

**Chesapeake Environmental Improvement Council**  
**Meeting Minutes - August 28, 2019**  
**Rivercrest Community Center**

**Attendees:** Rogard Ross-Chair, Jason Brown-Vice-Chair, Lauren Ragsac-Secretary

- Council Members: Vikki Barnette, Heather Barlow, Bob Fountain, Becky Greenwald, David Sackett, Adrienne Sawyer, Levin Turner, Amy Weber
- Parks, Recreation & Tourism Staff (PRT): Josh Fisher
- Guests: Kathy Russell (TFC Recycling), Joan and Bill Gregory, Mike Perry (City of Chesapeake Landscape Coordinator), Anna Eli (City of Chesapeake Park Planner)

- I. **Welcome and Introductions:** Rogard opened the meeting at 12:03 and welcomed members and guests and asked for participants to give introductions.
  - Approval of Minutes: Minutes from the June meeting were sent by email. Heather Barlow commented that Amy Weber has done an amazing job as Secretary. A motion was made and seconded to approve the June meeting minutes. All approved.
  
- II. Environmental Tip  
Lauren talked about zero waste packed lunch products to reduce reliance on things like zip lock bags and cling wrap. The selection and availability of these products has really grown in recent years. Vikki asked about using castor oil for mole control and whether it had any environmental side effects.
  
- III. Election of Vice Chair  
Amy Weber, on behalf of the nomination committee, announced the nomination of Jason Brown for Vice Chair of the CEIC. Jason agreed to take on the role. Dave Sackett seconded the nomination. Rogard asked for any other nominations for Vice Chair and none were put forward. A motion was made to approve Jason Brown as Vice Chair and was approved unanimously. Heather Barlow pointed out that a second is not actually required when a designated committee has put forth a nomination.
  
- IV. Approval of Bylaw Changes  
The City Attorney made some edits to the bylaws and they were then sent on to City Council for further review. City Council made no changes. The revised bylaws were sent out electronically to CEIC members two weeks prior to today's meeting. Rogard solicited discussion from members before moving to approve the bylaws. Becky Greenwald moved to approve the bylaws. Bob Fountain seconded and the bylaws were unanimously approved. There was brief discussion that going forward, the CEIC should look to having at least one active duty military person serve as a member.
  
- V. Updates
  - Letter of Appreciation – was sent by the Mayor to Jack Elder, who was an active member of the CEIC for many years.
  - Conference Committee - Rogard, Josh, Heather and Becky met on August 22 to discuss progress on planning the Conservation Conference. They've gotten preliminary acceptance from BGIF, USFWS, CBF, ERP, Healthy Chesapeake and Friends of Indian River. They are continuing to contact other groups, including Public Works Stormwater Committee. Mike Barber (Director of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism) was going to talk to Mark Woodard ( Planning Department) to discuss how to pay for the conference; waiting for an update. The likely date for the conference is Friday March 6, 2020.

- License Plate Committee - Josh reported that Mike Barber wants to meet with the license plate committee. Four sites have been identified for beautification projects. Two sites are near the NC border, a third is on Route 58 at Access Road, and the fourth on Portsmouth Blvd at the Suffolk line. The plan is for a two-level landscape and lighted sign. The license plate fund would fund installing the projects and the City would handle long-term maintenance. Josh suggested the CEIC gives input before they move forward with the projects. Heather expressed concern about avoiding the problems CEIC has seen in the past with a lack of maintenance on some beautification projects. Josh noted that there is City funding allocated for maintenance. Jason, Rogard, Alden, Vikki, and Levin would like to participate on the committee, as well as Mike Perry.
- Tree Board – Bob reported that the Tree Board had their first meeting on August 28. Mike Andruczyk (Chesapeake Extension Agent) and Ed Bradley are also coordinating with the board. Bob Fountain noted that he is the last certified arborist on the City. Tree Board members discussed expediting the position of Urban Forester or City Arborist. The board plans to play a larger role in the upcoming Autumn Fest at the Arboretum on October 5. The board is going to recommend at least three staff positions to the City: Certified Arborist at the Arboretum, a Certified Arborist in Parks and Grounds Maintenance, and a City Arborist. Rogard pointed out in the letters the CEIC has been sending to the Mayor and City Council, we have been using the title “Urban Forester.” The Tree Board will meet again in two weeks.
- Notable Yards – Josh reported that the program for this year is completed. Media package has been provided to the Virginian Pilot and we are awaiting their publication of the article announcing the winners. Rogard will coordinate posting to the CEIC Facebook page.
- Calendar Contest – Josh noted the photo contest deadline is Sept. 6. They need to get together and look at the photos to assess what they have. Judging needs to be completed by mid-October, when Meghan comes back from maternity leave. Rogard asked members to think about whether they want to assist in judging.
- Business Beautification – Jean was absent from the meeting, so no report/update was given. Rogard described the Business Beautification program for CEIC members. This program parallels the Notable Yards contest, but is directed at local businesses, granting a single award citywide. The judging rules have not been formalized as much as with Notable Yards.
- Scholarship Program – Dave Sackett has not had time to update the status of the program. He will give an update at the next monthly meeting in September.

