

CONSERVATION ADVISORY COMMISSION
MINUTES

March 9, 2021

MEETING CONVENED: 7:02 p.m. GoToMeeting

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Sheila Smith, George Irvine, Beth Chajes, MaryClare Matsumoto, Helga Huntley, John Mateyko

ABSENT: Robyn O'Halloran

STAFF: Public Works and Water Resources Director Tim Filasky
Nichol Scheld, Administrative Professional I

Ms. Smith called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. She informed Mr. Filasky that Dr. Irvine would be late.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM FEBRUARY 9, 2021:

MOTION BY MS. MATSUMOTO, SECONDED BY MS. CHAJES: TO APPROVE THE FEBRUARY 9, 2021 MINUTES.

MOTION PASSED: 4 – 0.

AYE: Smith, Matsumoto, Huntley, Chajes.

NAY: 0.

ABSENT: O'Halloran, Irvine, Mateyko.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Ms. Smith asked if Andrew O'Donnell's appointment had been approved and he replied that he was on the March 22nd Council agenda for confirmation. Ms. Chajes informed that she now would represent District 2 so her Mayoral Appointment position would be open to the public.

There was no public comment.

3. POSSIBLE CONTRIBUTION TO REPAIR THE BRIDGE AT CHRISTIANSTED – GEORGE IRVINE, TIM FILASKY: *(Secretary's note: Dr. Irvine arrived late, and Ms. Smith moved to agenda item 5)*

Dr. Irvine asked Mr. Filasky to present and he would comment afterwards.

Mr. Filasky explained that between the Christiansted neighborhood, at the end of Farmhouse Road and the entrance of West Branch, there was a pedestrian bridge at the creek crossing that also carried one of the City's sanitary sewer pipes which served a large portion of the Christiansted community. He was unsure why the development was constructed in such a way to give maintenance to the Christiansted Homeowners Association (HOA) instead of to the City and explained that the City had an aerial sewer line that crossed underneath the bridge. He continued that the bridge over the line was

supposed to be owned and maintained by either the HOA or Civic Association at Christiansted, but he was unsure which organization was valid. He informed that City experienced a few different phases of streambank restoration since the early 1990's and noted the creek had some several thousand feet of gabion baskets that held rocks against the banks. He explained that the corrugated metal eventually deteriorated, and the rocks fell into the stream, but the baskets were still holding in the bank; although he was unsure if stabilization matting had been installed. DNREC contacted the City offering grant funding for 2021 at the same time that staff was speaking with Christiansted residents and Councilman Lawhorn about securing funding to reinstate the bridge. He explained the approaches to the bridge had nearly fallen off and pedestrians had to hop onto the bridge in order to walk across so it was useless for bike riders. Representative Baumbach was also contacted about funding around the same time. Mr. Filasky reiterated there were multiple discussions about funding in order to make the path viable once more while also securing the sewer line. He continued that the worst-case scenario was that the sewer line would break and empty directly into the creek. He noted that Representative Baumbach had state funding available, DNREC had funding specifically for streambank restoration, and the City's sewer fund could be used to address some issues with the sewer line. Staff investigated all of the funding mechanisms and found that none addressed the pedestrian part of the bridge, so Dr. Irvine spoke to Mr. Lawhorn about opportunities for the repairs.

Mr. Filasky acknowledged that the bridge had been in state of disrepair but now there was the additional concern for the sewer line. In conjunction with DNREC and its streambank restoration, the City sent an engineering consultant to perform an inspection on the bridge and sewer line. He reported that the damage was repairable but would take more time and money than originally expected. Staff had the consultant's report and after review, Mr. Filasky would meet with DNREC and Steve Williams, who performed most of the streambank restorations in the state, to ensure whatever funding was available for the restoration in and around the bridge would be used to shore up the abutments so no more soil was lost and the abutments were protected. He would meet with Mr. Williams and determine which entity would fund each step of the restoration: secure the abutments, fix the stream banks, and then concentrate efforts on the bridge. He noted the team was months out from addressing bridge repairs but would appreciate some funding support from the CAC. He explained that while the City did not own the bridge, staff understood the bridge was important to Christiansted residents and thought it was possible that the developer balked on its duty to the residents who were then stuck with the maintenance responsibility. He believed that outside funding would go far with the repairs and reminded all there was no sidewalk on Nottingham Road so pedestrians could walk through the woods to Delrem and cross at the newly improved traffic light and pedestrian signals. He hoped that the repair would encourage residents to walk instead of drive and offered to submit a memo and sketch of the area for the CAC.

