

Town of University Park
Sustainability Committee
Wednesday, July 1, 2020

Committee members in attendance: Roy Alvarez, David Brosch, Steve Hurtt, Joe Schultz, Joe Thompson, Mary Sue Twohy.

The meeting, held via Zoom, was called to order at 7:30 p.m.

1. Sustainable Maryland recertification

Roy Alvarez submitted the recertification application on June 30. One required element, the town government carbon footprint calculation, remains to be added, but since the town had arranged to have that calculation done through the UMd Environmental Finance Center, which also sponsors Sustainable Maryland, there seems every reason for confidence that that will not prove any obstacle. We should have a response from SM in July.

2. General updates

The pollinator meadow is progressing nicely, with native plant species taking hold at about the pace anticipated by the bee lab and AWS. The project received some nice publicity via a recent article in the Hyattsville Wire. A pair of interpretive signs, on pollinators and the meadow flora, are in the works and should be installed this summer.

The stream cleanup in early June was a success, with 25+ participants and 26 bags of trash collected.

3. Climate action framework

The committee returned to discussion of the draft framework prepared in February by Joe Thompson and Rose Tully, consideration of which had been interrupted by the coronavirus pandemic. Thompson commented that the objective in developing such a framework is to create a simple filter that can be used by council, mayor, and staff, applied to all decisions concerning how the town will spend money or allocate other resources to make them with the climate change deliberately in mind. The analogy is the record of decision requirement in the National Environmental Protection Act, which does not mandate any particular outcomes but instead aims to affect decision-making processes by building in a requirement that environmental impacts and benefits, if there are any, be systematically identified and considered.

Because a climate action framework could have particularly direct effects on town purchasing procedures, and would necessarily work in tandem with the town's existing green purchasing policy, the committee will invite town administrator David Deutsch to attend the next meeting, if he can, to get the benefit of his expertise in that area.

Continuation of this discussion will be the main agenda item for the next committee meeting, scheduled for August 5. Schultz will provide initial draft resolution language, for discussion along with the framework draft, with the aim of obtaining a consensus in the committee on a proposal to send to council for its consideration.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Submitted by Joe Schultz, chair.