

Hyattsville Environment Committee (HEC)

Meeting Minutes

December, 9 2025

7:00 pm to 8:30 pm

Open to the Public - Zoom Virtual Meeting

Attendees: Melissa Schweisguth, Thaddeus Waterman, Janet Nackoney, Malik Ferguson, Rayya Newman, James Wigley, Staff Liaison Dawn Taft, Councilman Edouard Haba **Guests:** Mary Ellsworth, Scott Wilson

Agenda Items:

1. Welcome, Committee Roll Call, & Guest Orientation.
2. Approval of [November](#) minutes
 - a. Unanimous approval of November meeting minutes
3. Public Comment Period (Comments limited to 3 minutes per person)
 - a. No public comments
4. CAP Update
 - a. Recently hosted a stakeholder meeting about the Climate Action Plan
 - i. Stantech Contractors, Economic Development Coordinator, city staff were in attendance
 - ii. Completed a site survey and a tour of city buildings with existing environmental upgrades
 - b. Next Actions from Stantec for Climate Action Plan
 - i. Stantech looking to host a workshop with different committees
 1. Expected date is January
 2. Looking to host many different committees
 3. Want to understand how to leverage environmental solutions in each committee, so that decisions are made with an environmental stewardship lens
 4. Potentially creating a check list for ways to consider environment in future decisions
 - ii. Outreach to public planned at annual Hyattsville celebration in April
 - iii. Further survey of residents is also being planned
 - c. Door Knocking survey for Climate Action Plan is wrapping up
 - i. Expecting results from UMD students by January
 - ii. Still deciding on how they are going to share the information
 - iii. Information by ward is not possible, but likely to get data by age, race, apartment vs homeowner, etc
 - d. Questions - Is the City going to receive the raw data from the door-knocking survey?

- i. Yes, this should be possible
 - e. What is Stantech's role?
 - i. They are the core contractors hired by Prince George's County for the climate action plan. They will be doing analysis on the survey results, meeting with committees, gathering further information, etc
 - f. How many survey responses did we get?
 - i. We are unsure at this time, believe it is at least 4000 doors. More information should be in the survey results. Recent communications have focused on the breakdown of the data
5. Zero Waste: discussion with DPW
- a. Updates
 - i. DPW was asked to pause until they can speak with council members
 - ii. Council is interested in the vetting of other ideas such as:
 - 1. Holding residents accountable for using bins
 - 2. Reducing container size in general
 - iii. Over all the goal is to reduce trash waste per resident, but WasteZero is just one potential solution
 - b. Challenges
 - i. Biggest challenge is going to be the tradeoff. If we are looking at raising fees, residents are going to want money back or further services
 - ii. City hasn't changed the rate of taxes in some time. Our housing prices are going up so taxes are going up. Trying to find ways of showing that by taking action we can prevent raising taxes in the future
 - iii. Addressing questions that pop up from residents
 - 1. Pay As You Throw limits options, residents can't use favorite brands
 - 2. Residents can't use discount bags, have to use specific bags
 - iv. Have to consider things through an equity lens
 - 1. Currently where property values are higher, they offset the amount paid by individuals that are not paying as much in taxes
 - 2. If everyone pays the same amount (existing system), smaller families offset larger families. By covering waste fees through taxes you lessen the burden on larger families. Changing systems could impact equity

- c. Waste fees are going up, Hyattsville is already incurring costs. Pay-As-You-Throw is one solution, but there may be others out there. Prices are going up, we are running out of places to put trash, we need to do something.
- d. But we need to walk-in with full clarity on what we are presenting to city council, and have conviction on what we are proposing
- e. Questions -
 - i. In our discussion last month, HEC was curious what DPW is proposing. How is the fee going to be approached, what technology is used, fairness for HOAs, enforcement, etc?
 - 1. Pay-As-You-Throw will be more work, have to document violations.
 - ii. What are you asking for from HEC on this?
 - 1. Focus right now is CAP, which should be solidified by April/May. Ideally by June of 2026 this can be a focus where HEC can work with the city staff on proposals. HEC doesn't have to take this on, but DPW will have to because of rising costs. HEC's support can impact deadlines
 - iii. How will the RFID bins impact waste reduction?
 - 1. Reduce trash pick up to one time a week for each resident. We can also monitor residents for not diverting things to the proper waste streams. Some residents have differently sized bins and changing bins can limit the size to 64 gallons a week instead of the larger sizes.
 - iv. Are there any City Council members interested in these proposals?
 - 1. Danny is in support of the proposal, and some others have also received information, but it isn't a majority.
 - v. Why did the council ask for a pause? Was the pause about any waste reduction methods?
 - 1. DPW was asked to pause going forward with seeking grants and working with WasteZero at this time. Council wants a variety of ideas to choose from and more members to be on board before moving forward with a solution. Ideally council wants three recommendations (with nothing as a fourth option) with information about logistics, impacts on residents, etc.
 - vi. What it be possible to have an environmental economist expert from UMD to speak about waste reduction?
 - 1. Yes! That would be great

6. Combining Shade Tree Board and HEC

- a. Councilman Edouard Haba is looking for feedback on combining the Shade Tree board and Hyattsville Environmental Committee
 - i. Goal is to potentially reduce the number of boards, but further clarification from councilman is needed
 - ii. City staff shared that the Shade Tree board is moving away from code compliance, and focusing more on educating residents about how to protect trees (from invasives, overmulching, etc). Shade Tree Board is still evaluating fees for the illegal cutdown of trees, but the procedure for how to do so is outlined in ordinances.
- b. Concerns/Questions about combining boards from HEC attendees
 - i. Is the intention to have HEC take over what the Shade Tree board is required to do by city code, or take on the other things tree board is doing?
 - 1. More clarification is needed on this
 - ii. Some concerns were expressed about needing to know more about what the Shade Tree Board is working on and if follows city guidelines for committees
 - 1. May need to bring Nate to meeting to outline guidelines for committees
 - iii. Some concerns were expressed for splitting focus if committees are combined. Could require splitting HEC into subcommittees to focus on trees and other things
 - iv. Timing for combined meetings could be difficult. Shade Tree board generally meets for an hour, HEC usually meets for a full 90 minutes monthly
 - v. The justification for combining the boards isn't fully understood by committee members, need more clarification
- c. Further discussion needed when councilman Edouard Haba is available

7. HEC [Calendar](#) 2026 approval/agreement

- a. Unanimous approval of 2026 calendar

8. HEC chair, co-chair & secretary elections: January 2026

- a. To be discussed next month

9. Any Other Business

10. Announcements

11. Adjournment