Dr. Irvine confirmed that Christiansted residents used the bridge when it was operational, but the recent rains stressed the river which felled numerous trees and hit the bridge. He emphasized that shoring up the sewer line was extremely important given the increasing rain events and appreciated staff's attention to what could be a major environmental impact. He explained that residents used the bridge and the walkway running along the far side of the bridge connecting at Country Club Lane. He stressed the CAC used Green Energy funds to create portions of the trail running from White Clay Creek to Fairfield Crest which was now lit and used by many pedestrians and looked forward to Mr. Filasky's plan. Mr. Filasky shared that the consultant's report indicated a new bridge could be a better solution than repairing the old, depending on funding resources and estimates. He hoped to receive good recommendations to make an informed decision.

Ms. Smith asked if the loss of trees contributed to the volume of flooding and Dr. Irvine explained

he was referring to trees lost upriver to the bridge but confirmed it was due to the loss of the riparian zone from past development practices. Ms. Smith asked if Mr. Williams were an engineer who would investigate the streambank restoration and Mr. Filasky corrected that Mr. Williams was a program administrator with DNREC who worked with consultants. He continued that Bio Habitats was the main consultant and Mr. Williams focused on streambank restoration and had previously partnered with the City to shore up some of the infrastructure located along the creek where sewer lines ran. He added that DNREC needed to make repairs with minimal funding and would try to include the project to shore up the area between Route 273 and Christiansted.

Ms. Smith asked if landscape modifications contributed to the flooding which could be mitigated by planting upstream. Mr. Filasky explained that most of the drainage came from Maryland but agreed that reforestation was always an option. He noted that private landowners would not allow outside entities to plant trees all over their properties, so City and State parks hosted mass replanting efforts. He noted that the County recently planted trees in an open field near Polly Drummond Road and Fox Den Road. Ms. Smith asked if Maryland had a similar rule to the City's ordinance on maintaining riparian buffer zones and Mr. Filasky acknowledged that Dr. Huntley reached out and he was due to follow up. He informed that staff was open to discussions and said the issue was more educational because many people thought creeks were appropriate for yard waste disposal. He informed much of the creek area north of the City was already developed and the flooding had more to do with climate change.

Dr. Huntley hoped to connect with Mr. Filasky on the riparian buffer education campaign and asked for clarification on why the consultant report was unfavorable. Mr. Filasky replied that the consultant report indicated the repairs would be expensive and difficult with concerns over access to the wooded site. He explained that dump trucks and concrete trucks could not reach the area and while concrete pumper trucks were available, therefore the expense was additional. He continued that the repairs could also be made by the buckets using a small skid steer on the trail and emphasized that the work was time consuming and staff was conservative on estimates as a result. Dr. Huntley asked if there were alternatives and if staff was required to fix the situation because of the sewer line. Mr. Filasky replied that the City had to fix the sewer line but was not obligated to repair the bridge. He clarified that the City was using the sewer fund to fix the sewer line but also to shore up the bridge, so it did not wash out as securing the bridge was an added benefit.

Dr. Huntley asked if the bridge repair helped with maintaining the sewer and Mr. Filasky replied no because both sides had a manhole and explained that the sewer line could theoretically hang from anything and did not require a bridge. Dr. Huntley asked if the bridge was publicly accessible. Mr. Filasky confirmed but added that staff installed gates to keep visitors off for safety. Dr. Huntley asked if there were funding mechanisms other than the sewer fund and the DNREC Streambank Fortification Fund. Mr. Filasky confirmed the two were the primary funds but noted Representative Baumbach was often able to secure additional funding. After speaking to Dr. Irvine and Mr. Lawhorn, staff thought the CAC could be a potential contributor. Dr. Huntley asked if it were necessary for the CAC to contribute given the other funding sources and Mr. Filasky explained that most of the sewer funding was from the State Revolving Funds via the 2018 Referendum. He further noted with the restrictions that money could only be used for certain repairs including shoring up to ensure the sewer line was good and functional and was protected in the future. Staff could not spend any sewer funds or DNREC Streambank Restoration Funds to repair the bridge or approaches. Mr. Filasky reiterated that Representative Baumbach could potentially secure funding and staff only considered utilizing CAC funding because the project intended to keep cars off of the road. Dr. Huntley summarized that the project had three components: secure the abutments, secure the streambanks, and repair the bridge. She assumed the abutments would be funded by the sewer

