

**Chesapeake Environmental Improvement Council**  
**Meeting Minutes – January 22, 2020**  
**Rivercrest Community Center**

**Attendees:** Rogard Ross-Chair, Lauren Ragsac-Secretary

- Council Members: Heather Barlow, Vikki Barnette, Bob Fountain, Becky Greenwald, Sandy Madison, Mike Perry, Carol Praissman, Amy Weber
- Parks, Recreation & Tourism Staff (PRT): Josh Fisher, Ana Elezovic, Megan Hale
- Guests: Denise Cordiero-Bennett, Roger Fuller, Meghan Mulroy-Goldman, VA Dept of Forestry

**Welcome and Introductions:** Rogard opened the meeting at 12:03 and welcomed members and guests. He introduced Meghan Mulroy-Goldman, VA Department of Forestry. Meghan discussed the benefits of having an urban forester for the City of Chesapeake. She referred to an NPR story that aired earlier this year on how Chesapeake is one of the top ten worst cities in the country for heat islands in urban poverty areas. Northern Chesapeake in particular is affected, due to a combination of disproportionate built environment/impervious surface without corresponding tree canopy to offset it. In addition, the aging tree canopy presents a problem, and the City will need to develop a strategy for replacing trees. Chesapeake is also very vulnerable due to natural disasters, and an improved urban forest canopy could help buffer the city. Rogard pointed out that the CEIC has been advocating for an urban forester position for several years now.

Approval of Minutes: Minutes from the December meeting were sent by email. Minutes were approved unanimously.

I. Updates

- Position Vacancies - Bob has stepped back from being Chair of the Tree Board. Between being a City employee and acting as a citizen advocate to change city policy, he found himself in a conflict of interest which complicated his efforts. Rogard thanked Bob for his ardent efforts to advance the goal of having the city fill the Urban Forestry position over the past six months. Rogard will step in as interim Chair of the Tree Board. Next steps for the Tree Board will be defining the job description for the Urban Forester.

Jason Brown has also stepped down as Vice-Chair. Jason had reported to Rogard that his job requirements did not leave him with time to meet the role of being Vice Chair. Again, Rogard expressed his thanks for Jason's efforts and gratitude that he will remain on the CEIC as a member, especially since he is our liaison to the Chesapeake Recycles Day, the Adopt-A-Highway program, and other Public Work efforts. The position is officially vacant, and the CEIC by-laws do not specify how it is to proceed in terms of replacing the Vice-Chair. Rogard suggested forming a nominating committee. There was discussion among members as to how to proceed, and what entity has the power to appoint such positions. This was tabled until the New Business agenda item.

- Chesapeake Conservation Conference – Registration is open; so far, only a few registrations have come in. Rogard asked members to try to drum up interest. He encouraged members to take flyers to various events they may be attending. Amy suggested taking flyers to central library to distribute to the other libraries and community centers. Megan noted that several sponsors have been procured for the conference. CEIC members are asked to volunteer in some capacity in order to receive a complimentary ticket to the event. Roger asked about

former sponsors of our past events. Megan will look into sponsors the CEIC has had in the past. Rogard identified that Becky, Lauren, Heather, and David Sackett would be moderators for the different panels. Volunteer positions are still open. Megan outlined the various volunteer tasks (timekeepers, note takers, cleanup crew, etc.). A committee is also needed to review nominations for the environmental awards. Amy Weber suggested that for next year, each CEIC member be tasked with finding someone every month to single out for recognition. We could have it be part of our monthly agenda, so we are not left at the end of the year coming up with nominations. Megan noted that calendar sales have thus far generated \$800 for 2019 and 2020. She suggested that these funds could be used for the conference.

- License Plate Fund/Georgetown Project – Mike Perry noted that the Georgetown pilot project is going forward and plans to hand off to PRT. Funds are available through PR&T. A license plate fund committee has been designated, but a Chair is needed. The committee has to come up with a process for selecting and approving community areas for beautification projects. Selection criteria may address developing designs, funds, maintenance plans, and other details around the process.

A decision was made to combine the conservation landscape committee with the license plate fund committee since both deal with landscape design. Becky, Lauren, Mike, Vikki, Amy, and Rob Beaton will be members of the committee.

Rogard cautioned that while combining the two committees, funds are assigned and allocated differently for the beautification projects (funded by the License Plate Fund) and conservation landscaping at city buildings (funded by regular operating budgets). The combined committee needs to address each of these efforts differently. Becky is designated Chair of the license plate fund/conservation landscape committee. Rogard charged the committee with coming back to the CEIC with the process on the License Plate Funding project selection.

- Conservation Landscaping/Library Project – Becky gave an update on the Indian River Library circle project. The hardscape for the circle is to be installed first, and initial preparations for that step have already begun. At the Great Bridge Library circle, some work has been started as well. *Nandina* shrubs have been removed but there are some stumps that still need to be removed. Mike is working with crews to mark utilities.

## II. Seeking Volunteers

- Environmental Awards Sub-Committee – the deadline for nominations is January 31. Megan asked members if they want to extend the deadline. It was decided that, if not enough nominations are submitted, the deadline can be extended for another week. Also, the Mayor's Pioneer award and Outstanding Citizen awards are still open to nominations from CEIC members.
- Flower & Garden Expo – 1/24 and 1/25, 10 a.m. – 7 p.m., 1/26 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. Megan still needs volunteers for the event. Volunteers are to sign in at the designated window, where their name should already be on a list.
- Great American Cleanup – 3/27 and 3/28 – details TBD. One of the events will be installing the planting design at the Indian River Library circle. Megan would also like CEIC members to consider doing a cleanup.
- Earth Day 2020 – 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, 4/21, TCC Chesapeake campus, 10 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. Rogard noted CEIC will have a table set up; volunteers will be needed to staff the table.

- Clean and Green Poster Contest – Megan noted that the contest is open and students are already working on posters. The deadline for submissions is the third week in March, and awards are given at City Council in May. Carol, Vikki, and Amy volunteered to be on the poster judging committee.
- Megan passed around a form for members to report their volunteer hours related to the CEIC.

### III. New Business

- CEIC Vice Chair nominating committee – Rogard asked for volunteers to chair the nominating committee. Self-nominations are permitted. Amy volunteered to be Chair and Heather will also serve on the committee. Heather suggested that the bylaws be amended to address future issues with executive board members resigning before their terms expire. No agreement was made as to whether the bylaws should be amended at this time. Megan and Rogard asked members to submit names to Megan as soon as possible.
- Rogard reported that the City Council met in Closed Session yesterday to discuss the recycling contract. There was no word on the outcome of the meeting as of our meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 1:13 p.m. The next regular monthly meeting of the CEIC will take place on February 26, 2020.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Lauren Ragsac, Secretary