem he identified was the lack of follow-up/inspections on mitigation efforts – plantings need to be revisited periodically to ensure they do in fact survive and provide the intended mitigation. Allan agreed with Charlie that these trees need to be saved, even when on private property. Disease has killed some oak trees in town, making the remaining oaks even more important.
- There was a discussion of the tree committee ordinance centering on what authority the tree committee has to prevent the loss of trees. Charlie said that if the town worked more closely with the planner/architect on building projects, the situation could be improved by adjusting plans, siting, etc. to not impact so many trees. Lisa talked about the recently updated tree inventory as a good reference tool for the tree committee. Allan said that on his property, when trees were removed, the town didn't require mitigation planting, but the county required 3 trees be planted for every tree removed. However, there was never any follow-up from the county.
- Elizabeth & Allan highlighted the need for the Tree Committee's involvement with the planning commission to effect the desired changes with respect to the tree ordinance.
- Charlie talked about the requirements for rain barrels and landscape plans for new construction. An inspector ensures rain barrels and plantings are done at

time of construction, but there is never a re-inspection to ensure plants don't die. He also mentioned that in many cases, renters have no interest in maintaining plants where they rent, so in new-construction rentals, plants don't survive and rain barrel equipment fails.

- It became evident from the discussion that the tree committee needs to become familiar with the tree ordinance to determine the extent of its authority, as well as identifying how it might be inserted into planning commission processes as necessary to achieve its goals. It was also clear that the tree ordinance isn't the only regulation that has an impact on trees and plantings in construction projects.
- Lisa added that the University of Maryland has a program where grad students will look at town ordinances and make recommendations for improvements based on successful ordinances in other towns (relating to green issues.)

The Green Wave Program

- Lisa talked about a small Keep Maryland Beautiful grant she was going to use in a partnership with the North Beach House and Garden Club to get residents to do green projects like stormwater management, replanting trees, rain gardens, etc. in their yards. The idea is to provide markers to participating homes and create a "green trail" through town. The first effort on this project is to purchase small 3 gallon trees to give to residents who agree to keep the trees alive for at least 3 years. NBHGC volunteers will provide planting and care guidance to the residents.
- Elizabeth said she thought it would be a good idea to put some educational material together for a discussion of air quality within the context of green programs.

Earth Day

- Lisa said Earth Day is April 22, 2021. It isn't clear yet how it can be celebrated, but the committee recommend activities be shifted to Saturday the 24th to improve participation. She was thinking of doing some form of tree planting.

Meeting adjourned

The next Environmental Committee will be Tuesday, March 2nd, 2021.