

Town of North Beach  
Environmental Committee Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, February 5th, 2019  
7 PM

Attendees: Jane Hagen, Veronica Cristo, Karyn Molines, Jeff Noyes, Guy Stone.  
Guests: Lisa Garret, Herb Wolf, Denise Lagrange, Sandra Raviv, Rit Aldi

Agenda and discussion: This meeting centered mainly on Parks Manager roles and responsibilities, along with the factors that will influence them as the beach evolves. There were also discussions with the new mayor about past and future committee initiatives.

Guest Comments/Issues

- There were 5 guests in attendance. As a courtesy, the committee let them speak before moving to planned committee discussions. Their ideas and related discussion follow here:

Community Garden in Town Right of Way at Greenwood and 5<sup>th</sup> St

- Rit Aldi raised an issue in the context of storm water management. His idea was to build a garden at the top of 5<sup>th</sup> Street where Greenwood would go through if there were a street there. The location is adjacent to where the NB welcome sign is on the right side coming into town. He continued, suggesting that storm water piping might be used to channel water into a community garden, possibly using catch basins of some sort to store some of the water. This would essentially replace the road right of way with a community garden. Karyn and Guy recommended that the town council would be the best group to approach with the idea. Karyn reviewed the mission of the EC, indicating that since what Rit was talking about was a green space, the EC would be involved in the project should it move forward. Veronica commented that the garden could be a great opportunity to educate citizens on what they can do in their own yards such as how to make a rain garden or deal with a boggy spot or mosquito control. She also said that Calvert county has just reached a threshold where it has to focus seriously on storm water management – that perhaps this sight could attract funding since they’re looking at NB as part of the effort, so the timing is good for the idea.

Tree Ordinance in NB

- Denise LaGrange asked if there is a tree ordinance in NB. Karyn explained that there is a tree ordinance, and there was a tree committee (now defunct and not funded). She said the ordinance protects public trees, but not private, and that it was findable on the town’s website. Denise followed up, asking about whether there was a requirement for developers to replace a certain percentage of trees removed on developed land. Karyn answered in two parts. The first is that the town had it’s own zoning, the other is related to critical areas law. But because

much of NB was developed prior to the law, it is exempt. San Francisco wasn't in NB when developed, but annexed later. Denise discussed her observation that many residential lots have been developed without trees being replaced.

- Karyn explained that the ordinance doesn't regulate private development of that kind. Denise asked if there was a tree replacement plan. Karyn said that would be something for the tree committee to come up with. Jeff mentioned that there were 2 volunteers for the tree committee that has not formed yet, and Karyn added that NB is legally required to have a tree committee. Jane suggested that there may be a way to fund the committee again through the new eco-tourism position. Denise said it would be great for the community to have a tree committee again that would focus on replanting trees in green spaces in NB.
- Jeff explained that the committee recognizes the importance of the issues guests were raising, but that they present real challenges for the town because no paid staff are assigned to focusing on environmental issues. He continued with an explanation of how the EC is working toward that type of hire for the town, indicating that Lisa's presence at the meeting was a result of that effort. The EC, is all volunteer, and so too would be the tree committee, but without a paid staffer leading, the committee's efforts can easily fail in their execution.

#### Shrub Planting Program

- Herb Wolf suggested that shrubs are really important as well, that volunteers could help resident plant shrubs in their yard if residents are amenable to allowing it. Karyn reiterated Jeff's comment that without a paid staffer to do the coordination and promotion, it's tough to make it happen. Herb, an outing leader for the Sierra Club, said that the club is looking to do more of this kind of work in communities to promote awareness of the natural environment. Karyn recommended presenting the idea (as the Sierra Club) directly to town council, but also indicated that the committee was hopeful about having the paid staffer soon. Veronica told Herb that if he was interested in doing a citizen to citizen kind of program, that she'd be happy to use Chesapeake's Bounty as a staging/pickup area for club-provided discounted shrubs as part of a larger effort the Sierra Club might make in helping citizen's do shrub planting with volunteer assistance. Lisa talked about the importance of making those plants native as part of best-management practices, as well as providing training on those practices.

#### Chipping/Mulching/Composting

- Herb explained that he has a large amount of yard waste from trimming trees and shrubs, and that it was difficult to get it picked up on trash days, that they're not always picking up grass clippings in paper bags. Jane commented that it should be picked up on normal trash days, but Karyn advocated strongly for composting, and also that she owns and uses a wood chipper as well. Herb didn't want to own his own wood chipper, and talked about maybe having a central composting site in town, but Guy said that when he researched it, there simply wasn't appropriate space. The runoff issue alone made it impossible. Lisa suggested that perhaps a chipper could be made available for residents on

plant the town day. Karyn said home composting is best because it's small scale and manageable.

