

Hyattsville Environment Committee (HEC)

Meeting Minutes

February 10, 2026

7:00 pm to 8:30 pm

Open to the Public - Zoom Virtual Meeting

Attendees: Melissa Schweisguth, Thaddeus Waterman, Janet Nackoney, Malik Ferguson, James Wigley, Bradley Phelps, Staff Liaison Dawn Taft, Councilman Edouard Haba **Guests:** Hal Metzler (DPW Acting Director)

Agenda Items:

1. Welcome, Committee Roll Call, & Guest Orientation.
2. Approval of [January minutes](#)
 - a. Unanimous approval of meeting minutes
3. Public Comment Period (Comments limited to 3 minutes per person)
 - a. No public comments
4. Welcome new members! (5 min)
 - a. Bradley introduced themselves and shared some of their interest in being on HEC.
5. Winter salting - DPW policy/use of [smart salting](#) practices public education on proper use (Dawn) (15 min)
 - a. Hal Metzler shared about Hyattsville's Department of Public Works' (DPW) policy on salting
 - i. Some DPW staff participated in a Smart Salting program last year
 - ii. DPW did have a brining effort during the last storm, and covered the majority of the major roads prior to the recent storm using two truckloads of brine
 - iii. DPW attempts to brine within 24 hours or less pre-storm (ideally same day) to reduce salt running off roads
 - iv. Plowers are taught to reduce salt use and to prioritize pushing snow, but some salt is usually placed on roads during shift changes to prevent snow sticking during staff downtime
 - v. Salt was used more often during the recent storm due to sleet. However, DPW keeps track of asphalt temperature to ensure salt is only being used when it would be effective

- vi. Some sidewalks are cleared by DPW, but a magnesium salt mixture is used to prevent concrete degradation
- vii. Summary: DPW attempts to reduce salting when possible, and plans to train more employees on smart salting program practices
- b. Questions/Comments
 - i. Some of the sidewalks to the Hyattsville Crossing Metro are being impeded by ice/snow blocks. Citizens are concerned about how little is being done to keep some specific bus stops clear (specifically Firehouse adjacent bus stop on Belcrest). Whom should complaints be directed to?
 - 1. This storm is the biggest storm the area has received in 10 years. The law is that the adjacent property owner is responsible. DPW staff intend to talk to the Fire Chief about how to resolve the issue in the future. There is also some confusion about who is responsible for clearing bus stops, which city staff intend to resolve for future storms.
 - ii. Is sanding occurring in the city of Hyattsville?
 - 1. DPW doesn't use sand, and sand usage isn't common in Maryland. Temperatures in Maryland don't tend to reach below the temperatures at which salt stops working
 - iii. Does DPW have to report salt use annually to the State?
 - 1. Not sure, it is not a stat that is regularly collected. DPW does keep track of the amount of salt that is used, but will have to check on reporting requirements
 - iv. Is there an efficiency measurement that the city uses?
 - 1. DPW is working on getting more accurate data. Hyattsville has approximately 44 miles of road and 100 lane miles. DPW could estimate how much is used to come up with a metric, and is working on updating things to be more digitized and accurate
 - v. Are contractors putting down salt?
 - 1. Only DPW staff are plowing and spreading salt. Contractors are only being used for clean-up activities like trucking out snow
 - vi. Has any education been done to teach residents about smart salting practices?
 - 1. We would need to check with the Communications department. It is something that could be looked into doing more of when the storms come up

6. Diversifying HEC partnerships & outreach (20 min) (Chair facilitates)
 - a. City staff have started working with groups (Defensores de la Cuenca, ecoLatinos) to expand some programs (Audubon yard assessments, Rain Check rebate tour, etc.) to Spanish-speaking communities
 - b. There could be good ideas from groups like Sustainable Maryland to look for ideas on outreaching to new members
 - i. Thad and James are interested in looking more into Sustainable Maryland opportunities
 - c. What if we invited groups to hold a Committee position to hear feedback without requiring their representative to be full members? Something between participant and panelist?
 - i. There are committees that have advisory non-voting members. There are different committee structures that have non-resident participants
 - d. School or High School kids could be brought in to talk about things and bring them back to their schools.
 - i. Edmonston did start a Junior Green Team. Interesting idea to coordinate with youth green team
 - ii. Students are required to do Student Service Learning (SSL) hours in Maryland, it could be a way to get students engaged. Dawn can sign off on SSL hours
 - iii. Melissa and James offered to reach out to the Edmonston youth program
 - iv. Bradley is interested in making connections to schools in Hyattsville
 - e. Many city programs engage with homeowners, but renters could be a demographic to do more outreach to
 - f. Opportunity to implement school/revive gardens. This could be a cross-committee (Youth, Health and Wellness) program to bring gardens to schools
7. Creative Thinking Workshop for Homeowners - dates, partnership & ideas (20 min) (Rayya) - Moved to future date
8. Any Other Business
 - a. Combining HEC and Tree Board discussion
 - i. The city staff member that Councilmember Haba was working with to potentially combine the committees is leaving.
 - ii. A tree board/committee is required for Tree City USA. Research needs to be done on if HEC could serve as the tree board requirement. The Tree Board also has some very specific duties in the city code

- iii. The goal of combining HEC and Tree Board is to potentially streamline and reduce the number of committees

9. Announcements

- a. Janet will be moving to Washington this year (Spring) and will no longer be a part of HEC
 - i. Priorities to pass on are Ivy removal with Hyattsville Aging in Place (HAP)
 - ii. Earth Day clean-up at Melrose Park with the Anacostia Watershed Society
 - 1. Malik is interested in taking over on this opportunity

10. Adjournment