

**Draft**

**Town of Boonsboro**

21 North Main Street, Boonsboro, Maryland 21713

Telephone: (301) 432-5141

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION**

**TUESDAY, February 14, 2023**

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**PRESENT:** *Commission Members:* Chairperson Cassandra Ladino, Kristen Disbennett, Amy Jones, Laura Schnackenberg, Janeen Solberg, Kathy Vesely, Andy Watson, Barbara Wetzel

**ABSENT:** Town Council Liaison Terri Hollingshead, Kim Pruitt

**PRESIDING:** Chairperson Ladino called the regular meeting to order at 7:34 PM.

**Guest:** Life Scout Grant Hausler from Boy Scout Troop 20 attended the BEC meeting to present his Eagle Scout project idea. Grant is proposing to construct and install raised garden beds and a drip irrigation system at the community garden. Fund raisers and/or donations would be required to finance the project. Chairperson Ladino suggested Earth Easy's raised bed kits as an example of how the beds might look, but the Community Garden Committee is open to design ideas. As a takeaway we will need to investigate ADA standards for wheelchair accessible garden box height. The BEC provided tentative approval to accept Grant's proposal, but this will have to go to the Mayor and Council for final approval.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** The January minutes were reviewed and unanimously approved with corrections.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Community Garden:**

- Final approval to move forward with Community Garden was received by Mayor and Council.
- Fencing will have to go through RFQ process for bids, and the Town will need to mark the final perimeter of the garden site.

**Dedication:** A plaque in memory of Bruce Schmidt will be dedicated on April 23, 2023 at 1:00 during the Town's Arbor Day celebration. The BEC will be requesting that a formal invitation be sent from the Town to members of the Schmidt family. Commission Member Wetzel authored an invitation letter to the family which will come from the mayor.

**Compost Bins:** In addition to the ten compost bins that the BEC was aware of, Commission Member Vesely found 14 additional bins, bringing the total to 24. Vesely proposed that the Town keep 14 (four for the Community Garden and ten on hand for any Boonsboro residents who want them), and offer the remaining ten to Keedysville. Town Council approved this plan at February 13, 2023 Mayor and Council meeting. The BEC will include a notice in the April Town Newsletter that compost bins are available.

**New EV Station:** First Energy is still finalizing sites for additional charging stations, and will follow up with the town if another EV station is still an option for Boonsboro.

**Apple Valley Waste tour:** Commission Member Solberg will be reaching out to Apple Valley Waste (AVW) for the Swap and Recycling event in May and will take the opportunity to also inquire about a tour of the AVW facilities.

**April Town Newsletter:** The BEC column for the April Town Newsletter will focus on the Community Garden as well as the aforementioned notice about the compost bins and information about the May 13<sup>th</sup> Swap and Recycle event.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**BEC Goals for 2023:** The BEC discussed possible top priorities for 2023.

- Commission Member Wetzel suggested composting and consistent glass recycling. Is there potential for compost pickup by Key City Compost at Farmer's Market? Commission Member Solberg volunteered to reach out to Key City Compost for a commercial bid. [Note that the compost bins at the community garden are intended for garden debris only.]
- The BEC Strategic Plan includes a component for a walking program to promote healthy living. When the trail circuit through the park is completed do we want to develop a program in conjunction with the circuit (i.e.: mileage markers along the trail)? What kind of funding would we need for this? There will be new grant opportunities forthcoming this year in conjunction with becoming an Appalachian Trail Community as well as for other programs.
- Commission Member Disbennett suggested repurposing some of the Town's weedy open spaces to grow pollinator gardens, plant trees, and host bee hotels. Chairperson Ladino commented that there are grant opportunities to improve unused spaces, and noted that a lot of the vacant lots are already slated to have trees planted on them.

## **SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Energy:** Commission Member Watson reported that the EV charging station sees consistent use. Watson also noted that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) changed the ruling on the Tesla Model Y from sedan to SUV thus raising the cap to \$80K and making it eligible for the full \$7500 EV tax credit.

