

Environment and Energy Committee Meeting
4 p.m. on November 12, 2021

Minutes

1. A meeting of the Village Environment and Energy Committee was convened outdoors on November 12, 2021 from 4-5 pm in front of the Village Hall. Those present included Marilyn Bracken, Betsy Stephens, Ralph Stephens, Ollie Davidson, Jonathon Lyons, Sarah Cooper, Lotta Kramer, Emily Lawson, Dina Lassow, Peter Kilborn, Ellen Sands (Village liaison) and Gary Crockett (Board contact). Marea Hatziolos chaired the meeting and welcomed old and new members. The Committee now has 11 registered members, plus two ex-officio members representing Village government.

2. Following a brief round of introductions, Marea invited members of ad hoc thematic groups to update the Committee of the Whole on progress in addressing issues since the last meeting (June 4, 2021). Updates and discussion around key themes focused on the Agenda items circulated earlier in the week and posted on the Committee's web page. A summary follows:

a. *Improving Recycling Behavior among Village Residents (Sarah, Emily, Ollie, Marea)*

Sarah and Marea reported on this topic. Sarah noted that the group had drafted some initial guidance on good practice for residents, to be circulated in a handout similar to what the Village had prepared on the existing ordinance governing the use of leaf blowers, and the soon-to-be-implemented new legislation banning the sale and use of Gas Leaf Blowers in the Village, effective January 1, 2022. The Committee has held off circulating the draft guidelines for review, pending information from the Village Contractor (Goode) on what is acceptable for collection and what the main issues are with respect to waste stream contamination. This information has been requested from the contractor but has not been forthcoming. Marea reported that after many attempts she had managed to secure an invitation for a site visit to the upgraded waste reception facilities in Capital Heights, MD where Goode delivers our recycling, sometime in mid-January. Marea has also reached out to environment committee counterparts in the Town of Chevy Chase and Somerset, both of whom have expressed keen interest in joining the site visit. Once the date has been confirmed a note will go out to interested parties. In the meantime, to get a head start on improving recycling behavior, the Committee has also requested a list of allowable materials for recycling and those that end up being rejected by the sorting station in PG County. Sara has ideas on preparing a visual, once we have the information, to help residents avoid the worst of the infractions. This would be rolled out after the site visit.

b. *Clarifying Reporting and Enforcement Procedures for Non-Compliant Leaf Blowers in the Village (Jonathan, Ollie, Peter, Gary)*

Ollie reported that violations of the existing regulations on leaf blower noise are ongoing and mentioned a few contractors who had been cited by Village Police. Marea noted a recent encounter with one contractor, who has repeatedly violated the ordinance by running multiple blowers simultaneously, as was the case when she approached him. She explained

the issue and said that this was not the first time, and she would call in the violation the next time it happened. When the contractor argued that the workers didn't speak English, she replied in fluent Spanish that she had explained it to them in Spanish and that they understood perfectly well that they were in violation. Ollie then briefed the Committee on the Village Police Chief's commitment to enforce the new ban in January to the full extent of the law, as reported at the November 8 the Board Meeting. In the meantime, the sub-committee is working on additional outreach to residents for inclusion in the Blast/Crier, with suggestions on how to help smaller contractors with the transition from gas to battery powered blowers.

c. *Promoting Renewable Energy and other Climate Friendly Action in the Village* (Marilyn, Emily, Marea, and Ellen)

Climate Change is a major concern of many Village residents and of most members of the Committee. The County has issued its Climate Change Strategic Plan and has called on communities in the County to help implement it. Marilyn reported on a Zoom meeting with the County Executive and Department of Environment and Natural Resources Staff on practical ways that residents and communities can contribute to lowering Green House Gasses and promoting clean and environmentally friendly consumer behavior. She will submit these suggestions to Ellen to be posted on the E&E Committee website. Marea also reported that she had explored options for the Village to offset its use of fossil fuels for Village operations by either purchasing renewable energy credits or subscribing to a community solar project similar to Neighborhood Sun for its energy needs. Jonathan explained that at the moment, most solar farms in the area are fully subscribed, but new ones are being developed all the time, with a boost from the State. Marea will follow up with two municipalities in the County who have already subscribed to Neighborhood Sun to generate clear energy offsets for the electricity they use. The Committee agreed that it was probably time for the Village to host another information meeting for residents on Community Solar and Marea asked Jonathan to follow up on this.

d. *Planning our Next Youth-Oriented Activity*

(i) *recycling events to collect gently used athletic and sports equipment, medical equipment that meets state and Health Board standards, and other equipment that can be refurbished for reuse and distribution by a local Non-Profit.* (Ollie, Emily and Sarah)

Ollie regaled the group with a story of how he had been reported to Village Police by a neighbor for allegedly "stealing" several bikes that he was seen picking up from houses in the Village on his way back home. He was greeted in his driveway by a Village officer who recognized Ollie immediately and realized the misunderstanding. Ollie has since offered to pick up additional bikes that can be refurbished by Manuel Vera, a retired policeman who restores them for free for distribution to people in need. Another drive to collect gently used sports and athletic equipment is being planned for the spring. Sarah kindly volunteered to draft an announcement for the Village Blast, which appeared in the November 19th edition:

Consider Donating Used Sports Equipment

As we move into the season of giving and gratitude, please consider putting aside your gently used, unwanted and/or outgrown sports equipment for a collection drive the CCV E&E committee will be hosting in in early 2022, to aid the efforts at Leveling the Playing Field in Silver Spring, MD. This non-profit provides sports equipment to kids and organizations in need across the region. More information on collection date to come. Thank you, in advance, for your participation!

(ii) Promoting Pollinators Gardens in the Village (Marea and Ralph)

Ralph and Betsy reported that they are in the process of installing a pollinator garden on their property with help from the Audubon Naturalist Society, in Chevy Chase MD. Marea has been in touch with Montgomery Parks and the **Master Gardener Coordinator for Montgomery County** about the possibility of installing a pollinator garden in the Western Grove Park, adjacent to the children's play area. She has also been in touch with the Smithsonian's Museum of Natural History to get information on pollinator garden plantings for residents (and kids) in this region who want to start their own pollinator garden. Ellen has kindly included links to these regional/seasonal guides in several recent Village Blasts; and hard copies of the guides are available for pick-up at the Village Hall. Marea and Ralph will follow up on more education and outreach to residents, including a possible lecture in collaboration with the Chevy Chase Garden Club in the early spring.

e. *Environmentally friendly Street Lighting* (Heloise Morgan)

This discussion was tabled as time ran out and Heloise did not attend the meeting.

4. New Business

In light of the multiple, timely issues the Committee is dealing with, Emily proposed to address these via standing sub-committees, with assigned chairs. These sub-committees could take the lead on specific follow-up actions and report to the Committee as a Whole at subsequent meetings. This recommendation was agreed to in principle by those present. Members who would like to work on one or more sub-committees are invited to contact the chair with their preferences.

5. The meeting was concluded shortly after 5 p.m.

With thanks to all who attended the meeting, and to Emily for contributing to the Minutes—

Respectfully submitted,

Marea E. Hatzios
Chair, Environment and Energy Committee
Chevy Chase Village
November 21, 2021