funds, the streambanks would be secured with DNREC funds, and the bridge could potentially be repaired using CAC funds. Mr. Filasky confirmed.

Dr. Huntley reminded that the last stream restoration took place in 2014 and she still felt DNREC's definition of stream restoration was insufficient and was more streambank fortification. She hoped that the state had evolved its practices because she did not consider the restoration south of 273 a success. She revealed the installed boulders washed downstream and there were large sections of the stream that were completely silted over. She reminded that the last contractor planted seedlings on the river edge that did not last a month and were not replaced. She asked to have a better approach to planting than the last time.

Ms. Chajes was not familiar with the area but understood it easily flooded and agreed with Ms. Smith that intense rain events would be more likely in the future and the spot would flood again. She suggested investigating how to route sewer lines without crossing streams that would consistently flood and Mr. Filasky replied there was always a way, but staff had to consider time and budget. He informed that staff buried two aerial sewer crossings on the south side of town in Rittenhouse Park, under the Christina River, by using sewer syphons but it was an expensive, intensive project. He confirmed staff was considering using syphons at the end of McKee's Lane and Karpinski Park off of Old Papermill Road. He elaborated that Karpinski Park had a dam-like structure in the middle of White Clay Creek and in order to remove the dam, staff would use a syphon. Ms. Chajes asked if a syphon would be part of the assessment and Mr. Filasky confirmed staff always performed an alternatives analysis and considered costs and timeframes upon receiving results.

Ms. Matsumoto asked if the bridge was a pedestrian bridge that went over the Christina, asked where it ended, and if there was a trail. Mr. Filasky repeated there was a trail that led to Delrem. Ms. Matsumoto asked if the property owners owned the land all the way to the river in West Branch and Christiansted. Mr. Filasky confirmed and explained that staff had to have permission from the owners to do work in the area and access easements. Ms. Matsumoto asked if the trail would be on private property and Mr. Filasky confirmed. Ms. Matsumoto asked if there was a right of way because she would not feel comfortable going through a private yard and Mr. Filasky informed that homeowners reached out to staff with the same complaint. He noted the trail had been in place for 30 years and was unsure if the owners had an argument to shut it down but in order for staff to perform the work, the City needed access easements from the neighbors. He added that most owners were open to the suggestion and he assumed that many wanted to have a release of liability because society tended to be more litigious. Ms. Matsumoto was concerned about using CAC funds for private property that might not benefit everyone in the community. She thought it would be nice for the City to have a trail that went to the Maryland border and Mr. Filasky informed that part of the Mason-Dixon trail existed but it was not well-maintained.

Dr. Irvine interjected and reminded that his property had an easement for a public right of way through his backyard. He reiterated that the City allowed the developer to build in the riparian zone in exchange for creating a trail network with three bridges. The HOA realized that bridge maintenance costs were high, so it disbanded in order to drop the maintenance liability, but the easements still existed in each Christiansted plot; but he was unsure of West Branch. He agreed the land was private property, but the title granted public easement for the trail. Ms. Chajes interjected and agreed with Dr. Irvine because she once lived in West Branch. She recalled her first Council meeting in 1991 addressed the trail system and its maintenance and noted the Mason-Dixon Trail Club had offered to maintain the trail. Mr. Filasky added that the City had easements for sewer line and maintenance, but it did not cover pedestrians. He added that the easement was for the Christiansted side, not necessarily the Delrem side. Ms. Matsumoto

asked how much the CAC had in yearly funding and Mr. Filasky assumed that operating funds were budgeted yearly. **(Secretary's note: the 2021 CAC Budget is \$100,000)**

Ms. Smith asked for the bridge's dimensions and Mr. Filasky replied it was 45 feet long and 6 feet wide with railings. Dr. Irvine shared that thruflow.com specialized in bridge decking material designed for docks and wet environments. He continued that the bridge's current design used bridge and steel which were suboptimal for use in a river but shared that White Clay Creek used pressure treated wood and the thruflow bridging material to allow water to flow through and not degrade the bridge. Mr. Filasky was curious if the material was the same that would be used for the Rodney fishing pier. Dr. Irvine explained the company had different lines of docking and some were solar power enabled. Mr. Filasky asked that anyone with questions reach out to him at tfilasky@newark.de.us and promised to follow up on the report of idling vehicles.

