Town of North Beach

Environmental Committee Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, November 16, 2021

7 PM via Zoom

Attendees: Stacy Milor, Guy Stone, Lisa Garrett, Jeff Noyes, Elizabeth Lawton (replacing Jane Hagen as liaison), Sean Mansperger.

Agenda and discussion: This meeting focused on the NB Environmental Awards program/Green Scorecard.

Environmental Awards Program

* Guy opened the discussion talking about the challenge of having very disparate types of businesses/residences. Each should have the opportunity to achieve a good green score by tailoring/adjusting the scorecard categories/criteria so that only the applicable or achievable goals are scored for a given business.
* Elizabeth, as the new liaison, asked for some background info on the origin of the green awards program. Was the program being put in place to align the town with a state or other mandate? Lisa discussed that this program would be similar to those in place for other MD municipalities. Jeff stated that the EC specifically was working on it because the mayor tasked the EC to develop the program. Guy said that part of the driver was tie-ins to the sustainable MD program goals, and further elaborated on the ways in which having a program like this serve to educate the public, both businesses and residences and create awareness of green/sustainable practices. He felt that the most important thing about this program is that it encourages residents, many of whom are not doing anything at all currently in terms of green practices, to begin to do so.
* Elizabeth said she would circle back to the mayor and try to get more clarification on the program. She felt it was important to be aligned with the state and county, that with limited resources we need to be selective about creating programs for the right reasons.
* Guy provided Elizabeth with information on a smaller, related initiative the EC did to discourage the use of plastic straws and encourage the use of biodegradable straws by town businesses. With the state’s planned ban on Styrofoam containers and push to eliminate plastic straws, these would be low pressure ways to help the town move in the right direction.
* Lisa asked if ultimately a separate or subcommittee of the EC might run the green awards program. Guy didn’t feel this was necessary but did think the EC would benefit from as many as 10 people to support initiatives like this.
* Jeff added that he felt it was important to create this program as something that is *offered* to businesses and residents to apply for (by advertising the program and EC tables at farmers market and other events), but that EC members shouldn’t be expected to ask businesses to apply in the way they approached businesses about plastic straws. This would be too aggressive. Rather, voluntary participants in the program should see the value on their own and choose to apply.
* Lisa said that she plans to have “Green Walking Tours” of the town in which people tour the town, either on their own or with a guide, and they would see the green award placards to highlight the good things people were doing and encourage others to participate. Rain gardens are an example.
* Jeff mentioned the Baywise program might be a good source of criteria for the green awards, at least for residents.
* As the discussion evolved, it became evident that we may need to have separate scorecards for businesses and residences. Guy shared the draft scorecard via zoom during the discussion. He added that the most important thing about this program is that it has to be fair, that all participants must be able to achieve a green score by doing those things that are applicable to their unique situation.
* The possibility was raised of businesses sponsoring a cleanup day, or groups of individuals getting together to achieve something they could not do on their own, or achieving a goal that didn’t directly apply to them as individuals because a particular scored item wasn’t applicable to the particular residence or business.

Community Conservation News

* The Crafty Campfire is coming up at Wetlands Overlook Park November 20th. Garden Club will be making pinecone turkeys. Marshmallow roasting and turkey trivia. Another will be December 11th on the same day the garden club has the poinsettia pickup.
* Lisa passed that an Earth Day celebration will be held on April 23, 2022. She hopes for participation from the Environmental, Tree, and Stormwater committees, so that residents can learn more about the committee activities.
* The October 22nd Owl-O-Ween event was very successful – over 100 people attended.
* The Tree Committee will be planting a tree at Town Hall. There was mention of future tree giveaways to residents in the future with possible support from the EC.
* Lisa will be creating a display on how long products take to biodegrade for use at the farmers market table.

Meeting adjourned

The next Environmental Committee meeting will be December 7th, 2021