### **Solid Waste Reduction:**

- The Spring Recycling and Swap event is scheduled for Saturday, May 13, 2023.
- The Solid Waste Reduction Subcommittee met in January with Jim King of Crushin' It. Jim shared information about a number of organizations and municipalities across the country that have taken glass recycling into their own hands. Although Jim has a smaller glass crushing machine (which costs approximately \$18k), his sense is that it would be too small for an entire town's needs. Jim recommends the GP MegaMini Glass Pulverizer by Andela Products ([andelaproducts.com](http://andelaproducts.com)). This system starts at about \$60k, is large enough to support a municipal program, and would not require a person to hand-feed bottles into the machine. As the glass machine would require a roof over it, the entire investment would probably be \$75-\$100k. Grants or a Go Fund Me account are viable options to finance this endeavor. The subcommittee also wondered about the possibility of engaging neighboring communities as a way to share the expense. Maryland Department of the Environment has great information about grant opportunities for this kind of operation.
- The town's yard debris collection site is a possible area to accommodate the glass crushing operation.
- The subcommittee is also considering ways to sell/utilize the finished sand product. For example, the town of Winchester, VA uses the sand to line pathways.
- Composting: Commission Member Disbennett wondered if any of the Farmers Market vendors would be interested in collecting compost if they had a use for it for their farming operations.

**Strategic Plan/Grants:** BEC members are encouraged to research grants for composting and glass recycling. For any BEC goal or subcommittee priority, members are also encouraged to outline the project and budget to support the grant request and seek any necessary Town approvals. Chairperson Ladino is able to help with the grant writing and submission once these details are finalized.

### **Beautification (Trees/Green Spaces/Gardening):**

- The BEC will be working with two scouts on their Eagle Scout projects.
- BEC would like to purchase and plant some creeping thyme for the Monarch Waystation Garden to help discourage weeds. Commission Member Solberg suggested Plant Path Nursery in Knoxville as an excellent source for plants.

- The Town is moving forward with the GIS project to collect the tree inventory.
- Sycamore Run will be getting some attention in terms of plantings and trees this year.

**Public Education/Outreach/Speakers:**

- Vice Chairperson Schnackenberg has not heard back from Key City Compost. Commission Member Solberg volunteered to reach out to them.
- We are also hoping to schedule a Master Gardener for the March or April BEC meeting to discuss native plant gardening (both pollinators and edibles).
- Chairperson Ladino mentioned a Garden Planning class being offered by someone in the Master Gardener program, and will forward the link to register for the class.

**Sustainable Maryland Certified (SMC) Green Team:** The Green Team had a meeting on February 1, 2023. They reviewed the list of SMC activities and will look at opportunities in town that count toward SMC credits. Next Green Team meeting will be March 9<sup>th</sup>.

**Nominating Committee:** Inactive until September 2023.

**Community Garden:** See “Guest” section above for updates.

**TOWN UPDATE:**

No Town Update as Town Liaison Hollingshead was absent.

**COMMISSION MEMBER COMMENTS:**

- The Farmers Market Board welcomed two new members, Janeen Solberg and Barbara Wetzel. Vendor letters have gone out and many vendors are already looking for applications. The Farmers Market is looking forward to another amazing season!
- Vice Chair Schnackenberg recommends a stipend for Kathy Vesely for her role as liaison between the Farmers Market and the BEC. This is something that the Farmers Market board will need to decide and vote on.
- Arbor Day/Earth Day – Appalachian Trail Advisory Committee wants to lead a mini-hike through the park and incorporate some sort of art project.
- Appalachian Trail Community Designation Ceremony for Boonsboro will be June 3, 2023. The BEC will be coordinating an art project geared toward families with young children at this event. We are also considering providing education about the “Leave No Trace” initiative (<https://Int.org/our-work/international/>)
- Commission Member Vesely would like to utilize the former Green Fest storage closet at the Community Center to store Farmers Market things.
- The BEC would like to further investigate Bee and Pollinator Hotels for the park, possibly in coordination with the Cub Scout Troop. This would need to go to the Park Board and then to the Mayor and Council for approval. Safety precautions were discussed and need to be taken into consideration.

**ADJOURN:** The meeting was adjourned at 8:58PM

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

**\*Next meeting: TUESDAY March 14, 2023 – Regular meeting at 7:00 at Town Annex.**

*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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