4. PARTNERSHIP BRAINSTORM FOR THE NEWARK PARTNERSHIP (TNP)

Ms. Smith reminded that Dr. Dan Rich spoke with the CAC in January about potential collaborations between the CAC and TNP. She wanted to discuss initiatives and introduced Dr. Rich's suggestions:

- Facilitate community-based Coordinating Council with representation from CAC, UD (including students), community institutions and residents
- Educational role - addressing the importance of sustainability around energy and transportation
- Monitoring emissions – helping to develop the energy dashboard. Possibly working through UD Sustainability Council Chris Williams, possible ongoing student project.
- Other possible initiatives – Preservation of open space, clean water

Ms. Smith did not believe the Coordinating Council yet existed and assumed TNP would proceed with its formation through its Community Conversation meetings. She asked for a volunteer to serve as the CAC representative with TNP and asked if anyone was already a member. Dr. Irvine said that he was not on TNP's board, but he was a member of UD's Sustainability Council. He informed that Dr. Rich met with and got support from the UD's Council about the prospect of partnering with the CAC. He continued that UD's Council was creating a priority and strategic plan of which the community engagement piece was important. Ms. Smith wanted to determine one or two initiatives where interests intersected to work towards a common goal. She asked Dr. Irvine if he intended to remain with UD's Council and if the current meeting was his last with the CAC and he confirmed. He credited the CAC with helping UD's Sustainability Council gain traction, so he wanted to concentrate his efforts at the University while maintaining a relationship with the CAC through the partnership with TNP, the CAC and UD. Ms. Smith supported Dr. Irvine's decision and agreed that there was the potential for great benefit.

Dr. Huntley said she would consider representing the CAC with TNP but wanted to first understand the time commitment and have better defined goals for the Coordinating Council. Ms. Smith agreed. She referred to Goal 1.4 in the Sustainability Plan where the City would prepare a greenhouse gas emission inventory for the baseline year 2018 and reduce the greenhouse gas emission rate to net zero by 2060 and asked if the section referred to the emissions dashboard. Dr. Irvine reminded that the dashboard was discussed various ways. One suggestion was for a UD graduate student to partner with Public Works to take the existing City data for electricity usage, greenhouse gas, and carbon emissions to create a dynamic dashboard that would change as the City adapted. At the time the suggestion was made, City staff did not

have the bandwidth to work with students, but a Biden School faculty member volunteered to work as the student advisor. He wanted to bring the offer forward again because it could link the UD Sustainability Council, the CAC, and the City with assistance from TNP. He cautioned that it would take at least one semester to build the dashboard but was sure UD students were capable. He suggested planning the initiative for the fall because he still had the description for the internship and Dr. Andrea Sarzynski was still interested. He believed it was different from the Sustainability Plan Goal 1.4 where a third party would establish a baseline and the student dashboard initiative would use data the City already had to illustrate steps the City took to decrease carbon emissions. Ms. Smith asked if the emission inventory would be factor in the dashboard and Dr. Irvine confirmed. Dr. Huntley explained that the emission inventory was very technical and included how much CO₂ emission was directly caused by the City and what it was responsible for due to the product and services it purchased. She continued that Dr. Irvine's suggestion was clearly publishing the benchmarks for the City's environmental footprint so it could be easily tracked. She suggested including the City's electric forcements so residents could see how the renewable segment was growing. She recalled discussing the dashboard at the Sustainability Plan meetings, but she could not locate it in the Plan itself and assured Ms. Smith that it was not the greenhouse gas inventory. Ms. Smith thanked Dr. Huntley for the clarification and confirmed the dashboard was a collaboration possibility between the CAC, UD, and TNP.

