

HARFORD COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY BOARD

APPROVED MEETING SUMMARY – June 16, 2020

Members Present: Sally LaBarre, Jackie Koehn, Tami Imbierowicz, Paul Gartelmann, Michael Charlton, Roland Beckman, Dennis Kirkwood, Lynn Davis

Ex-officio Members Present: Paul Magness, Joe Siemek, John Resline, Matt Kropp

Review / Approval of February 18, 2020 Meeting Summary

A motion to approve the February 18th meeting summary was made. The motion was seconded; the Board unanimously approved the meeting summary.

Update on County Green Infrastructure (GI) Demonstration Projects – Mr. Matt Kropp, Planning and Zoning

Two locations in Harford County were chosen to showcase the initiative of the County's Green Infrastructure Plan by use of demonstration projects; the Mary-Risteau District Courthouse parking lot and Mariner Point Park.

Mr. Kropp explained that the Courthouse parking lot project aimed to demonstrate how conventional stormwater management can be used in green infrastructure. A corner of the parking lot was unusable space given its location, and was transformed into a bio-retention area rain garden, allowing stormwater runoff from the parking lot to filter through the garden prior to entering the storm drain system in the street. This aesthetically pleasing project not only prevents potential flood damage from excessive runoff from the parking lot, but also prevents harmful pollutants and debris from entering our local waterways.

The project at Mariner Point park aimed to transform unused, mowed lawn areas into native wooded areas. Large trees absorb and filter lots of water, and when planted on steep slopes, can slow the rate of stormwater runoff and prevent erosion from occurring. Canopy coverage from the trees also shades the nearby parking lots, cooling the asphalt and the water that drains from there, thereby preventing heat island effects and lowering the risk of algal blooms in our waterways.

The use of native species in both projects demonstrates how native vegetation can be beautiful while also providing the added benefits of food and habitat sources for local wildlife (and people!), less maintenance requirements than those of exotic species, and the prevention of over-spreading invasive behavior. Educational signage will be added at both locations in the future to inform passersby of these green infrastructure qualities and benefits.

Departmental Updates

Joe Siemek stated that DPW has an 11million dollar budget for stormwater management (SWM) capital projects. He stated that the smaller SWM facilities cost more per acre than larger

facilities. Although the larger facilities are more economical, they cost more for the overall project given the size of them. Most facilities in Harford County are owned and managed by HOA's. Parks and Recreation is responsible for the maintenance of SWM projects on County properties.

Mr. Siemek also informed the group that DPW worked hard to prevent the closing of the County landfill facilities during the pandemic. As a result, a recycling surge occurred during the COVID-19 Stay-At-Home Order, receiving 25% more customers and 55% more recycling items than usual.

Paul Magness stated that Parks and Recreation was working on a stream restoration project at Magnolia Middle School. A bid will be out soon for a stream restoration project at Heavenly Waters.

John Resline informed the group that the Health Department has repaired lots of septic systems over the last few months, most likely due to systems that were already beyond their life expectancy being overloaded during the Stay-At-Home Order.

Mr. Resline also stated that the Health Department is in discussion regarding the ways to have a safe rabies vaccination clinic event that meets social distancing requirements.

Matt Kropp stated that the Department of Planning and Zoning stayed open during the pandemic, utilizing work-at-home options to meet social distancing requirements while fully meeting the requirements of the public needs. Planning and Zoning is prepared to phase in their back-to-work hours near the end of Summer.

New Business

There was discussion about future topics of the EAB. Mr. Gartelmann suggested that Parks and Recreation could update the group on the current status of County Parks. Mr. Kropp suggested that Brittany Long of Planning and Zoning could reach out to a contact at Aberdeen Proving Ground to provide insight as to the environmental ongoings on Post.

Adjourn: Meeting was adjourned at 7:25 pm.