#### VI. City Council Liaison

The City would like for every board and commission, such as the CEIC, to have a member of City Council at each of their meetings or to be “on call” to attend any meeting at the discretion of the Chairperson on that group. After brief discussion, a motion was made by Adrian that the CEIC choose to have a council member “on call” as necessary. Jason seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

#### VII. Seeking Volunteers – Chesapeake Recycles Day, September 7, 9 a.m. – 12 p.m. Sam’s Club, Western Branch

Jason solicited volunteers for three recycle event dates. Amy, Dave and Rogard volunteered to help during the September 7 event. It was suggested that the dates for the events be posted on Facebook and that additional volunteers be solicited there.

## VIII. Plans for 2019-2020 – 12-Month Plan of Action

Rogard reviewed the list of events and efforts to be accomplished. These included:

1. Business Beautification Award
2. Arbor Day (October)
3. Calendar Contest (Fall)
4. Holiday Party (December)
5. Awards Nominations (January / February)
6. Conservation Conference and Awards Luncheon (March)
7. Clean and Green Poster Contest (Spring)
8. Notable Yards (May/June)
9. Tree Board
10. License Plate Fund planning
11. Scholarship Fund planning
12. Chesapeake Recycles Day (on-going)
13. Outreach Events (various)
14. Adopt-A-City Hall cleanups (quarterly)
15. Urban Forestry
16. Conservation Landscaping
17. Member and Volunteer Recruitment

Josh discussed upcoming changes to the Adopt-A-Park program and how it affects the CEIC adoption of Courtyard Square Park and the area surrounding City Hall. Courtyard Square itself is not much in need of volunteer cleanups, but the surrounding parking areas need additional trash receptacles; especially those area used for parking by those attending the Courts. For the moment, Rogard recommended that the CEIC suspend Adopt-A-City Hall cleanups schedule; we will re-visit when to resume.

On the topic of conservation landscaping, Becky discussed the possibility of the CEIC spearheading a conservation landscaping project at the Indian River branch library as a pilot program. Becky will form a committee to further explore the idea.

Heather raised that we need to plan our Holiday meeting/party.

## IX. New Business

Rogard noted that 2020 will mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Earth Day. He will look into the Mayor making a proclamation to recognize the milestone.

Heather briefed the committee on the City's plans to pave the main north-south trail in Northwest River Park. The initial goal is to provide a paved path to support a Triathlon in Chesapeake in 2020. But the new road could then also enable a boat launch at the south end of the park. The concern is that this would replace the only all-weather walking path in the park and permanently impact the park's ecosystem and quietness. She is meeting with Mike Barber in the coming weeks.

Jason reported that the City will soon release a new Social Media Policy that will also govern the social media usage by boards and commissions, including the CEIC. It should not result in any drastic changes.

Jason reported that the City is working on the algae issue at Lakeside Park. He also reported that all Adopt-A-Park, Adopt-A-Spot, and Adopt-A-Highway programs going forward will be for one year contracts. Renewals will be reviewed each year to ensure that adopters are fulfilling their obligation.

Becky asked that an updated roster of CEIC members be distributed. Josh said he will send it out.

The next meeting of the CEIC will take place on September 25, 2019.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Lauren Ragsac, Secretary