

Hyattsville Environment Committee (HEC)

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, November 08, 2022

7:00 pm to 8:30 pm

HEC members: Thaddeus Waterman (chair), Janet Nackoney (meeting minutes), Melissa Schweisguth, Joseph DeMarco, Dawn Taft (staff), Ben Simasek (Council)

Guests: Colin Morrison (new City env coordinator)

Agenda Items:

1. Welcome, Committee Roll Call, & Guest Orientation.
2. Approval of [October meeting](#) minutes: **APPROVED**
3. Re-introductions (Background, Why you are here, Strengths you bring, etc)
 - Janet Nackoney: background in conservation and geography, international development, in Hyattsville 11 years; on HEC close to 8 yrs. Personal interest in tree canopy, leads invasive English ivy removal in partnership with Hyattsville Aging in Place (HAP).
 - Thaddeus Waterman: Hyattsville 2 yrs; close to 1 yr on HEC. Works in climate advocacy, volunteer-focused. Brings awareness of Federal and State legislation around the environment. For HEC, likes to help the City promote even more env legislation.
 - Melissa Schweisguth: Ward 5, in Hyattsville ~2yrs. Interested in env policy and advocacy and personal env sustainability. Board member of Neighbors of NW Branch.
 - Ben Simasek: Ward 3 council liaison. General interest in env sustainability
 - Joe DeMarco: Work in federal permitting for environment sector, certified Floodplain Manager; expertise in stormwater management
 - Dawn Taft: City Arborist and Env Manager, City liaison for HEC
 - Colin Morrison: Env Coordinator, DPW. Just began;
4. Invasive Vine Removal Current Efforts Update (Janet)
 - Ideas for greater outreach to people with ivy: Janet has ivy pamphlets and some HAP pamphlets– could do greater dissemination at houses with ivy on trees.
5. Expanding Invasive Vine Removal with Chesapeake Climate Action Network (CCAN)
 - CCAN visited the City and asked whether there are funds for expanding
 - Colin and Dawn are submitting a proposal for a stormwater management grant (due before Christmas)– will partner with CCAN and Anacostia Watershed Society (AWS). Proposal will have CCAN conduct an

assessment of the number of trees affected by invasive vines throughout the City and develop a database of addresses to remove the ivy from targeted trees on both public and private property. CCAN already did this in [Takoma Park](#) ([NPR coverage here](#)), which then successfully mobilized volunteers to remove ivy from ~4,000 trees.

- Volunteers can get their personal liability covered under CCAN to enter private property and remove ivy. Outreach and education efforts in partnership with surrounding municipalities; instructional video “how-tos”; education of our Spanish-speaking community in tandem.
- The residents/owners who have the removal done will need to show commitment to keeping the ivy removed from their property.
- BS: Knows about some interest from local churches (one has a lot of ivy)-- could incorporate this into the proposal. **ACTION:** Ben will share points of contact with Dawn.
- Can HEC commit to some part of this? **ACTION:** We will revisit this at next month’s meeting
- Potential volunteers: Audubon yard program, AWS Watershed Master Steward program, HAP ivy volunteers

6. Standardizing Legislation recommendations to the City

- TW: People from the general public have come to HEC in the past to make recommendations related to City council positions on certain state or county legislation. Should we design a process to evaluate these requests and opportunities and standardize how we make recommendations to the City regarding its position on legislation at other jurisdictional levels?
- BS: Ensure that the legislation really hits home and is important to Hyattsville. Also ensure that Hyattsville really has a sway in a particular issue (we don’t need to spend time on legislation that will easily pass on its own). Timeliness is important as well– need a lead time to get letters of advocacy prepared for City Council in time before the vote.
- Will revisit next month

7. American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding for weatherization and energy (Ben)

- Both the Inflation Reduction Act and American Rescue Plan Act have initiatives to help homeowners reduce their energy use. Can the City dedicate some portion of their ARPA funding to help older rental properties access some of this funding to upgrade older systems in rental properties and ensure the energy savings (and benefits) is passed onto tenants? [More information](#)
- Could HEC advocate for some chunk of these City funds to go to this particular effort to support renters? Submit as a budget proposal for next

year (deadline by end of January)? The City might be soon hiring a new affordable housing specialist, and this person could be key to this going forward.

- Ben will prepare something to discuss at next meeting to keep this idea moving.

8. Announcements

- DW: In January, the City will be announcing volunteer opportunities for yard advisors with the Audubon Wildlife Habitat program and yard inspection opportunities for residents.
- DW: Healthy Trees Hyattsville– rolling out in Jan/Feb. Casey Trees will lead structural tree pruning training for City employees; City will lead a tree care workshop in Jan; family day in the woods in May/June; hands-on pruning instruction training for residents.
- TW: [EPA public comment on the Inflation Reduction Act, Regulations for Lead Emissions from Aircraft](#)
- BS: Nov 12 @ 12pm - Community clean-up around University Town Center

9. Adjournment.