### Regular Committee Business

#### FCC & 5G (Small Cell)

- Jane reviewed the design guidelines for subject equipment. She said that if the town wants to have input on how the install is done, they have to have their guidelines in place ahead of time prior to cell provider install planning. She provided paper copies of pictures of demo installs. There is a joint NB/CB group that is working through the process of how to manage the installs in town. Herb said that the home component of this system is something analogous to a dish. The town won't likely have a choice about the technology being installed, but we will be able to steer the install some. Jane did say that we could require that once the system has run its lifecycle, we could require the 5G provider to de-install the equipment and restore the site to its prior condition. Jane indicated that the town's main concern is how the system looks. For example, some of the pictures indicated that poles might be extended in height, which may not be desired aesthetically. DC has a lot of this equipment already installed and visible.

#### City Nature Challenge

- Karyn talked about an upcoming initiative in which she'd like NB to participate called the City Nature Challenge that takes place April 26-29. Over 100 cities are competing to document the most biodiversity. Calvert is part of the Washington DC coalition. Calvert is included because we have two Nature Conservancy sites. It uses the iNaturalist for smartphones that lets you easily record and upload observations of plants and animals. Millions of people using that app, along with built-in artificial intelligence, can help novices identify what they see. Technically, it's not meant for plants that are "cultivated" in residents' gardens, but there is a way in the app to log those too.
- Karyn would like the EC to recommend that the town participate in the challenge. CB with Keith Pardiac is already participating. She would like to do a training and "identification party" on Saturday, March 30th that essentially uses sightings from last year as the basis for making new observations with the group of trainees, while using the iNaturalist app. Lisa added that National Parks use does "bio-blitzes" and photos to show previous observations in the parks. It is a fun activity that Karyn does with the MD Biodiversity Project that would greatly improve residents' awareness of nature. More info is available at [CalvertParks.org](http://CalvertParks.org) about the City Nature Challenge. The team agreed that this activity should definitely be recommended to the town council.
- Karyn asked Jane who she should contact about officially being a sponsor of the Challenge with the logo, etc if the town was to sponsor it. Jane recommended Dawn be the POC.

### Plastic Straws to Paper (or no straws)

- Jane raised the issue of plastic straws at restaurants, saying how Mayor Benton wanted the EC to work directly with businesses vs. having a public campaign against plastic straws. The committee went over all the potential businesses, including convenience stores that might also have them. Jane asked the committee members to go to the businesses and discuss with them. Sandra suggested that when businesses are contacted, that perhaps they consider they're wait staffs simply ask patrons if they need a straw instead of automatically giving them one. Jane asked the committee to think about the issue so that we can determine the best approach at an upcoming meeting.
- Veronica pointed out that there is a cost to businesses to make this change, as paper or compostable products do cost more than the plastic alternative.

### Eco-Tourism Director PD vs. Parks Manager PD

- Jane provided a new job description for the Eco-Tourism director, which is the current evolution of the Parks Manager position the team has been working on for more than a year. Jeff pointed out that the current PD omits most of the detail that was in the original Parks Manager PD, but the team felt that the new description mostly captures the spirit of the original, plus allows for more opportunities to get grant money to achieve some of the team's goals. Further, the most important thing at this point is to actually get the hire completed so that work can begin. The team has always expected the job to change as talents of the hire best work with the town's evolving needs anyway. Jane said the money was already in the budget for the position, and that the council wants to get it in there for 2020 as well (currently in process).
- Karyn said the tree committee should be added back into the description, as well as Sustainable Maryland. Guy reminded the team that the mayor will be setting the hire's priorities on a daily basis, so the description isn't necessarily in need of more specifics. He recommended that where the description reads "Will collaborate with Environmental & EDC committees", the words "and initiatives" should be added to cover Karyn's suggested additions. Karyn was firm on getting the words "Sustainable Maryland" into the description.
- Veronica pointed out that the new position description seems to underestimate the amount of time required to accomplish the activities – that the first 3 bullets could consume all the time of the hire, none of which include the educational component that the committee feels so strongly about. Lisa stated that she has lots of experience in performing the work in the description and was comfortable with it.

Meeting adjourned

Next meetings (Tentatively):

March 5th

April 2nd