

**Chesapeake Environmental Improvement Council**  
**Meeting Minutes – September 23, 2020, 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, Sydney Covey, Lacy Kuller, Sandy Madison, Calib Miller, Rogard Ross, Dave Sackett, Levin Turner, Bruce Weckworth. A quorum was present.
- Parks, Recreation & Tourism Staff (PRT): Josh Fisher, Ana Elezovic, Megan Hale
- Associate Member: Amy Weber
- Guest: Bill Gregory

- I. Welcome and Introductions: Becky opened the meeting at 12:02 and welcomed members and guests. She read the announcements required under the electronic public meetings ordinance. The secretary took roll call.
- II. Environmental Tip: Lacy suggested bringing your own pen for early in-person voting in order to reduce waste, since elections staff is disposing of pens used once by voters instead of reusing them.
- III. Environmental Group Spotlight: Dave noted the “Catch the King Tide” 2020 event is on October 18. It is a citizen science environmental survey coordinated through Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) to gather GPS flood data during one of the highest tides of the year. The data help VIMS scientists to develop and validate predictive sea-level rise and nuisance flooding models. Dave briefly explained how to participate.
- IV. Approval of Minutes: Minutes from the August 26 meeting were sent by email. Vikki made a motion to approve the minutes. Bruce seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.
- V. Updates
  - A. 12-month Plan—Becky reported that the four project committees have been established and the committee chairs have all had initial meetings and are in the process of identifying and refining their goals for the upcoming year. The second main goal of the 12-month plan is to increase the CEIC’s outreach by developing an updated list of contacts and a robust volunteer pool. Levin, Roger Fuller, and Sandy have been working on updating their assigned parts of the lists and the

endeavor is still in progress. The third goal of the plan is to increase the CEIC's collaboration with other organizations in the South Hampton Roads area. Becky has point-of-contact information for several other groups like the CEIC and is working on reaching out to them.

- B. Litter and Pollution Prevention Committee—Lacy reported that her committee has met and reviewed their action items. They are looking into creative gifts for people participating in activities. There is an app called RocketBook that they would like to use as a prize for the poster contest. Lacy led a group for the Great American Cleanup at the Great Bridge Community Center. Sixteen people, including several CEIC members, collected an estimated 360 pounds of trash. Becky led a group at the Great Bridge Battlefield and Waterways Park in weeding one of the large beds near the English monument. For the Keep It Beachy Clean and the Straws on Request campaigns, her committee will work on reaching out to restaurants to encourage them to participate. They are also considering incorporating a Take-Out campaign to focus on increased take-out container/utensil waste due to the pandemic. For the cigarette litter prevention campaign she noted that receptacles will be concentrated around the municipal center and they will monitor usage and adjust locations as needed. AskHRGreen has developed social media messaging around a “Big Butts” campaign and plans to add a hashtag associated with the campaign so we can piggyback and have consistent messaging. PRT is sending a letter to the City Manager to request support for the campaign. For the Adopt-a-Spot program, two groups have submitted reports for Oak Grove and the Bruce Road trail. For balloon litter, the CEIC will partner with Clean Virginia Waterways and the Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program and allow the CEIC logo and links to be included on the [preventballoonlitter.org](http://preventballoonlitter.org) website. Lacy noted that Central Library has an ongoing tabling opportunity coming up that the CEIC could potentially use for outreach and giveaways around these campaigns.
- C. Waste Reduction and Recycling Committee—Denise reported that her committee, which includes Bruce, Dave, and Lacy, had its first meeting to define its mission and goals. The committee decided to initially focus on gaining an understanding of what happens to all the waste products picked up by the City and perhaps visit facilities that handle various types of waste. Jason Brown with Public Works is their point of contact for this information. By mid-December they are hoping to have flow charts that they can use for educational activities. Denise noted that some of the work of her committee overlaps with the litter and pollution prevention committee, so that committee is also providing input for this effort. Dave suggested the committee check with the City to make sure the recently renewed TFC contract hasn't changed what is recycled for curbside pickup. This could affect the accuracy of the recycling flyer that was developed last year in a joint effort by the Chesapeake Master Gardeners Green Team, Chesapeake Department of Public Works, and TFC Recycling.

