

**Chesapeake Environmental Improvement Council**  
**Meeting Minutes – January 27, 2021, 12 pm**  
**Video Conference Meeting**

An electronic meeting is being held pursuant and in compliance with the Amended Ordinance adopted by Chesapeake City Council on April 28, 2020 to effectuate temporary changes in certain deadlines and to modify public meeting and public hearing practices and procedures to address continuity of operations associated with pandemic disaster.

**Attendees:** Becky Greenwald-Chair, Denise Cordeiro-Bennett-Vice-Chair, Lauren Ragsac-Secretary

- Council Members: Vikki Barnette, Alden Cleanthes, Sydney Covey, Bob Fountain, Djeneba Kiema, Sandy Madison, Calib Miller, Bobby Nance, Mike Perry, Rogard Ross, Adrienne Sawyer, Lacy Shirey, Bruce Weckworth.
- Associate members: Amy Weber
- Parks, Recreation & Tourism Staff (PRT): Ana Elezovic, Josh Fisher, Megan Hale

**I.** Welcome and Introductions: Becky opened the meeting at 12:03 and welcomed members and guests. She read the announcements required under the electronic public meetings ordinance. The secretary took roll. A quorum was present.

**II.** Environmental Tip:

- Becky shared a tip about reducing single use plastic by considering purchasing personal hygiene products like shampoo that come in solid form, often in recyclable cardboard containers. Less Than in Norfolk and Eco-maniac in Virginia Beach were mentioned as known sources.
- Lauren mentioned there are reusable swabs with washable silicone tips and Ana cautioned about their careful use, as the tips may separate.

**III.** Environmental Group Spotlight:

- Vikki highlighted a foundation landscaping project coordinated by the Botanical Buddies, a volunteer group that maintains the non-profit Chesapeake Care Clinic's landscaping. Last fall, the group identified the need to remove shrubs that had outgrown the allotted space, presenting major maintenance challenges. The group arranged for outside volunteer help and funding, resulting in a new design and total renovation.
- Bobby noted that his tree company (Bartlett) is looking for volunteer community projects for a day of service this spring.

**IV.** Approval of Minutes: Minutes from the October 28 meeting were sent by email for members' review. As there were no corrections, the minutes were approved.

## V. Updates

### A. Recruitment and Hails/Farewells

- Becky outlined the process by which applicants for CEIC membership are considered by the Executive Committee and encouraged any former members who have had at least one year off the CEIC to submit an application on the City website if they wish to rejoin.
- Farewells: Levin Turner has resigned. Alden Cleanthes' 6-year term ends 1/31. Becky thanked both for serving. Alden spoke to the group, indicating she plans to remain engaged with the CEIC.
- Hails: Karen Moultrie, who could not make the meeting, is the CEIC's newest member. Djeneba Kiema, a new member, introduced herself and will join the Recycling and Waste Reduction committee. Djeneba is in the Medical Reserve Corps and holds a Master's degree in Environmental Health from ODU.
- New members receive a digital welcome packet, which includes a welcome letter from the Chair, the bylaws, and a member roster.

### B. Litter and Pollution Prevention Committee- Lacy Shirey

- Clean and Green poster contest: registration going well. 3/1 registration deadline.
- Litter Cleanups: Jan 9<sup>th</sup> Lacy led a group of 17 volunteers, who picked up about 360 pounds of litter in two hours at Lakeside Park. Next event is Saturday, March 27 along Johnstown Road as part of the Great American Cleanup.
- Straws and Utensils on Request: committee is developing a list of target restaurants. CEIC volunteers are needed to approach restaurant owners to explain the campaign, gauge interest, and encourage them to sign up.
- Cigarette Litter Prevention: 10 additional receptacles were purchased and are being placed in appropriate locations. Megan was interviewed on January 21 for a WCTV segment about the Park Your Butts campaign and is looking for tabling opportunities at City Hall to raise awareness.
- Litter Fund Grant: \$19K was spent to purchase new trash receptacles for the municipal center, leaving \$3,700 left to spend. Planned purchases include CEIC-branded reusable produce bags and branded RocketBooks as award giveaways.
- Chesapeake Recycles Days: still tentative due to ongoing COVID restrictions.
- Adopt-a-Spot/Park/Highway: annual application renewal is in progress.
- Balloon Debris: A balloon bill is going through the General Assembly right now. CEIC members may provide input to their representatives as private citizens.
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### C. Waste Reduction and Recycling Committee- Denise Bennett

Committee met virtually with Jason Brown from Public Works for a question and answer session regarding waste management in Chesapeake and continues to do research. Plans are to focus on leveraging tools that are already out there to make outreach and education more effective. Planning a February committee meeting.

