

Environment Committee Meeting, September 15, 2020 (via Zoom)

Present: Barton Rubenstein, Jack Frink, David Kathan, Donna Harmon, Stephen Surko, Ralph Wooden, Patty Friedman, Marnie Shaul

1. Minutes of the August 26 special meeting was approved.
2. Leaf blower Discussion
Barton reviewed the October 14 leaf blower forum conducted by the Environment Committee for the Town. Other Committee members who listened to the forum provided their very positive reactions. Overall, everyone agreed that the forum was well organized and very informative. The discussion then turned to next steps. Steve Surko suggested that a similar presentation be given to the Town Council that DC used in the Forum. Marnie noted that additional input from landscaping companies would be useful. Steve also recommended that as part of any recommendation, the Committee develop a plan for ensuring compliance. The consensus of the Committee was to propose a ban like the ones approved by Chevy Chase Village and DC, with the same phase in dates. Ralph made a motion that a recommendation to the Town include the following provisions: 1) same phase-in dates, 2) the Environment Committee work with other Town Committees on the proposal, 3) inclusion of an aggressive educational campaign, and 4) the incorporation of a cash for clunkers incentive to retire gas-powered blowers. After discussion of this motion, Donna seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.
3. TOS Battery Power Leaf Blower Purchase update
Matt reported that the new blowers would arrive the following Monday.
4. LED Lights update
The Committee conducted a brief discussion of the status of streetlighting. It was noted that PEPCO is expected to file a rate case soon with LED streetlights. In addition, an October 29 PEPCO session with the Town was announced. At the October 29 meeting, PEPCO's streetlighting proposal will be reviewed. PEPCO will also present its plans for placing chargers on public land and property.
5. Mother Earth Climate Event
Barton reported that a Mother Earth Project climate event had some Zoom bombing problem when it first attempted to do its program. They had 250 participants from around the globe. They were able to reschedule successfully and the event went smoothly.
6. Climate Emergency Declaration
David summarized Montgomery County's climate emergency resolution, which sets a goal of zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2035. David suggested that an easy option for the Town was to pass a resolution supporting and adopting the County's resolution. Another alternative was to prepare a very detailed climate emergency resolution being prepared by Takoma Park. The Committee agreed to discuss this in a future meeting.
7. New Items
No new items were offered.
8. Public Comments
No public comments were offered.
9. Meeting was adjourned at 8:46 pm.