Dr. Irvine suggested hosting a Sustainability Day with a solar go-cart competition where the City, UD, TNP, and surrounding businesses could join to raise consciousness about environmental technology. He proposed that the CAC could get sponsorships and create a semi-annual event that could also serve as an economic development driver. Ms. Smith thought the idea could address the importance of sustainability around energy and transportation and Dr. Irvine though it could stand alone. He reminded that Wilmington used to host a bike race and he imagined a Grand Prix competition where high school students could design alternatively powered vehicles. He admitted there would be pushback, but he hoped the event could draw visitors to the City while fostering graduate/high school student partnerships. Ms. Smith agreed that the Grand Prix could fall under Goal 2.3 of the Sustainability Plan and Ms. Chajes interjected that there was a National Non-Profit Coalition to promote EVs which held a Drive Electric Week Event in September each year and shared resources to help other municipalities host events. She noted that most events were collections of EVs for visitors to test. Ms. Smith recalled that middle school students used to participate in a solar car event in Dover and suggested the City could shut down Main Street for an EV event. Ms. Chajes suggested that Formula E vehicles could be showcased while Dr. Huntley supported the idea and emphasized the need for partners for a 2022 or 2023 implementation.

Ms. Smith wanted TNP to participate in the CAC's anti-idling educational campaign and encourage business owners to reach out to the City with anti-idling concerns. She found the slogan "turn the key, be idle free" to be a positive message and said that she would contact TNP to share ideas.

Ms. Smith asked if Chris Williams and the UD Sustainability Council were part of Dr. Irvine's team and he confirmed that Dr. Williams was the chair and a professor in the College of Agriculture. He continued that the Council had representation from many campus units, including facilities, and were still sorting the strategic plan and how to secure funding from UD, grants, and alumni. He suggested partnering to create a revolving fund similar to the Green Energy Fund with the addition of UD funding because it was practiced at other universities and he wanted to start one at UD. He admitted there were many reasons why the fund was not possible but suggested UD could sponsor and foster environmental projects at UD while the CAC and the Green Energy fund worked simultaneously within the City. He believed all entities could create funds to galvanize investments into green energy.

Ms. Smith agreed the extra funding would be helpful towards attaining goals. She reiterated her support for the EV Day and asked for clarification on private level 2 charging station installations. Dr. Huntley explained that level 1 charging was when EVs were plugged into regular outlets in residences and level 2 was a charging station that charged in two or three hours. She noted that level 1 was generally included with the purchase of the EV but level 2 ranged from \$300 to \$2,000 depending on preference. She added there were incentive programs for commercial entities to install level 2 charging stations but there were no longer incentives for private installation. Mr. Mateyko asked if President Biden intended to reintroduce incentives for private installation because there were no incentives at the State level and Ms. Smith said the infrastructure bill was not yet available. Dr. Huntley informed the federal government provided incentive for EV purchases and the State had a grant program where EV owners submitted documentation of their purchase to DNREC and received a grant. She clarified that the federal government allowed an EV tax deduction and was valid as long as the EV model was not overly popular. Dr. Irvine believed that President Biden's proposed infrastructure plan would provide more funding because renewable-based infrastructure equaled good union jobs. He wanted the City and State to be prepared to pursue funding and thought the CAC's partnership with UD and TNP could serve as a vehicle to obtain money through DNREC or the federal government. Mr. Mateyko interjected that Senator Carper's Committee for Environment and Public Works could have implications for the sewer line because it was a public works infrastructure. Ms. Smith agreed and summarized that the CAC was interested in collaborating with TNP on the dashboard, promoting an EV Day, educating the public on anti-idling, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Dr. Irvine stated that UD's Sustainability Council would meet the next day and he would share that the CAC was interested in partnering. Ms. Smith confirmed and reiterated that developing the dashboard was a logical initiative.

5. STRAW FLYER DISTRIBUTION PLAN UPDATE – CAC MEMBERS

Ms. Chajes revealed that she received the bookmarks and transferred 400 to Ms. Matsumoto to deliver to the library. She also informed Mr. McDowell and Dr. Irvine so they could distribute the bookmarks to students.

