

Draft

Town of Boonsboro

21 North Main Street, Boonsboro, Maryland 21713

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

TUESDAY, October 10, 2023

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

ABSENT: Kim Pruitt, Andy Watson

PRESIDING: Vice Chairperson Schnackenberg called the regular meeting to order at 7:31 PM.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The August minutes were reviewed and unanimously approved.

OLD BUSINESS

Potomac Edison will be installing an EV charging station near Pavilion 4 at Shafer Park.

October Town Newsletter: The BEC contributed several articles for the October Town newsletter including: proper pet waste disposal, registration information for the new community garden, information about the Fall Bulk Trash & Recycling event scheduled for October 14th, and a separate flyer detailing the compost pilot program along with composting “Do’s and Don’ts”.

NEW BUSINESS

Compost Bin at Shafer Park: Town Council Liaison Hollingshead shared that, at the September Mayor & Council meeting, the Mayor & Council voted to discontinue the compost bin pilot project after hearing two complaints about alleged odors from the compost bin. The BEC objects to this action by the Mayor & Council for reasons including but not limited to:

- The compost bin issue was not a posted agenda item for the Mayor & Council meeting.
- Funding for the bin comes from the BEC budget.
- No due diligence was performed to examine the terms of the agreement with Key City Compost prior to calling for a vote.
- No attempt was made to communicate concerns about alleged bin odors to the BEC.
- The BEC was given no opportunity to address the alleged odor concerns.
- The compost bin has been heavily advertised in two town newsletters, through social media, and via signage and flyers posted in businesses around town.
- Although the compost bin has been in place for only three months, usage has been steady and strong.

Town Council Liaison Hollingshead will make a motion at the October 23rd Mayor & Council workshop to rescind the motion and related vote to remove the compost bin.

Chairperson Ladino and Commission Member Solberg plan to meet with the Town Manager to express concerns related to this action specifically as well as the town’s policies and procedures for communicating with the various town commissions.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:

Energy: The current charging station located at Town Hall is still being used regularly and recently had the first charge of a Jeep plug-in hybrid.

Solid Waste Reduction:

The Bulk Trash and Recycling event will be held Saturday, October 14th from 8 am -12pm at Shafer Park. Conservit, Goodwill, ReStore, Apple Valley Waste, Washington County 40-West Landfill, Battery One, the Lion’s Club, and Jim King (glass crushing) will be on hand. No appliances with refrigerants will be accepted.

Strategic Plan/Grants: No updates.

Beautification (Trees/Green Spaces/Gardening):

- Trees: still gathering volunteers to tag the trees in the GIS database. This will be discussed further at the next Tree Board meeting.
- Antietam-Conococheague Watershed Alliance (ACWA) is collecting acorns, red bud seed pods, and black walnuts to help with Maryland's "5 Million Trees" initiative. If you have any of the above you can drop them off at the Soil Conservation Office or give to Commission Member Solberg and she'll pass them along.

Public Education/Outreach/Speakers:

- Horizon Goodwill will be at the November BEC meeting to discuss their operations and recycling initiatives.

Sustainable Maryland Certified (SMC) Green Team:

- Commission Member Vesely reported that Boonsboro has been SMC recertified!!
- Commission Members Vesely and Wetzel will be attending the Maryland Municipal League's Fall Conference on October 16th to accept the award.
- Commission Member Vesely plans to attend Middletown's Green Team meeting in December to learn best practices on how they operate. Vice Chairperson Schnackenberg may also attend.
- Neighboring Keedysville has been certified as a Green Community as well! Congrats to Keedysville!!

Nominating Committee:

- The BEC will hold its' annual election for officers (Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary) at the November meeting. Please contact Vice Chairperson Schnackenberg if you are interested in running for an officer position.

Community Garden:

- The Community Garden management team will be putting the bid back out for the fence soon, and continues work on garden rules and regulations. There is a Community Garden meeting next week.

TOWN UPDATE:

Town Council Liaison reported the following from the September Mayor & Council meeting (in addition to the previously-reported compost bin vote):

- A new evergreen tree will be planted in Shafer Park to replace one that is dying.
- Construction Plans have been finalized for Chase Six Blvd extension.
- Town election will be held in May 2024 for mayor and two council seats.

COMMISSION MEMBER COMMENTS:

Commission Secretary Jones will not be renewing for another BEC term.

Commission Member Vesely reported that the Farmers Market end-of-season prize drawing will be held next week (10/17). The following Tuesday, 10/24, is the last week of the Farmer's Market for the 2023 season.

Commission Member Wetzel shared a story from the Washington Post (October 6, 2023 edition) about "Weed Warriors" – concerned citizens who volunteer to clean out nonnative weeds in an effort to protect the region's parks and forests.

Commission Member Solberg shared that locally, ACWA has been doing some work removing invasive English Ivy from trees in City Park. Solberg also commented that a great guest speaker would be someone from the state or county forestry department to share information about invasive plant species and how to eradicate them.

ADJOURN: The meeting was adjourned at 8:48 pm.

Respectfully submitted by
Amy Jones, BEC Secretary

***Next meeting: TUESDAY November 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.