

Commission on the Environment (Tuesday, August 6, 2024)*Generated by Andrew Cheney on Tuesday, August 6, 2024***Members present**

George Thompson, Melissa Rodriguez, Molly Boron, Kristen Whitesell, Leslie Taylor, Nicole Bega

Meeting called to order at 6:30 PM

1. Call to Order

Action: A. Call to Order

Motion by Melissa Rodriguez, second by Molly Boron.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yea: George Thompson, Melissa Rodriguez, Molly Boron, Kristen Whitesell, Leslie Taylor, Nicole Bega

COE August 2024

Motion to accept minutes from July. Motion seconded and passed.

Old business: officer elections – completed in July. Molly remains Chair, Nicole is Vice Chair, and Kristen remains secretary. We almost elected Leslie as Chair (she was absent)!

Budget discussion: Do we have actual budget numbers? In the next couple of months think about events we might want to host again (master gardeners, etc.) so that we can go over the budget and ensure we are using all of it

Lexington Park bird safe event – Dr. Sutherland has confirmed. Will be Oct 26th, 2-330. Will be similar to event at Leonardtown. Audubon society will be joining as well. Molly has some samples to provide to the library and she also has the window samples available for display. Mike mentioned that about once a week he believes he has a bird hit his window.

- The Leonardtown library still has issues even with their shades pulled down

Riverfest – We have agreed to support, Nicole hasn't submitted the vendor form, but she will. There will also be a rain barrel event. Will we know where our vendor booth will be by next meeting? Yes, we should. We would like to be near LUGM. Molly asked if we would like to have the window safe info? Other flyers with info about what we are about? Melissa wanted to have a giveaway (we do have the bags!)

- Date and time: September 28th, opens at 1000, so volunteers should get there around 0900 or 0930. Need to determine who will work which blocks of hours (will figure it out next meeting.)

Tree canopy task force: Do we have any updates? AJ said not yet, but he will look into it before next meeting.

- Caroline King – used to be on COE, she is a Maryland Master naturalist. She took a job at St. Mary's College – community liaison. She is going to be doing a lot with them tied to environmental concerns. She is thinking of things like climate change resilience in SOMD. Leslie will be working with her for hands on experiences for the kids that take her leadership classes. Leslie mentioned the intern again, and Caroline will advocate for us getting an intern from inside. We need to get a status to provide more details. If we got an intern now it is not clear what we would have them do.

SWAC – Public Works will be attending the September meeting. Think of questions and topics to discuss!

New business: Oyster Fest? Third week of October. Run by the Lexington Park Rotary Club. We have time to decide if we want to participate as a vendor. Need to determine when vendor applications are due, and determine if we are going to support in addition to Riverfest?

Sustainability awards – nothing new from last month to this month. If you are out and about and you see something impressive, put a plug in for them to nominate themselves for the sustainability awards. Mike asked if we have nomination forms yet. Molly responded that we usually post them on our site in the November timeframe. Molly's hard drive crashed, and she still needs to look into getting it fixed. We could use any of the previous years' forms, we will accept any form! It is on our facebook page too. We could put them out for Riverfest at our table.

Any other new business or topics of interest to discuss? If we ever do the tree canopy study, one thing we should keep in mind is the animals. Molly can think of turtles and deer – what would be a solution down here? First solution is to have adjoining tree areas that they can sneak through. Can help revive animal species with enough tree canopy. Mike mentioned Costa Rica, but they have a more primitive infrastructure. Road crossings weren't as detrimental.

- Leslie mentioned that 235 is turning into one giant strip mall.
- California did put things that go over highways, and animals will go towards them, but it was controversial because it was expensive

- Any topics of relevance that we could find literature on that we could provide at our vendor booths? Any examples of what works? Even though we would love an animal bridge, probably wouldn't happen down here.
- One thing to consider, Leslie mentioned that we can't get tunnel vision on only treed areas, certain animals like quails require large fields.
- Molly asked if we can reach out to the farming community about non tilling farming, non pesticide farming – Molly will reach out to see if she can get a speaker at one of our fall meetings for large scale farming best practices.
- Molly recently went to a local distillery that wants to be labeled as organic, but it would require the neighboring farms to stop using pesticides as well.
 - What would it take for advocacy to garner interest in the local area? The distillery had contacted the farm and they were not interested in changing practices.

Next Month – SWAC, maybe for November meeting, Farm bureau and soil conservation.

Mike – would like to get EVs into the Leonardtown Veteran's Day parade. Would like to start the EV club of SOMD! Need some members!

Molly asked if there's anything going on with LUGM that we should be aware of? Mention of a marijuana farm came up?

Discussed solid waste 10 year plan – will ask Jim to provide for us to read in preparation for him coming to the meeting in September.

- Discussed limitations of composting in our county – potential opportunities

Motion to adjourn – seconded – motion passed! See you next month!

6. Adjourn

Action: A. Adjourn

Motion by Leslie Taylor, second by Melissa Rodriguez.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yea: George Thompson, Melissa Rodriguez, Molly Boron, Kristen Whitesell, Leslie Taylor, Nicole Bega