

Howard County Environmental Sustainability Board Meeting
Robinson Nature Center - Columbia, MD
November 9, 2017
7pm-9pm

Attendees

Mark Southerland	ESB
Sonia He	ESB
Georgia Eacker	ESB
Christine Conn	ESB
Matt Hoover	OCS
Tim Lattimer	Resident
Margo Duesterhaus	Transition Howard County

Summary

7:10 PM – Mark opened the meeting and had everyone give their name and what affiliation they had with the county. Mark gave a brief statement on what the board does and who it reports to.

7:12 PM – Margo from Transition Howard County gave a presentation on what her organization does. It is an international movement that focuses on sustainability and resilience. It began in England in 2006 due to the response of global issues such as financial instability, climate change and peak oil. Transition initiatives are all over the world and there are currently 163 in the United States. She showed a map that displayed that enough solar energy strikes the earth every hour to power our whole society for an entire year.

Transition Howard County was formed in 2012. All members are volunteers and are 501 c3. Their mission is to raise awareness, advocate and implement practical solutions that create and strengthen sustainable communities. They partner with organizations such as the Watershed Improvement Network (WIN), Local Health Improvement Coalition, Solar Energy World, Howard County Climate Action, Horizon Foundation and many other organizations.

Some activities they have are showing movies such as Racing to Zero and Dirt, during their Food in Film series, at the Earth Forum. They have Transition Talks with HCC on different aspects of sustainability. They attend GreenFest and Sustainability Day at the Community College. They do an annual Green Homes Tour. They visit local farms and gardens. They do Bioblitzs and have planting parties. They have a bi-monthly newsletter and are also on social media.

One of their biggest projects is the Repair Café. This is an international movement that began in 2007 in Amsterdam. The idea is to repair items for free to reduce waste, reskill and build the community. They

host the Repair Café at different locations throughout the county. They want to expand the Repair Café into a permanent public workshop space.

Areas of interest include, health related impacts of climate change and soil's importance to food, climate, and stormwater. They also have a discussion circle on *Your Money or Your Life* book. They have interest in the local economy and investing. Transition Howard wants to increase the number of healthy restaurants or the healthy food options at restaurants. They have an interest in Scenario Planning and are also signed on to support Bikeways.

Transition Howard County is also interested in some type of Styrofoam and plastic bag ban. She spoke about the plastic bag ban in DC. Since it started, almost 80 percent of the community bring reusable bags. If they don't use a reusable bag, the merchant will supply the bag and charges 5 cents for each bag. The initial pushback from merchants was it would hurt business, but found out instead they make money from the plastic bag fee. They receive 3 cents from each bag sold.

7:47 PM – Tim Lattimer presented his idea of Social Convergence: Scenario Planning to Solve Complex Problems. His idea was submitted for the Changemakers Challenge that the Horizon Foundation held.

He stated there are various troubling issues in the county and some of them are traffic, schools, jobs, crime, and health care. Another issue is a polarized political atmosphere in the United States. It is hard to find solution that will have broad support overtime. To find solutions that stand the test of time, he said, we have to reduce polarization, engage uncertainty, challenge assumptions and empower people.

His proposal is to enable Howard County citizens with diverse views to converge around promising solutions. The idea of "Sustainable Convergence" is to bring together a variety of people from different backgrounds to work together to do a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis. Based on that analysis, as well as preliminary surveys and interviews, they will enlist expert help to develop scenarios for Howard County's conditions in 2030. They will all get together to study the scenarios and discuss what it is like. They will gather the information from each scenario and create a package of recommendations for advancing climate-smart development in Howard County.

They will publish the results and get the information out to the community using social media. They will also create opportunities to engage with civic leaders and community groups. The idea is to create a platform where political affiliation is put aside and to do what is best for the county. This process should be able to be used for other critical problems in the community, such as traffic, crime and housing. The question was brought up to see if ESB should present Scenario Planning to the Council. He believes that if it works in Howard County, it can serve as a model for others to use in their community.

8:10 PM – Georgia gave an update on the award committee. The first meeting was on Monday. They are trying to figure out what or who they should be recognizing. Assignments were given out to each committee member to collect resource information. The focus is on teachers right now. There is still more exploration to complete.

Mark gave an update on the Building Bird Collisions Task Force. It has three pillars which include effect on government policy, getting the architects on board and getting citizens educated and helping out. When Green Neighborhoods is revised they want bird safe buildings to be part of it. Mark met with Howard Hughes and they were not aware of the issue. Safe Skies is a committee of the BBC which currently has 100 members. They are in the process of making a poster to detail the issue with Bird Strikes.

Future topics/presentations

- Community Analysis
- Development Community
- Forest Conservation
- Waste
 - Plastic Bags
 - Bans
 - Fees
- How to monetize underappreciated resources initiative for better acceptance by public and politicians
- Pollinators
 - Monarch Initiative
- Cars Mills Site for Solar Panels
- Sonia – Student Symposium
- Indivisible Howard

Possible Fieldtrips

- Oxford Square – Green Neighborhood
- Wilde Lake – Zero Energy school