

Town of North Beach  
Environmental Committee Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, March 1, 2022  
7 PM at Town Hall

Attendees: Lisa Garrett, Jeff Noyes, Elizabeth Lawton, Guy Stone, Allan Creamer, ,  
Herb Wolff, Tom Litke

Agenda and discussion: This meeting introduced Tom Litke/Community Resilience Partners, included updates on county environmental news, and discussed recycling at length.

Administrative Discussion

- Elizabeth asked if the EC falls under the Open Meetings Act – Guy explained that because the EC was non-partisan, not paid, all volunteer group, that we do not fall under the statute. Lisa added that we do have to post agenda and minutes.
- Jeff explained that the meeting minutes should be reviewed internally by the committee before being forwarded to town staff. This had changed when Jane Hagen passed, but the procedure will be restored with these March minutes.
- Elizabeth explained that committees in general are being looked at by the town – how and why they are established, why they are disbanded, how they align with town governing documents and the comprehensive plan. She added that soon the committee will/should take a fresh look at its mission and strategic alignment.

Jane Hagen Memorial Tree Planting

- Jeff shared that John Hagen selected Saturday, April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022 as the date for the memorial tree planting ceremony (new info since the meeting – ceremony will be at 11AM, and John Hagen will bring the plaque with him), and also that John approved the estimate from Garner Landscaping that Stacy provided. Earth Day is the day before.
- Remaining planning will need to be done by the town. A time will need to be selected, as well as working out the ceremony, exact location for the tree planting, who will attend, etc.

Maryland Commission on Climate Change (MCCC)

- Herb reported on his following of multiple MD working groups
  - Adaptation and Resiliency Working Group (contingency planning group for environmental events): This 60 person group was ID'd as the pilot group at the federal level. – Eastern Shore water studies
  - Mitigation Working Group: focus is on the atmosphere and greenhouse gases. MD Zero emissions initiative expects to have 60% of vehicles in MD be electric vehicles by 2030. This group is planning a network of charging stations across MD w/federal funds.
- Herb plans to attend these monthly meetings and report back
- Elizabeth asked that Herb find out about any planned air quality initiatives

#### Maryland Planning Commission

- Elizabeth provided a handout which was a single slide from a larger presentation. She asked that the team review slides and presentation materials provided by email for discussion at the April meeting.

#### Tom Litke/Community Resilience Partners

- Brochure handout provided. Tom's interest is in community resiliency, both environmental and social, primarily supported by restoring outdoor spaces that people get together for socializing.
- Tom is aware of the flooding issues in NB – may be able to provide resources to help as part of a focused effort on low-lying areas on the western shore.
- Tom has met with Donnie Bowen, the mayor, and town council – offered his services to chase grants that may help NB with environmental issues.
- Identifying what is *most important* to the town is critical to obtaining support.

#### Recycling Program/Campaign

- Elizabeth explained that the NB trash collection contract is up this year.
- She met with Stacy, Dawn & Lisa to discuss NB's recycling campaign materials. They came up with 5 points that will also be discussed at the upcoming council work session.
- Question 1 (of 2) to EC: how did we get where we are today, with the recycle day being misinterpreted by residents as a third "trash" day (mixing recycles with regular trash)?
  - Guy explained that originally, there were bins for each type of recycling, which made it difficult to get the wrong stuff in the bins. But now with mixed recycling, residents make less effort to put the right materials in the single bin. He suggested that a sampling of bins on Tuesday night could be used to quantify the nature of the problem. He explained that a "tipping fee" is not charged for properly recycled materials, but when the recycle bin is contaminated by non-recyclables, the contractor charges a tipping fee for that load. He believes that if/when residents understand that they are paying for that contaminated recycling load with their taxes, behavior might change.
  - Allan added that there is confusion about what is supposed to go in the bins because Calvert County's recycling guide differs from NB's contracted recycler requires (because our recycling leaves the county)
  - Jeff suggested that Guy already provided the answer to the problem: *separate bins for each type of recycling*. He asserted that more training on what should go in the mixed bin won't help – NB has been attempting to do that for years, without success. He also suggested that the program be voluntary – only provide bins to those residents who ask to participate.
  - Allan said that if NB intends to go back to single stream recycling, residents should be surveyed to determine who would be willing to

participate. Guy believes that single stream would not be accepted by residents.

- Elizabeth said that it had been suggested that larger recycle bins would solve the problem. The team rejected that notion, concluding that a larger bin would only amplify the problem, resulting in a larger bin with even more contaminated recyclables.
- Elizabeth also raised the issue of reducing the number of pickup days to 1 recycling, and 1 regular trash. Guy commented that there is no limit to the number of cans or amount of trash, so there will just be more on the curb on those days. So the result would just be more cans.
- She added that approximately 50% of homes are owner occupied, and the other 50% are a mix of different kinds of rentals. Compliance with trash rules needs to taken into account absentee landlords, short term rentals, and all others.
- Herb said he has seen communities that use only recycle and trash convenience centers, with no local pickup (New York and (from Tom, Delaware examples)).
- Question 2 (of 2) to EC: how do you see this playing out?
  - Allan – some residents are confused, some don't care, some don't live here (short term renters)
  - Tom – most likely, one third of residents are compliant, one third doesn't care (and never will), and one third *could* become compliant with motivation. The issue is whether you want to go after that third.
  - Elizabeth – cost is the ultimate driver, but not from a contractual low-bidder standpoint. The question is what “best value” looks like.
  - Tom – What is most important for this committee?
  - Jeff asked if a pound of recycling costs the same, more or less than a pound of trash? If cost the real driver, knowing this will be necessary to move forward. Guy reiterated about the tipping fee.

#### Sustainable Maryland

- Elizabeth said now that the SM re-certification was awarded, the EC needs to look at priorities for the next 2 or 3 years. What are state/county/SM requirements, and what does NB want to achieve? We should include other NB committees, residents and EC team members concerns in setting priorities/goals.
- As Elizabeth mentioned the mission statement in discussing the SM program, Guy relayed that the mission statement of the EC exists because the SM program required that we have a mission statement, so it doesn't map back to anything specific about what the EC was at its inception.

Meeting adjourned

The next Environmental Committee meeting will be April 5, 2022