

**Chesapeake Environmental Improvement Council**  
**Meeting Minutes - October 23, 2019**  
**Rivercrest Community Center**

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

- Council Members: Heather Barlow, Rob Beaton, Bob Fountain, Becky Greenwald, Mike Perry, Carol Praissman, David Sackett, Amy Weber
- Parks, Recreation & Tourism Staff (PRT): Josh Fisher, Ana Elezovic, Megan Hale
- Guests: Kathy Russell, TFC Recycling

- I. **Welcome and Introductions:** Rogard opened the meeting at 12:04 and welcomed members and guests and recognized new CEIC members Rob Beaton and Mike Perry.
  - Approval of Minutes: Minutes from the September meeting were sent by email. Members did not take a vote on approval of the minutes.
  
- II. Environmental Tip  
Kathy noted there is a big push to raise awareness around the danger of putting batteries and electronics into recycling bins. As a result, a lot of the vendors that pick up recycling are having fires in their trucks. There will be an article in the *Virginian Pilot* on the state of recycling in Hampton Roads. Kathy noted that several places accept used batteries, including the household hazardous waste station. Dave suggested that information on where to recycle batteries should be included in the upcoming news article. Kathy will contact Liz Vaughn. Rob volunteered to post information to FB. Also, Becky shared some information on “black bag” composting.
  
- III. Updates
  - Conservation Conference Committee – the Committee met on October 16. Rogard, Becky, and Jason met with Mike Barber to speak about funding the event, and also about the schedule. Megan has the go ahead to work with Mike and staff on the budget and advertising. Mike suggested \$40 per person, \$35 for early registration, and \$25 for students. Most of the panelist spots are filled. Heather is still working on Land & Water Conservation panelists. The committee is also working on sponsorship for the event. The environmental awards luncheon used to be sponsored, so there is some precedent for soliciting sponsors. Megan encouraged CEIC members to reach out to their contacts to invite people to the conference. She is also looking into getting the conference accredited to draw in more people. Rogard pointed out that one of the goals of the conference is to collect input for the City’s comprehensive plan for the next 20 years. Dave Sackett is chairing a committee on sea level rise for an upcoming December conference at NBG sponsored by the Society of Military Engineers. Federal, state and local officials will be presenting there, so Dave will put in a plug for the Conservation Conference at that event. The Conservation Conference will be on Friday, March 6 and will be held in conjunction with the CEIC Environmental Awards luncheon.
  - License Plate Committee – Rogard wants to have CEIC members involved in more directly seeing how these funds are used. The idea is to use license plate funds to do beautification projects in coordination with various city groups such as civic leagues. Those groups would then be responsible for maintaining the sites. The Georgetown Blvd. location would be the first of these types of installations. Mike Barber is asking for the CEIC’s “seal of approval” on these individual projects. Rogard suggested the CEIC could eventually develop an approval process to nominate various locations around the city. Rogard asked for additional volunteers. Rob and Becky volunteered.

