

Draft

Town of Boonsboro

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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

TUESDAY, February 8, 2022

PRESENT: *Commission Members:* Chairperson Cassandra Ladino, Kristen Disbennett, Amy Jones, Kim Pruitt, Laura Schnackenberg, Janeen Solberg, Kathy Vesely, Andy Watson, Barb Wetzell, Town Council Liaison Terri Hollingshead

ABSENT: All present

GUESTS: Eric Kitchen, Chair, American Rescue Plan Capital Planning Task Force

PRESIDING: Chairperson Ladino called the regular meeting to order at 7:02 PM.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The January 2022 minutes were reviewed and approved with one correction.

OLD BUSINESS

2021 Annual Report: The BEC reviewed the 2021 Annual Report and discussed minor updates and corrections. The Annual Report was unanimously approved as updated.

American Rescue Plan Submission: Eric Kitchen was in attendance for further discussion of the American Rescue Plan (ARP). Detailed project information is not needed at this juncture. Chairperson Ladino will clean up the BEC's list and email to Eric.

BEC's initial list includes:

1. Community Garden
2. GIS Consultant for GIS asset inventory
3. Antietam Creek Watershed restoration project
4. Added / improved sidewalks and hiking/biking trails
5. Arboretum/outdoor museum/small nature center
6. Funds for repurposing vacant lots / buildings owned by the town
7. Glass Crushing Machine

April Newsletter: We will need to finalize the newsletter topic during the March BEC meeting as newsletter content deadline is mid-March. Potential topics include information about the Green Fest Swap and Recycling event scheduled for May 14, information about where items can be recycled outside of Green Fest and the annual bulk trash drop off event, and a reminder that trash needs to be bagged inside of trashcans when set out for trash pickup. We'd also like to include an updated interest survey for the Community Garden (including assessing interest in volunteers and donating surplus food to community food banks).

NEW BUSINESS

Community Garden: Potential Community Garden locations will be reviewed by the Park Board during their February 9, 2022 meeting.

Planning for Annual Budget Projects: A reminder to keep an eye open for grant opportunities and matching funds to supplement the BEC budget with an eye toward the goals listed in the BEC Strategic Plan.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:

Solid Waste Reduction:

The Green Fest Swap and Recycling event will be held May 14, 2022 from 9-2 at Shafer Park. We are looking to maintain or expand upon last year's event in terms of swapping and recycling opportunities. Volunteers are needed during the event as well as after to help distribute the items collected. Also worth noting: unlike the larger Green Fest event which was funded through vendor fees and sponsorships, the Swap and Recycling event has no revenue source and will likely require some financial support in the coming years as remaining Green Fest funds run out.

Strategic Plan/Grants:

AARP offers a Community Challenge Grant. The Town's grant writer has offered to assist with the grant application which could potentially be used toward the Community Garden or any of the BEC Strategic Plan initiatives. Chairperson Ladino will send the link to BEC members.

Washington County approved use of ARP funds for a Community Investment Grant program that offers matching funds for "outdoor and neighborhood improvements". Chairperson Ladino will send link to this as well, and we can discuss further at the March BEC meeting.

The Town is applying for Sustainable Community Designation which allows the Town to apply for related grants and other designations prior to being awarded the Sustainable Community Designation.

Beautification (Trees/Green Spaces/Gardening):

The Tree Board plans to submit an application to the Maryland Urban and Community Forestry Committee (MUCFC) requesting \$1000.00 with the intent of using it for new educational tree signage in the park (six signs), at Town Hall (one sign), and at the School Campus (one sign). Thanks to BEC/Tree Board member Kim Pruitt for all of the hard work she has put into this initiative!

Public Education/Outreach/Speakers:

Susan Simonson from the Antietam Creek Watershed Alliance (ACWA) will join us at our March BEC meeting to speak about stream temperature monitoring in local streams and creeks.

SMC Green Team: No report

Nominating Committee: Nominating Committee will be dormant until September.

Community Garden:

Potential funding opportunities and locations were discussed during the course of the BEC meeting. A Community Garden survey was done approximately 10 years ago, and there was a lot of community interest at that time. The BEC will be sending out a new Community Garden survey in the April water bill to ensure that there is a sustained level of interest.

Energy:

The EV station is still being used on a regular basis. Although Shafer Park was previously considered but ultimately dismissed as an EV charging site, the BEC is interested in investigating the potential for a charging station at the park. It's a highly utilized area and the BEC would like to locate a charging station in a visible area. There was further discussion related to the potential for Federal Infrastructure funds for additional charging stations.

TOWN UPDATE:

No Town Update as the February Mayor and Council Meeting is not until next Monday.

COMMISSION MEMBER COMMENTS:

Vice Chair Schnackenberg commented that she read an excellent article about community gardening in *YES! Magazine* on line. Schnackenberg will share the link.

Commission Member Vesely commented that President Biden is supposed to share news about a factory he wants to have built in Tennessee to produce EV charging stations.

Vesely also commented that she is still able to collect a grocery bag full of litter daily on her walk around the neighborhood.

ADJOURN: The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 PM

**Respectfully submitted by
Amy Jones, BEC Secretary**

***Next meeting: TUESDAY March 8, 2022 – Regular meeting at 7:00.**

Any person desiring a transcript of tonight's meeting shall be responsible for a competent stenographer. Items on this agenda are subject to change at the discretion of the Chairman.

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