Ms. Chajes received two survey responses, but she was not sure how many TNP distributed because its email list was private. She informed the survey was also published in TNP's website. Ms. Smith asked when the request was sent, and Ms. Chajes estimated a month. Ms. Chajes revealed the responses came from Little Goat Coffee Roasting and Klondike Kate's and each estimated straw usage in 2019: Little Goat used 80,000 in a year and Klondike Kate used 22,000. Ms. Smith asked if the straws were plastic and Ms. Chajes said not necessarily and added the establishments also provided cost estimates and were actively engaged in actions to reduce plastic straws. Little Goat always used compostable straws made from corn and asked customers if a straw was wanted before assuming one was needed and Klondike Kate's also used a plastic-free, corn-based compostable straw. Both establishments claimed that customers had mixed reactions to the changes but anticipated taking further actions by continuing their current practices to reduce straw usages in response to the City's resolution. Little Goat revealed their biggest issue was that while compostable straws had less of an environmental impact, they were only compostable if done so correctly. Staff at Little Goat doubted customers had the ability to privately compost the straws and assumed they were still ending up in landfills.

Ms. Chajes shared that the establishments felt the biggest challenges to adopting a straw by request only policy were that patrons wanted straws regardless of the environmental impact and Klondike Kate's revealed that staff were not yet in the habit of asking patrons if a straw was necessary and patrons got easily annoyed if there were no straws. She informed that one establishment requested a quarter

sheet flyer and the other requested a full sheet.

Ms. Smith reminded that Grain used tabletop flyers and suggested that Klondike Kate's could follow suit so patrons and waitstaff understood the City's stance. Dr. Huntley wondered if the CAC needed to reach out directly to restaurants because it could be more effective, and Ms. Chajes agreed. Ms. Matsumoto informed that she delivered the bookmarks to the library but had not received a reply to her follow-up inquiry.

Ms. Smith welcomed Mr. Mateyko and explained the background of the discussion. Mr. Mateyko asked how the initiative began and Ms. Smith replied it stemmed from a presentation by Newark Charter students. She noted the process took two and a half years and Council approved a straw resolution. Mr. Mateyko asked if the CAC had any contact with the Sunshine Movement students and Ms. Chajes informed there were many different environmental organizations at UD, including the Sunshine Movement, who visited Main Street restaurants five years ago to help initiate the movement. She believed that as long as the pandemic was an issue, people were not likely to invest too much effort into the straw initiative and would most likely prefer straws to using glasses without straws. Mr. Mateyko suggested the situation could change in another three or four months and Ms. Chajes agreed because more students would be back, and restaurants would hopefully be operating at a fuller capacity. She did not think data collected this year would provide a reasonable comparison to 2019 and Mr. Mateyko agreed the timing was poor and recommended waiting for four months.

Ms. Smith was enthusiastic with the responses and agreed with the perspectives of Mr. Mateyko and Ms. Chajes. She acknowledged that public education campaigns were time consuming and Mr. Mateyko suggested displaying the number of straws used per day so patrons could visualize the impact. He continued that straws were the leading edge of dealing with the plastic crisis and were a small part of the carbon crisis. He wanted to ask the public where the effort should begin, and Ms. Chajes informed him that the statistics were on the flyers and bookmarks. Ms. Chajes noted that Ms. O'Halloran was not present but presented a connection to the student population. Dr. Huntley believed Mr. Mateyko's point about carbon footprint reduction was relevant because Council passed the resolution and tasked the CAC with tracking its effectiveness. She emphasized that the CAC was subject to Council's direction and suggested reviewing the Sustainability Plan for ideas on how to reduce the City's carbon footprint. Ms. Smith appreciated Mr. Mateyko's suggestion and reminded the CAC could reintroduce the straw initiative in the fall and added that Community Day provided another opportunity to promote the resolution.

Ms. Matsumoto wondered if the email could be sent again and asked how many were sent out. Ms. Chajes reiterated that TNP's list was private, but she would ask Leanne Moore. Ms. Matsumoto wanted to offer another chance for restaurants to respond and Ms. Chajes confirmed.

(Secretary's note: Dr. Irvine was still not present, so Ms. Smith proceeded to the next agenda item.)