- D. Beautification Committee—Vikki reported that she, Mike and Sydney met to discuss the business beautification awards judging form, and drafted revisions to use for this year’s contest. Vikki asked about the administrative process for revising the form and seeking final approval. Vikki noted that Mike proposed extending the 9/30 deadline to 10/30 to allow more time to finalize the judging form and because there are presently only two nominations. Megan is concerned this may be too late because many properties are not looking as good so late in the season. After discussion, it was decided that the deadline would remain as is, the beautification committee would submit their final draft to the executive board for review and approval, and Megan will format it. Denise noted that as long as the bylaws don’t prohibit the committee alone from deciding, the judging form does not need a vote from the CEIC. Becky encouraged CEIC members to submit more nominations. With Jason Brown’s approval, Mike, Vikki, and Becky are in the process of contacting those on the Adopt-a-Garden list to verify their desire to continue and update contact information, and are visiting adopted sites to assess maintenance status. The notable yards contest judging is under way; judges should submit their winners to Megan by 9/30.
- E. Conservation Landscaping/License Plate Committee—Becky reported that the license plate fund application form has been approved by Mike Barber, pending a few minor tweaks. The committee will meet to discuss the application process and promotion of the program on October 5. Becky asked CEIC members to keep an eye out for sites that could be good candidates. For the Central Library front entrance circle project, the committee is still waiting for the MOU to be finalized before the historic mill stone can be placed there. The site will then be planted, hopefully with assistance from some DAR volunteers. When plants are ordered for the site, Becky will also include a few additional plants to complete the Indian River Library circle, which was planted earlier this year. Two Indian River Library employees have been regularly maintaining that site.
- F. Tree Board—Rogard reported that the tree board is making plans for Arbor Day and coordinating a scaled-down event with Ed Bradley’s assistance. The plan is to plant six trees, funded by a garden club donation, at Great Bridge Battlefield and Waterways Park, near the history museum. Megan will coordinate with Sandy to pick a date the Mayor can attend the event, which will tentatively be broadcast on Facebook Live. There is no update from the City Manager on the city budget or location for the Urban Forester position, but restructuring was a topic at the City Manager’s staff meeting this month. The Tree Board is also considering tabling at more events in 2021 and having more tree-specific materials to hand out. They are also exploring the possibility of doing some local hikes and focusing on trees during the hikes. Virginia Tech has a fall wildlife and field tour, so the Tree Board may ask them to do that in Chesapeake in 2021. They also talked about locations for future tree plantings, in particular focusing on areas that have been identified as urban heat islands. Megan Mulroy-Goldman noted there is a high priority for plantings along the Southern branch of the Elizabeth River. Rogard

asked CEIC members to think of good locations for tree plantings. The Tree Board will continue to work on securing funding sources and sources for trees.

- G. Keep Chesapeake Beautiful Photo Calendar Contest—Vikki noted that judges, including a professional photographer, have been secured and will judge the photos on 9/30. Megan noted over 50 photos have been submitted.
- H. Calendar Funds Survey—Megan and Becky have discussed creating a survey for CEIC members to provide input on how to spend the \$867 currently in the fund. Members should email Megan and Becky with ideas. Helping fund the Conservation Conference had been mentioned in the past. Megan suggested buying more cigarette butt receptacles, estimated at about \$70 each. Denise made a motion to use the funds for the next Conservation Conference. Becky seconded. After much discussion about whether the conference could be held at all due to the pandemic, and in the absence of cost data needed from PRT, Denise withdrew her motion. No decision was made regarding use of the calendar funds.
- I. Conservation Conference 2021—Rogard updated members on the status of planning the conference, which at this stage is exploratory only. There is still a great deal of uncertainty around whether large gatherings will be possible. A half-day format in conjunction with the Annual Awards Luncheon has been proposed. The entire ballroom has been reserved at the Chesapeake Conference Center for March 19th. Megan advised members that funding for the conference was not in the PRT budget this past March and is not for 2021 either, so funds would need to come from other sources. She needs to revise the cost figures she had provided earlier to Rogard. Rogard will reach out to sponsors to gauge the level of interest but no sponsor fees will be collected at this point. Dave suggested contacting Dollar Tree to see if they would be interested in supporting a conference. Rogard noted that last year he didn't contact them because their corporate giving guidelines clearly state that they do not support conferences.
- J. Great American Cleanup Results—Megan reported that to date, eight groups consisting of 64 volunteers reported collecting approximately 1,000 pounds of trash for the Great American Cleanup. Some groups postponed due to weather and will still be going out to do trash cleanups.

## **VI. New Business**

October 1 CEIC Vacancy –Becky asked for suggestions for nominations to replace Jason Brown. To Lacy's question about particular skill sets being sought, Becky responded that CEIC does not have active duty military or spouse representation. Lacy mentioned she will be meeting with a lieutenant commander whose wife is the executive director for Volunteer Hampton Roads. She will ask him for recommendations for candidates.

## **VII. Seeking Volunteers**

- A. Cigarette Litter Prevention Campaign—Megan reported that the new receptacles will be concentrated at the municipal center. Information could be placed in the City Hall lobby area and/or the Central Library to communicate information about cigarette waste. Outreach activities and receptacle installation must be completed by the end of October to fulfill the requirements of the grant.
- B. Chesapeake Recycles Days—10/24 at the TCC Chesapeake campus; 11/14 at Greenbrier Mall. Volunteers are needed from 8:30 to 12:30.
- C. Newsletter/Outreach Coordinator—Becky indicated that the CEIC still needs a volunteer for this position.
- D. Arboretum Invasive Species Removal—scheduled on October 2, from 9 a.m. – 12 p.m. Bob Fountain is coordinating this event, which will involve pulling out invasives such as ivy, stilt grass, and privet. Tools will be available.
- E. COVID-19 resource fairs – the Chesapeake Health Department is hosting several COVID-19 resource fairs from 9/22 – 9/25, from 10 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. at various locations around the city. Becky and Denise will table at the Deep Creek North location from 10 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. tomorrow.

**VIII. Citizen Comments**

There were no citizen comments.

The meeting adjourned at 1:25 p.m. The next meeting of the CEIC is October 28, 2020.