D. Beautification Committee- Vikki Barnette/Mike Perry

- Notable Yards: 2021 contest back on regular schedule (summer)
- Keep Chesapeake Beautiful Calendar photo contest: Vikki suggested changing name of contest to better reflect that it is a photography contest to capture beautiful spots around the city. She suggested something like “Celebrate Chesapeake’s Beauty” as the contest doesn’t focus on litter or pollution prevention. More discussion required.
- Adopt-a-Garden: committee has completed audit of list from Jason Brown and hopes to meet with him soon to go over findings.
- Business Beautification award: Mike said sub-committee met January 22. He is coordinating with Tim Howlett, a former City Planner who now works for the Economic Development Authority, to engage with businesses during an upcoming monthly Economic Development Advisory Committee meeting. Mike will work with PR&T to develop flyer for dissemination to that group.

E. Conservation Landscaping/License Plate Committee-Becky Greenwald

- License plate fund has \$85K; application is on CEIC website. 3/31 deadline. PR&T developed flyer, which will be posted on Facebook to encourage groups to apply for funds. CEIC members should reach out to promote program to any groups they know that might need to do landscape renovations in public areas.
- Conservation landscaping: Updates provided on the Georgetown project, Indian River Library, and Central Library. Design in progress for foundation beds around City Hall, Mike Barber’s next priority for renovation.

F. Tree Board- Rogard Ross

- Urban Forestry position: Mike Barber included the position when he presented his department’s 2022 budget request this month to the City Manager, whose feedback so far has been positive.
- City has received a Growth award from the Arbor Day Foundation through its TreeCity USA renewal process.
- City renewed its relationship with Elizabeth River Project to plant native trees in certain areas.
- Chesapeake does not require trees removed in public spaces, such as the recent sewer line replacement on Canal Drive, to be replaced. An urban forestry policy could address this issue. Public Works is looking into developing a policy for replacing trees that get damaged by various public works projects.
- Tree planting: Tree board in process of prioritizing highway interchanges, public schools, TCC campus, and churches.
- Legislation is being considered in the General Assembly regarding how much should be required of developers to replace trees removed by development.

G. Newsletter- Sydney Covey, Editor

- The first CEIC newsletter, The Heron Chronicle, went out December 17<sup>th</sup> to about 150 email addresses. Megan has received positive feedback. Sandy Madison shared the newsletter with members of City Council. CEIC members are encouraged to share the newsletter on social media with members of the public.
- The submission deadline for the March edition is Feb. 17 to allow time for review and PR&T approval. Each committee chair should submit a piece, with photos.
- So far, the items planned for the March edition include the tree tours, poster contest, litter cleanups, balloon litter issues, the straws and utensils on request campaign, the Great American Cleanup and license plate fund application.

H. Calendar Sales/Funds

- 2021 calendar sales are down from previous years, probably because COVID has reduced traffic to facilities where they are available. The calendars can be obtained at the PR&T Visitors Center for a suggested \$5 donation.
- The fund currently has about \$950. Each CEIC member received one and members should promote the calendar to their networks.
- Megan will send a calendar to Jim Knox, who helped judge the photo contest.

I. Environmental Awards Luncheon/Conservation Conference 2021

- Megan noted that the conference is not going to be possible this year.
- The environmental awards luncheon has been pushed back to October 21<sup>st</sup>.
- The nomination period for awards is currently open until February 28. Megan encouraged members to nominate groups and individuals. She has not received any nominations and encouraged CEIC members to consider submitting some.

J. Litter Grant Funds-\$3-4K is left to spend for the current fiscal year.

**VI.** New Business:

- Fix-it-Fair: PR&T along with the City of Suffolk received a joint grant award from the Department of Environmental Quality for \$3,500 to fund a Fix-it-Fair to be held by June 30. More information to follow.

**VII.** Seeking Volunteers

- A. Great American Cleanup, March 26-27: Contact Lacy to volunteer for the litter cleanup March 27<sup>th</sup> along Johnstown Road. Participation is limited to age 16 and older due to safety concerns. If a member wants to lead a family-friendly cleanup that weekend, contact Megan. All supplies will be provided.

- B. Straws and Utensils on Request Campaign: contact Lacy to add restaurants to the list and/or volunteer to approach restaurant managers. Written talking points and materials will be provided for volunteers to use during their visits. The goal is to target family-owned and smaller restaurants. Virginia Beach has a similar program, which may encourage Chesapeake restaurant owners to follow suit. Those who sign up will be featured on social media and in CEIC newsletters.

**VIII.** Citizen Comments: None.

The meeting adjourned at 1:27 p.m. The next meeting of the CEIC is 12 p.m. February 24, 2021.