6. ANTI-IDLING AND PUBLIC EDUCATION UPDATE – SHEILA SMITH

Ms. Smith delivered the anti-idling signage to City Hall for Mr. Filasky with the hope they would be installed at the Park & Shop across from the municipal building. She wrote an email to the Delaware Division of Air Quality Control regarding a statewide ban on idling and the League of Women Voters Environmental Committee agreed with the effort. She revealed that Clean Cities called idling bans low hanging fruit and had informed the Air Quality Control Division that the City's anti-idling ordinance had been in effect for a while, but public education was a challenge. Staff at the Division indicated the

pandemic was a hindrance and would begin considering a public education campaign or ban sometime after the pandemic lifted. She continued that Delaware's idling ban was only for large diesel engines, trucking, and trains, and did not provide public education or bans for personal automobiles.

Mr. Filasky received the signs and discovered more in various offices which were now consolidated in the sign shop. Staff spoke to Robert Wittig, owner of Park & Shop, who agreed to allow the City to attach anti-idling signs to the poles once new signage was ready to install. Mr. Filasky continued that the City would install as many as possible without overtaking the space and Ms. Smith was enthusiastic about the installation. Ms. Smith asked how many signs were found and Mr. Filasky replied there were about fifteen and suggested an inventory to see how many installed signs needed replacing at Fairfield Park. Ms. Smith understood there were no anti-idling signs at the newer City parks and Mr. Filasky would have them installed. Ms. Smith added there were also no signs at the municipal building parking lot and Mr. Filasky would investigate.

Ms. Matsumoto asked how the City Manager was encouraging anti-idling among City vehicles because she encountered various idling City vehicles throughout her day to day activities. Mr. Filasky appreciated the information and he would speak to his Department. He informed that the City's trucks were equipped with GPS units that indicated if a vehicle was idling and confirmed that staff were encouraged not to idle. He explained that some service trucks sat for an entire day during an emergency situation and needed their invertors but that would be unnecessary with a more electric based fleet. He would remind his staff.

(Dr. Irvine arrived at the meeting and Ms. Smith directed the discussion to the third agenda item.)

7. BIKE NEWARK AND HB36 – HELGA HUNTLEY

Dr. Huntley explained that HB36 was pending legislation that was introduced to the House to remove a sunset clause from the 2017 Bicycle Friendly Delaware Act. The Act called for bicycle specific traffic signs and allowed bicyclists to come to a rolling stop and yield at stop signs to cross traffic if the intersection was clear; it was commonly referred to as "the Delaware Yield". She explained the Delaware Yield was set to expire in 2021 so the House and the Senate had to pass HB36 to halt the sunset so Bike Delaware and BikeNewark coordinated efforts to promote the issue. Statistics collected by the State Police showed a reduction of over 23% in injury-causing accidents with bicyclists at intersections including stop signs and, at the same time period, the reduction of injury causing crashes with bicyclists at non-stop sign-controlled locations reduced by 5% which indicated the law was a clear improvement for bicyclists at intersections. She explained the Act was controversial because it was confused with bad trail etiquette so BikeNewark and Bike Delaware asked City Council to write an official letter of support to legislators to pass the bill.

Dr. Huntley thought the law was relevant for the City because of its large bicycling population and stop sign intersections. She revealed that safety gains were also discovered in other cities with similar rules and explained that it allowed cyclists to pass through the intersection when it was safest for them, so they spent less time at intersections and became more visible to drivers. She continued that cyclists could pass the stop line and pull into the intersection and, because they were allowed to stay in motion, they could be seen better than stationary people. Dr. Huntley revealed that the Council discussed the topic and asked the lobbyists to lobby in favor of the bill.

Ms. Smith was pleased with Council's decision and explained that HB36 was called the Barb Hughes Law, a Newark resident who was an avid cyclist. Ms. Hughes rolled through a stop sign at Orchard and Winslow, got ticketed, and disputed the ticket which initiated actions towards the bill. Ms. Smith assumed the Delaware Yield resulted in less rear endings and Dr. Huntley confirmed and added bikers were also cut off less when cars wanted to turn, and bicyclists wanted to go straight.

