

Draft

Town of Boonsboro

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**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
TUESDAY, April 12, 2022**

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

ABSENT: Andy Watson

PRESIDING: Chairperson Ladino called the regular meeting to order at 7:03 PM.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The March 2022 minutes were reviewed and approved with corrections.

OLD BUSINESS

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Submission: The Environmental Commission submitted its recommendations to the ARPA task force. There have been no updates to date. Commission Member Wetzel inquired if the Mayor & Council had made any decisions regarding projects and was advised that they have not and likely will not until early summer.

Community Garden: The preliminary community garden design and budget were presented to the Mayor & Council at their March 14th meeting.

April Newsletter: Chairperson Ladino and Commission Member Vesely submitted an article about the community garden and Spring gardening and pollinator tips for the April Town newsletter.

Farmers Market: Representatives from the Farmers Market committee attended the April Mayor & Council meeting to provide information about this year's market. The Economic Development Commission (EDC) extended an invitation to the Mayor & Council and County Commissioners to the May 3rd Farmers Market ribbon cutting ceremony.

NEW BUSINESS

Budget: The BEC's Special Projects budget in the amount of \$12,500.00 was approved by the Mayor & Council. The BEC hopes to receive matching funds from Washington County's ARPA Community Investment funds with the intent of utilizing this funding to develop infrastructure for the community garden.

Swap and Recycling Event: Flyers for the Swap and Recycling event were printed at a cost of \$210.00. A motion was made and seconded authorizing the \$210.00 to be paid from BEC budget.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:

Solid Waste Reduction:

- Commission Member Solberg asks that anyone who is available please come help out at the Swap and Recycling event on May 14th. Volunteer opportunities are available on Friday afternoon, May 13th, starting at 3 pm for clothing swap collection and sorting, and Saturday, May 14th starting at 7:00 am. The event ends at 2:00, but we'll need volunteer help until 3:30 pm.
- Flyers are available to anyone who wants to post them and/or distribute them. This free event is open to the public, not just town residents. Note: There is a charge of \$5/can to recycle paint.
- Potomac Edison will be donating over 100 trees for us to give out at the plant swap.

- Apple Valley Waste has confirmed their availability for the Swap and Recycling event. SSL hours can be earned, but the volunteer will need to bring his/her own volunteer sheet and will need to sign up in advance.
- Commission Member Wetzel commented that there will be a trailer available for book collection which we can then move to our storage area for sorting.

Strategic Plan/Grants: Chairperson Ladino inquired if anyone has ideas or suggestions for additional grants and to please give this some thought. Commission Member Wetzel inquired when the Strategic Plan is updated. Normally, the BEC reviews and updates the Strategic Plan annually in the fall. The BEC discussed reaching out to the Town's grant writer from time-to-time to see if she's aware of any grant opportunities, especially if we have a project in mind.

Beautification (Trees/Green Spaces/Gardening):

- The next Tree Board meeting will be held on April 20th. The Arbor Day and stream clean up event will be held on April 24th in Shafer Park.
- Commission Member Pruitt reported that the MUCFC grant application submitted in February will have to be resubmitted in July for the next funding cycle as they ran out of funding for the first cycle.
- Commission Member Pruitt inquired if there's any opportunity to improve the appearance of the rotary at the south end of town with some additional plantings. This would need to be approved by the Town, and it would be best to have funding secured and a landscape plan in advance. Town Council Liaison Hollingshead will check with the Town Manager to see if the State Highway Administration would need to be consulted about this since it's a state road.
- Commission Member Vesely will contact the scouts to see what their plans are for the Monarch Butterfly Waystation. Some milkweed needs to be planted.
- Chairperson Ladino noted that some new trees were planted near the school campus and was curious who planted them. She will bring this up at the upcoming Tree Board meeting.

Public Education/Outreach/Speakers: No update.

SMC Green Team: Commission Member Vesely attended another Sustainable Maryland Zoom meeting and learned about growing a "food forest", which encourages growing "up" with fruit trees and bushes (i.e.: berries) in addition to regular vegetable plantings at a community garden. This can earn points toward Sustainable Maryland. Commission Member Solberg commented that Plant Path Nursery in Knoxville, MD specializes in food-bearing trees (nuts and fruit).

Commission Members Vesely and Wetzel had a follow-up meeting with Dave Tilley, a professor from University of Maryland, to solicit his opinion on larger trees appropriate for planting at the parking lot where the Farmers Market is held. Professor Tilley suggested the idea of a "living wall". The structure and plants could potentially cost approximately \$6000.00; however, Professor Tilley is going to visit the site and follow up with an assessment of cost and wall placement. Commission Member Vesely will follow up with Professor Tilley. Commission Member Pruitt suggested that the BEC coordinate with the Town for a potential grant from Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Project Open Spaces. The potential for funding for this year is slim, so we might have to apply this year for next year's funding.

Chairperson Ladino noted that there's the possibility of some trees for the parking lot through the Chesapeake Bay Trust grant via Antietam Conococheague Watershed Alliance (ACWA).

A reminder that the Master Gardener Plant Sale is April 23rd 8-12 at the Ag Center. Arrive early for the best selection!

Nominating Committee: Nominating Committee inactive until September.

Community Garden: Two grants have been submitted for the Community Garden, one to American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) and the second to Lowe's Hometowns. We don't expect to hear back until mid-May for either grant. The BEC discussed the possibility of getting trees for the Community Garden from Potomac Edison, keeping in mind that we don't want to have too much shade in the garden.

Energy: Commission Member Wetzel commented that she receives numerous offers from companies that want to provide their solar power. Wetzel cautioned that these businesses are not as transparent as they let on, and it's better to select your own energy source through Potomac Edison.

TOWN UPDATE: Town Council Liaison Hollingshead provided highlights from the April 11th Mayor & Council including the possible cancellation of some town events due to ongoing projects and sourcing issues.

COMMISSION MEMBER COMMENTS:

Commission Member Vesely wondered if the parking lots at the new High's and Post Office will be a permeable surface? Commission Member Wetzel commented that there is a Town Ordinance that specifies certain construction parameters. Wetzel and Vesely will reach out to the Town Planner, Riley Stanley, and inquire about the parking lot surface.

Commission Member Vesely reported that a Farmers Market vendor meeting was held on April 5th. This year's market will include 14 full-time vendors, one drop-in, four part-time vendors, nine food trucks, and five musicians. There will be special events most weeks. A ribbon cutting ceremony is scheduled for May 3rd at 3:55 pm. No single use plastic bags or plastic products will be allowed at this year's market. The market is considering collecting reusable bags from folks and distributing them to those who don't have bags or who forgot to bring them.

The Boonsboro Environmental Commission mourns the passing of Bruce Schmidt, husband of first BEC Chair, Brigitte Schmidt. Brigitte was also an elected Town Council Member for a number of years, and a founding member of Green Fest and the earlier Recycling Task Force. BEC Secretary Jones will send a card to the family on behalf of the BEC. We would also like to consider either a memorial donation or possibly a memorial tree. Chairperson Ladino will check with Jeff Davidson and see if this year's Arbor Day tree is already spoken for and, if not, what is involved with securing a plaque in memory of Bruce.

Assistant Chair Schnackenberg mentioned that the Town's annual Arbor Day ceremony and stream clean-up will be held Sunday, April 24th at 1:00. Please come help! Many hands make light work!

ADJOURN: The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 PM

Respectfully submitted by
Amy Jones, BEC Secretary

***Next meeting: TUESDAY May 10, 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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