

Howard County Environmental Sustainability Board Meeting  
 Robinson Nature Center – Columbia, MD  
 February 8, 2018  
 7pm-9pm

**Attendees**

Ann Strozyk	ESB
Chris Tsien	ESB
Ed Wilson	ESB
Bill Mahoney	OCS
Elissa Reineck	OCS
John Dove	ESB
Sonia He	ESB
Georgia Eacker	ESB
Mark Southerland	ESB
Tom Paxton	ESB
Beth Decker	Safe Skies Maryland, MAEOE
Christine Conn	ESB
Jim Caldwell	OCS
Nancy McAllister	ESB
Josh Greenfeld	Maryland Building Industry Association
Paul Revelle	Terraform Real Estate Development, Ltd.
Matt Fitzsimmons	Hord Coplan Macht
Jeremy Rutter	Rutter Project Management
Hannah Zinnert	Patapsco Heritage Greenway

**Summary**

**7:05** – The Board Chair, Mark Southerland, began the meeting with a round of introductions.

**Patapsco Heritage Greenway Environmental Programs Overview**

Hannah Zinnert of Patapsco Heritage Greenway (PHG) presented to the Board about the history and scope of PHG’s work. PHG has been a 501(c)(3) since January of 2000, and they now manage the Patapsco Valley Heritage Area by working with individuals, businesses, non-profits and governments to form partnerships to preserve the historic sites and towns, unspoiled natural landscapes and enduring traditions in the heritage area. The heritage area covers an area on either side of the Patapsco River from Daniels to Elkridge.

The Patapsco Heritage Greenway, Inc. is dedicated to preserving, protecting, interpreting and restoring the environment, history and culture of the Patapsco Valley between Daniels and Elkridge, Maryland.

Hannah told the Board about PHG’s Environmental Stewardship Events including: Watershed cleanups, invasive plant removals, tree plantings, tree maintenance, storm drain marking, and watershed

education workshops. PHG also has a Stream Watch program and they are about to embark on a behavior change campaign focusing on pet waste in the Deep Run watershed.

### **7:50pm – Discussion with local land developers**

The following people, listed below with their associations, joined the ESB to discuss issues that some real estate developers face when trying to make their developments more environmentally sensitive:

Josh Greenfeld – Maryland Building Industry Association

Paul Revelle – Terrafirm Real Estate Development, Ltd.

Matt Fitzsimmons – Hord Coplan Macht

Jeremy Rutter- Rutter Project Management

Much of the conversation revolved around the Department of Planning and Zoning's Green Neighborhoods program, specifically the "Sites" aspect of the program, as opposed to the "Homes" portion.

The developers brought copies of the Subdivision and Land Development Review Process Flow Chart to help guide the conversation.

They stated, it is normally a 48-month process from the time of a Pre-submission Community Meeting until someone moves in to a home. Whether a developer will seek to make their neighborhood a Howard County Green Neighborhood is a decision made in the early phases of the project development. Developers are inclined to attempt to create a Green Neighborhood if general housing allocations are in short supply, at which point the extra effort and cost to create a Green Neighborhood may be lucrative for developers. During most years, housing allocations are not in short supply.

Developers pursue credits (best thought of as various Green Neighborhood best management practices) of varying point values to earn 90 points, out of a potential 167 points, to be accepted as a Green Neighborhood. They often aim for at least 100 points in case they fall short in achieving certain credits during the development process. The developers in attendance believe many sites will never be suitable for creating a Howard County Green Neighborhood because the sites are not in close proximity to mass transit, environmental features, or other amenities which can be leveraged to accrue more points than some other credits allow for.

It is roughly 5% more expensive to go with a Green Neighborhood option over conventional neighborhood development. Generally, developers are unable to pass the additional costs on to builders and home buyers.

An interesting note regarding the in-construction Green Neighborhood, Oxford Square, the developers are being somewhat limited in their ability to choose native plant species because of the FAA's concerns about attracting birds to an area in high proximity to Baltimore Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport.

Tom Paxton suggested that the developers lobby for more mass transit, since it makes it easier for them to get Green Neighborhood points. He also pointed out that they might be able to get DPZ to set up

more gradients for points rather than all or nothing options. There are currently many credits which have a gradient of points available for differing levels of achievement, but some attendees thought there might be room for more.

The development community is frustrated by not being able to connect new neighborhoods to existing neighborhoods in some situations.

#### **8:45 – Mark Provided updates**

Mark Southerland told the Board about DPW's Green Business and Green Leadership Awards which are administered by the Department of Public Works' Bureau of Environmental Services. Mark also reported that the Maryland Bird-Safe Building Act of 2018 (SB 1009, HB 986) would be introduced in upcoming weeks. This bill would require new, renovated, or newly-acquired government buildings to have bird safe building design.

#### **8:50pm – Director's Report**

Office of Community Sustainability will be posting a job opening for an energy manager soon and Matt Hoover will send the description around to the board.

The first grain malting facility in the County has opened and is receiving a huge demand. The facility's opening was partly supported by innovation grants issued by Howard County.

The 4<sup>th</sup> Agricultural Round table is scheduled for late February.

The Opti stormwater facility that Lindsay DeMarzo is working to have installed on Ellicott City's Walmart stormwater pond will begin installation as early as April 1<sup>st</sup>.

The interpretive sign for the BUBBA Award winning (Best Urban BMP in the Bay Award) Lot E Stormwater Staircase has been ordered and will be installed in Lot E at the bottom of the stairway in March.

BikeHoward Express has been announced by the Department of Administration. It is an accelerated three-year comprehensive strategy to complete a 48-mile network of bicycle infrastructure in Howard County.

Legislation was proposed to the state by Delegate Flanagan to allow some of the Watershed Protection Fee money to be used on quantity projects rather than just quality projects, in response to a need for more money to implement quantity project in Ellicott City.

Christine Conn, Tim Latimer, Ned Tillman, Jim Caldwell, and Elissa Reineck met with Phil Nichols of the Department of Administration to discuss ways that the County might make climate change relevant to people from all walks of life.

**Meeting Adjourned at 9:00pm**