- Tree Board (TB) – Bob Fountain noted that they met again with Mike Barber. Bob shared his opinion that the main goal of the TB should be to reinstate the City Forester position. He explained that he has become more sympathetic to the complexity of the situation in Chesapeake. Still, he feels the TB can take a leadership role in trying to surmount the various bureaucratic challenges. Mike Barber recommended that the TB wait until the new City Manager comes onboard early next year. In the meantime, the TB plans to do some research and develop a charter to codify their function and relationship with various city entities. Ana had volunteered to review the existing zoning ordinance to provide the Tree Board with information on potential amendments to favor better tree selections and preservation of canopy.
- The mayor’s Sustainability Committee has their next meeting on Nov 12 at 8:30 and Kathy suggested the TB consider joining forces with some of the people on that committee. Rogard raised the question of what the CEIC can do to move this issue forward because it has been languishing for years. Heather suggested that the job description for City Forester should specify that part of the job is to make recommendations on how trees and tree canopy can help sea level rise, because that particular issue has been mandated at the state level. The City can then pin its mandate in some part onto the City Forester position. Chesapeake’s tree canopy is actually steadily decreasing. Another priority of the TB will be to develop tree stewards in the City.
- Keep Chesapeake Beautiful Calendar Contest – Megan reported that volunteers reviewed over 80 photos for selection for the 2020 calendar. Winners have been notified. Grant funds are available for printing and monetary awards for the winners. The calendars will be available for a \$5 suggested donation. The goal is to have them printed in time for the holiday craft show at the Chesapeake Conference Center. Megan asked for volunteers in helping to distribute the calendar. Each month features an environmental tip, so if CEIC members have input, let Megan know as soon as possible.
- Business Beautification – The deadline for submissions was October 14. Megan noted that three businesses were submitted. She is looking for three volunteers to go to the businesses to judge the landscaping. Mike, Lauren, and Becky volunteered.
- Scholarship Program – Rogard reported that the letter drafted by the CEIC was sent to the Mayor. Rogard followed up with Sandy Madison, City Clerk, prior to today’s meeting and she reported that the request was forwarded to the City Attorney to see if such funding was permitted under current ordinances.
- Litter Grant - Megan explained that this is an annual grant and the City should learn in the near future how much is to be awarded this year. In past years it has been around \$30,000. Parks, Recreation, and Tourism (PR&T) has a spending plan for these funds but would like to know what ideas CEIC members have. Items can include giveaways for our events and outreach material as long as it has a litter reduction related theme. Amy indicated a preference for education materials. Heather reminded us that she gave 4H curriculum material to Sara Sumoski at PR&T and this might be a good thing to develop using these funds; she asked if Amy was interested in working with her on this. Ana mentioned using this to fund "Paint a Drain" activities. Rogard asked members to send additional ideas to Megan by e-mail and we will discuss this at the December meeting.
- Conservation Landscaping – Becky’s subcommittee had a follow-up meeting with Mike Barber on October 15. Also in attendance were Vicki, Mike Perry, Lauren, Megan, and Josh. The sub-committee is focusing on introducing sustainable landscaping methods at public buildings in Chesapeake. Current city maintenance practices are largely limited to a basic “mow, blow, and go” model. The subcommittee’s plan is to launch the Indian River Library parking lot circle as a pilot demonstration of a sustainably planned garden. Lauren and Mike

worked on a site plan incorporating low maintenance native plants and permeable hardscape. PR&T has allocated funding and will put in hardscape and do some other prep work over the winter. PR&T is also looking at putting public art work at the center of the circle; Mike Barber is reaching out to the Fine Arts and Public Arts Commissions. The plan is to recruit volunteers to do the planting as part of the Great American Cleanup the weekend of March 27-28. For long-term maintenance, an Adopt-a-Spot group needs to take over the site. Indian River Middle School or Priority Automotive have been suggested for this task. Becky has also been in contact with the librarian at Central Library to discuss re-landscaping the circle in front of the building.

- Holiday Luncheon - CEIC members decided on December 4 for the holiday party. Amy and Becky have not yet had a chance to do much planning for the event. They plan to do so after Nov. 12. The party will be a potluck. Megan suggested that we make it a zero-waste event. The first part of the event will be mingle and luncheon. The CEIC will have an abbreviated business meeting afterward.

#### IV. Seeking Volunteers

- Chesapeake Recycles Day –Saturday, November 16, 8:30-12:30 at the TCC Chesapeake campus; Rob, David volunteered, Amy and Rogard indicated they were possibly available.

#### V. New Business

- Megan submitted a nomination of the CEIC for the Keep America Beautiful President's Circle Award. She will share the nomination with CEIC members.

The meeting adjourned at 1:13 p.m. There will be no meeting in November. The next regular monthly meeting of the CEIC will take place on January 22, 2020. The CEIC holiday luncheon, with a short business meeting afterward, is scheduled for Wednesday, December 4.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Lauren Ragsac, Secretary