8. MONTHLY CONSERVATION ARTICLE WITH THE NEWARK POST – SHEILA SMITH

Ms. Smith thanked Ms. Matsumoto for the submission and shared that her own article was over 2,000 words. Dr. Huntley asked Ms. Smith to explain the articles to Mr. Mateyko. Ms. Smith explained the articles were an effort to publicize the CAC so the members wrote about conservation concerns for the Newark Post and Mr. Mateyko said he would read previous articles. Ms. Smith shared statistics from John Shannon that the Conservation Corner articles garnered 1,500 – 2,000 readers a month. Mr. Mateyko asked if the CAC had a webpage where members could create a public library to centralize important articles or studies. Ms. Smith informed that the CAC did not have a website and Dr. Huntley suggested to hold the discussion until Ms. O'Halloran was available as she was the CAC's social media contact. Ms. Matsumoto asked for the process of submitting articles and Ms. Smith asked that she receive the articles and she would forward them to John Shannon. Ms. Smith acknowledged the CAC would have two new members and explained the authors tried to tie the articles into the Sustainability Plan and aspirations.

- February – Annual Report - George Irvine
- March – Spotted Lanternfly - Sheila Smith
- April – Composting - MaryClare Matsumoto, Robyn O'Halloran
- May – 100% Renewable Energy – Helga Huntley
- June – Flooding and Riparian Buffer Zones – Helga Huntley, Bob McDowell

9. PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT REPORTS

Dr. Huntley informed that the Comprehensive Plan Revision Committee was hosting Coffee Hours during various times for the public and Ms. Chajes said she would participate in the next meeting. Ms. Scheld stated the next meeting would be held:

- March 10th at 3pm
- March 11th at 12 pm
- March 12th at 8 am
- March 16th at 7 pm

Dr. Huntley stated the meeting information would be available at newark.de.gov/meetings.

10. OLD/NEW BUSINESS – SUSTAINABILITY PLAN IMPLEMENTATION NEXT STEPS

Ms. Smith reminded that the members wanted each Department to address steps taken towards the Sustainability Plan and discern if there was anything the CAC could do to help facilitate. Mr. Mateyko suggested that the Parks & Recreation Department could discuss season dependent issues and noted Goal 4.3.C was to provide residents with opportunities to receive tree saplings each year. Ms. Smith agreed and shared that she was in touch with Parks & Recreation about the Arbor Day Celebration and revealed they were unable to host an event in 2021. She reminded that the Parks & Rec Department were running on half-staff since COVID. She informed Mr. Mateyko that the City held Reforestation Days and invited

residents to pick up bareroot trees two years ago. She did not know if the City was planning a 2021 Reforestation Day. She wanted to further explore Goal 4.3 and 4.4 and said she would reach out to City Manager Tom Coleman about department briefings. Dr. Huntley wanted to invite all Department Directors to address the CAC and to emphasize the importance of the Sustainability Plan. Ms. Scheld would reach out to Mr. Coleman for direction.

Dr. Huntley was disappointed with Council's decision to purchase non-EV vehicles for the Police Department and wanted to discuss it at the next CAC meeting.

Ms. Matsumoto informed there was a volunteer cleanup day scheduled for April 16th and asked if the CAC wanted to register as a club. Ms. Smith was already registered in a group and invited Ms. Matsumoto to join. Ms. Chajes asked for an update on the Earth Day Volunteer Day and Ms. Smith had no information but informed that the City would take volunteers until the last minute.

Mr. Mateyko thought the next decade would be the most influential in terms of conservation funding. He informed that Congressman Frank Pallone, Chairman on the House Energy and Commerce Committee, released a 951-page decarbonization plan for power production. He noted it would be coordinated by the White House and anticipated the federal government's plans would start to become public shortly. He wanted to address any relevant aspects on the CAC agenda to be able to position the City in a favorable light in the President's home state and because Senator Carper would be doing the committee work. He thought it was an opportunity for the CAC to help the City stay abreast of funding opportunities and to tailor the language in the bill to fit better. Ms. Smith agreed and noted the City was proactive in seeking funding.

11. NEXT MEETING – APRIL 13, 2021

MOTION BY MR. MATEYKO, SECONDED BY MS. MATSUMOTO TO ADJOURN THE MEETING.

The meeting adjourned at 9:27 p.m.

Nichol Scheld
Administrative Professional I

/ns