

Howard County Environmental Sustainability Board Meeting  
Robinson Nature Center – Columbia, MD  
January 10, 2019  
7pm-9pm

### Attendees

Jim Caldwell	OCS
John Dove	ESB
Georgia Eacker	ESB
Ann Strozyk	ESB
Mark Southerland	ESB
Chris Tsien	ESB
Tom Paxton	ESB
Christine Conn	ESB
Chein-Chi-Chang	ESB
Kelly Hensing	ESB
Ed Wilson	ESB
Kim Drake	CA Climate Change & Sustainability Committee
Athena Verghis	ESB
Olivia Farrow	ESB
Matthew Hoover	OCS

### Minutes

ESB 1/10/19

7:09 PM – Mr. Southerland began the meeting

#### 1.) Recap of the First HC Sustainability Legislative Breakfast

Mark Southerland started the discussion about the first Sustainability Breakfast, which was held on January 8, 2019. There were seven elected officials and two delegates that attended the breakfast. Ninety-three people attended the meeting and they represented a broad range of groups. The overall feel, from the board members that were in attendance, was that the breakfast was a success and something that should be held annually.

They went over five pieces of legislation because they didn't want to overdo it. The five legislative bills under discussion were the Clean Energy Jobs Act, the Healthy Green Maryland Amendment, Single Use Plastics, the Forest Conservation Act and the Sustainable, Energy Efficient, Bird-Safe Buildings Act. The responses they received were engaged and informed. Mark stated that he hoped it increased awareness and who the board is.

It was advised that Katie Fry Hester, the Maryland State Senator for District 9, was invited to the next month's ESB meeting and she may attend. Calvin Ball has been invited to a ESB meeting too, but hasn't committed to a date he would attend. Deb Jung, the District 4 council member, stated she would attend a future ESB meeting.

## **2.) Brainstorm on engagement with the Ball Administration and the County Council in 2019**

It was advised by Jim Caldwell that "Safe and Sound" was announced by the Calvin Ball administration, which is a flood mitigation and public safety plan for downtown Ellicott City. One aspect of it is that Howard EcoWorks will go out and inspect downtown Ellicott City after a rainfall.

It was advised that Mr. Ball has listening sessions and that they are posted on-line.

Mark stated there are a few pre-filed bills. One is for more stringent development regulations, one is for Ellicott City flood control and another one is for the use of the Stormwater fee money for flood control.

## **3.) Directors Report**

The Energy Manager, Leah Miller, has been doing research on energy efficient street lights. She asked BGE for a proposal to replace 700 lights in Howard County. The county wants it to be less than seven years for a payback. The process is complicated, because there are various owners of the lights.

Solar community farms have become an issue and most of the requests are from agricultural land owners. The issue is the location on the agricultural land to put them, which some requests are where the best agricultural land on the property is. The Agricultural Preservation Board (APB) is considering adjusting the requirements for their recommendation for approval or denial.

One question that has been discussed is if Howard County should complete another Climate Action Plan or should they just complete the recommendations in the previous plan?

### **Other partners**

Mark had a meeting with the Columbia Association (CA) that has a new committee on climate change. He asked if the board wanted to create an education committee and work with CA's group. CA's plan is to go to each village board and introduce themselves and find out each board's needs. They also want to go out to the community too. The challenge is trying to educate people and get different people to attend the events. In March, they are going to start meeting the village boards.

MD Climate Change Group – Christine Conn heard that they go out and listen to the concerns and then tailor their approach by those concerns.

Georgia Eacker has had two Master Gardeners sessions and one of the concerns is to avoid the term "climate change." They are using the sentence "gardening in a warmer climate" instead of "climate change." One issue they ran into while discussing Ellicott City was saying climate change, so they used the term "new normal."

## **4.) Committee Reports**

Green Apple Award – A summary of the Green Apple award was given by Georgia. The award is for a teacher that goes above and beyond their daily tasks and responsibilities to increase student awareness of environmental issues. The committee is discussing expanding the award to other people or groups. The money for the award was donated anonymously. They cannot give the teachers money but can give them supplies. The committee wants to know if there are any comments or concerns. Mark called for a vote. All in attendance voted for the award.

Education Outreach Committee – Mark asked if the board wanted to have an Education outreach committee. Ed Wilson stated he would be part of it if one was created.

Plastics Committee – Ann Strozyk advised they have met with a variety of people. Many people recommended working with the group Less Plastic Please. A Google group was created, so members could communicate with each other. They are going to focus on outreach and education of teachers and students.

## **5.) Meeting Minutes**

Mark asked if the board approved the October, November and December Meeting Minutes. All board members in attendance voted to approve the Meeting Minutes for October, November and December.

## **6.) Planning for 2018 ESB Annual Report**

Mark wants to use it as an education report. Mark and Chris Tsien will work on it. All board member in attendance agreed with them working on it.

## **Roundtable**

Athena Verghis thinks a big thing for students is outreach and how to get the student body involved. She stated she could help with the Education Committee, if formed, and she would help with the Green Apple Award committee too. In high schools a big thing is composting. They are composting at River Hill and she thinks more schools should do it too.

For outreach ideas Athena suggested one or two minute videos of what changes are going to be made and why they are being made. Maybe institute something like that for the board to help educate the public.

Matthew Hoover advised that only four or less board members can be on a committee, because if it is more it becomes a quorum.

Georgia advised that the Watershed Stewards Academy were given operating funds by the county. They are working with the River Network and have an advisory committee. They worked out an agreement with the college and they are doing their first class with the University of Maryland.

Tom Paxton spoke about electric bikes and trying to eliminate his car use. He stated when trying to use them it can become dangerous. Columbia is going to grow and he wants to know how they are going to manage it. He has been using his bike himself to see if it can be done. He stated it could, but there are some issues such as curbs and some roads not having bike lanes.

It was advised there is a Complete Streets policy but it currently is not being used. There is a Pedestrian Master Plan and Bicycle Master Plan coming up too.

It was mentioned there are issues with scooters where some people are riding scooters on sidewalks, which is not what they were meant to do. It was suggested that the board should try to get Chris Eatough to come in and talk about scooters.

Tom thinks it is important for Columbia, because of traffic issues. Traffic circles was brought up but they can be dangerous for pedestrians and bike riders. Tom sees some benefits of traffic circles and one of them is the elimination of some traffic jams. Highways has standards of when they can or can't put them in, Chris Tsien stated.

Christine Conn gave an update on Ecosystem services that Elliott Campbell, from the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, came in and spoke about during the December 14, 2017 ESB meeting. They have a system/tool they use now that can put a dollar value on them.

It was mentioned that the newer schools should follow more guidelines to be eco-friendly. Wilde Lake Middle School is the first net zero school in Maryland.

### **ESB Membership Needs**

Mark asked Athena, the student representative, if she is willing to serve next year and she advised that she would. Ed Wilson and Mark Southerland's terms are coming to an end. Mark is unable to serve again because he has been on the board for two consecutive terms, so his position will need to be filled and a new Chair will need to be voted on too. Ed was asked if he wanted to renew, but he didn't have a decision during the meeting. Ed is energy and Mark is general for the board. Mark recommended Chiara D'Amore who has interest in serving on the board. Mark advised the board to have their nominations by March. Mark also mentioned that someone that served on the board previously could come back.

Meeting Adjourned – 9:02PM