

Mount Rainier Green Team Minutes
January 14, 2019 7:00-9:00 PM
City Hall

Sarah Lifsey
Councilmember Chesek
Stephen “Jackson” Leas
Kevin McNeill
Mimi McKindley-Ward
Valerie Woodall

1. Events

a. Spring Greening Fair

- i. The Fair is scheduled for Saturday, May 4, 2019 from 12-5pm. Sarah has reached out to Miss Bernadine to offer the Green Team’s help but Kevin suggested that calling or meeting in person may work better.
- ii. Green Team member ideas for events include:
 1. Councilmember Chesek has talked with Gabe Popkin of the Tree Commission about doing a native wildflower tour on the morning of the Fair since flowers should be out by early May. This could be coupled with the native plant sale/swap.
 2. Mimi confirmed that the Community Garden plans to have the plant and seed swap again.
 3. Valerie offered to help with the website and event and suggested that the Green Team reach out to local bands such as the Wild Anacostias and Paint Branch Creek to see if they are interested in performing.
 4. Kevin suggested that Joe’s Stream Team hold a trash trap demo and potential event for kids to compete in sorting out recyclables and trash.
- iii. *Councilmember Chesek will reach out to Gabe with the final date of the Spring Greening Fair to discuss details of the native wildflower tour.*
- iv. *Sarah will follow up via phone or in person with Miss Bernadine about planning and will look at next steps for engaging local bands and scheduling events.*

b. Spring trash pick-up event

- i. The spring trash pick-up event is tentative slated for Mid-March; the Team suggested coordination with Joe’s Stream Team to find a date where the Green and Stream Teams can coordinate an event.
- ii. *Sarah will follow up with Kevin and the Stream Team on a March 2019 date for the trash pick-up event.*

2. Solar Workgroup Update

- a. Jackson gave an update on a workgroup meeting with Joseph Jakuta on next steps for the workgroup. One idea was to see if they could do presentations at apartment buildings about Neighborhood Sun/Community Solar. Jackson called around to local apartment buildings but the response was not very promising.
 - i. Kaywood does not have a public space. It is hard to get in the door with Kaywood and Queenstown, but in theory residents are allowed to hold parties in the outside space. Kevin, a resident at Kaywood, may be able to look into hosting a solar party-type event.

- ii. Rainier Manor went straight to voicemail; Jackson left messages with Rainier Manor and Humphrey Management. This is a senior/assisted living space and Councilmember Chesek has a connection and may be able to help the Solar Workgroup make contact.
 - iii. Queenstown does not have a public space and tenants have accounts with Pepco.
 - iv. Queen's Manor Garden Apartments has a public space that can accommodate 10 people and there is Café, an onsite community center, that is a separate business entity but might be able to host an event. The Café contact is Althea Young. Queen's Manor tenants must use Pepco and risk a fine if they deviate from Pepco; however, Neighborhood Sun/Community Solar does work with Pepco accounts. Mimi has a contact with the Café and will reach out to the contact and CC Jackson.
 - v. *Councilmember Chesek will reach out to his contact at Rainer Manor about a potential solar party*
 - vi. *Mimi will reach out to her contact at the Queen's Manor Café about a potential solar party.*
- b. The Solar Workgroup also had an idea for Community Solar with St. James and the Glass Studio. Councilmember Chesek has reached out to St. James but has not heard back.
- i. The Team suggested other potential churches that might be interested in Community Solar or solar panels: the Episcopalian church near Red Dirt and the Lutheran Church on 30th and Bunker Hill. Councilmember Chesek suggested that whoever makes contact also talk to them about storm water management as PG County has a program called Alternative Compliance for Faith-Based Organizations where the stormwater management fee is waived for faith-based organizations if the County is allowed to inspect the property and make needed remediations.
 - ii. Interfaith Power and Light is another potential partner.
 - iii. *Mimi and Jackson are going to go talk to St. James in the next few weeks about Community Solar and stormwater management.*
- c. Another Workgroup initiative is exploring the idea of using a solar array and power wall instead of a diesel backup generator at the Police Station. Councilmember Chesek noted that the station is already using geothermal power.
- d. *Councilmember Chesek will determine who to talk to at Public Works, the Police Station and the Glass Studio about the possibility of solar power.*

3. Grants

- a. **PG Litter Reduction and Citizen Engagement Mini Grant Program**
 - i. This grant is awarded on a rolling basis and the Green Team is considering applying for it to paint storm drains. If the Green Team determines that the City needs to be involved the Team can bring to the February Work Session. Kevin offered to secure a letter of support from the Stream Team if needed. Linda or Cathy from Joe's Creative Works Program would also be good partners to consult.
 - ii. *Valerie will take a look at the PG Litter Reduction and Citizen Engagement Mini Grant Program application and what's needed for it, when we would do it, and who needs to be involved.*
- b. For a future grant project, Valerie suggested creating an art walk with painted crosswalks from Joe's to the elementary schools.

4. Outreach

a. The Message

- i. For the March Message (due 2/11/19) the Stream Team will revise its submission on the litter trap/bandalong. In a future edition the Stream Team may issue a call to action for trash clean-ups.
- ii. For the April Message (due 3/11/19) the Green Team will develop an article promoting the Spring Greening Fair.
- iii. The May Message (due 4/11/19) will either be lead (by Joseph) or an article on apartment access to Neighborhood Sun/Community Solar by the Solar Workgroup.

b. #GreenIsLife Videos

- i. Sarah will follow-up with Doug on potential #GreenIsLife videos such as the corn co-op, winterizing your home and the bandalong/Stream Team. The non-salt de-icer topic is tabled until next winter as Public Works is still finishing up its supply of salt from the past year.

c. Social Media - tabled

5. Waste Reduction

a. Public trash cans and recycling cans

- i. Councilmember Shivali gave a quick overview on the issue of how to add garbage cans in a way that doesn't add more garbage as in the past community members have not wanted to add garbage cans in the community. The main issue is illegal dumping from businesses and contractors, causing overflowing cans. Vermin is another issue; using the Big Belly solar compacting trash cans helps prevent racoons from getting in but does not prevent human misuse of trash cans. The City picks up trash once a week and it was not enough to prevent trash overflow in Ward 2. The City even had police officers digging through trash to try and identify which businesses were illegally using the cans.
- ii. Valerie noted that in Hyattsville the trash cans are only located at bus stops and are well-maintained. Councilmember Chesek was able to push for a new trash can located on Eastern near the bus stop; residents petitioned for the trash can and Public Works was able to install it.
- iii. The Green Team discussed how to balance the community aversion to additional trash cans with the need for cans to reduce trash and "dog bags" in the street. Locating cans along where people walk makes them less likely to drop trash on the ground. In the past the City identified "hot zones" where trash was abundant, but the current status of this program is not known. Potential hot zones are school bus stops and bus stops, the soccer fields, and the areas around the Community Garden and Nature Center. Kevin noted that the Stream Team added cleaning up the border along the canal to its weekly bandalong clean-outs because of the amount of trash present.
- iv. Another idea is upgrading the cans the City currently has to accommodate trash and recycling streams. Mimi noted that there is a program in Montgomery County that places multi-stream trash receptacles near schools.
- v. PG County may also be able to provide trash cans, such as the ones in the 30th Street Park. The Recreation Committee has been in contact with the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (MNCPPC) and can put in an ask for more trash cans in their next funding cycle,

particularly around the Nature Center. More frequent trash pick-up (than the current two-week cycle) would also be helpful.

- vi. *Valerie will send Sarah her list of trash hot spots to share with Public Works.*
- vii. *Sarah will follow up with Public Works to see if the City has identified “hot zones” for trash can placement and to suggest adding questions about trash cans to the community survey.*
- viii. The Team noted that any new trash/recycling cans would need to be accompanied by a strong public outreach campaign on what to put in the cans and the importance of keeping the community clean. Kevin asked the Team to contribute thoughts to a Stream Team community education effort that will include a slide show with photos and data. The plan is to give talks to engage with the community, starting in March, and recruit designated block leaders to do monthly check-ins on trash on their blocks. The Stream Team is considering going door-to-door to recruit and coordinating with social media outreach and posters with the rules of trash near existing trash cans.
- ix. *Sarah and Kevin will discuss coordinating the launch of the Stream Team public outreach campaign with the March trash pick-up event.*

b. Kaywood Gardens Recycling Update

- i. In the last meeting, the Team discussed how to encourage Kaywood Gardens to recycle. As a multifamily unit, Kaywood is exempt from city recycling rules due to county-level legislation. The Green Team submitted letters about this legislation in the past but to no avail. There are other local cities/townships that might be interested in pursuing changes in this legislation. For example, College Park has no way to make businesses recycle. One potential avenue might be hold a multijurisdictional meeting with Kaywood management to let them know we’re working on a cleaner city/county and lay out the case for offering recycling.
- ii. *Councilmember Chesek will reach out to the Mayor of College Park to gauge interest in pursuing recycling in multifamily unites and will also reach out to Deni Taveras to see if she is interested in listening to a discussion on this topic.*

c. Cassette Tape Recycling – Team will get an update from Joseph next meeting

d. Next Styrofoam E-Waste Event

- i. *Sarah will email Public Works to see when the next Styrofoam and E-Waste Event will be.*

e. Compost Pickup

- i. Councilmember Chesek emailed Julia and Hannah Gressar and they are willing to help (potential Compost Workgroup) pursue City-level compost pick-up but can’t make Monday night meetings. Julia gave feedback from University Park: their compost program is a voluntary one and over the past six years has grown from 50 to more than 200 households. The program provides a five-gallon bucket with a lid and a countertop bucket with compostable bags. The bags are replenished to the household as needed. The compost is picked up once a week and requires one worker and one truck. University Park dumps the compost at the County; however, when College Park wanted to join, they were told that the County composting site is full.
- ii. *Sarah will reach out to Public Works and ask them to reach out to the County about space availability at the County composting site.*

iii. *Valerie will follow up with University Park and confirm where they are taking their compostables.*

6. Arundel Green Street – follow up with DoE

- a. Councilmember Chesek followed up with the Department of the Environment; they received the Green Team’s Arundel Green Street letter and sent it to the project engineer. They are working to schedule a follow-up meeting.

7. Rain Check Rebates

- a. Valerie reported the follow-up from the County: 48% of people who purchased a rain barrel have applied to the rebate and only three have received it because it’s kind of slow. Sarah offered to do a rain check rebate how-to blog/video as she is one of the 52% who has not yet installed her rain barrel.

8. Arbor Day Free Tree Seed Card

- a. *Councilmember Chesek ordered the Arbor Day free trees/seeds and they never came; he will follow-up.*

9. Community Needs Assessment Survey - tabled

10. December Work Session - December 18th follow up

- a. Councilmember Chesek presented his parks plan and it was well-received for the most part. The plan is to appropriate between \$2-3k a year for the parks and the idea is that every year the City will rehab or revitalize one park and have enough money to do upkeep at the remaining parks. The five-year plan is to revitalize all the parks and generate dedicated money for upkeep. It’s a small amount of money the City can find and the idea is to leverage the City’s relationship with University of Maryland as it is redesigning Memorial Park and see if other parks can be redesigned as well. There will be an upcoming line item in the budget for the parks plan.

11. Polar Bear Plunge for CCAN

- a. Mimi is unable to attend the Polar Bear Plunge this year but Jackson and Kevin were interested; Mimi will follow-up with Jackson and Kevin about how to register and fundraise.

12. Topics for a Later Date

- a. Workgroups
- b. Mosquito Workgroup
- c. Art Workgroup
- d. Plastics Reduction
- e. Economic Development Fund
- f. Parks - 31st Street Park, Rogers Park
- g. Green Development Fund
- h. Development Projects
- i. LED for Buildings
- j. Parks Plan - Fee in Lieu Of
- k. Lead Awareness

Upcoming Events/Dates

Next Meeting: February 11, 2019