

CONSERVATION ADVISORY COMMISSION
MINUTES

September 13, 2022

MEETING CONVENED: 7:06 p.m. Council Chambers/Teams Meeting Hybrid

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Sheila Smith, Beth Chajes, Mikayla Rypkema, Andrew O'Donnell, John Mateyko, Lauren O'Connor, Mahi Palanisami

ABSENT: Helga Huntley

STAFF: Jeffrey Martindale, Chief Purchasing & Personnel Officer
Philip Machado, Administrative Professional I

Sheila Smith called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM AUGUST 9, 2022:

Mr. Mateyko presented amendments to Mr. Machado; his corrections better captured his sentiments. He pointed out staff's work was incredible and must have taken quite a bit of time. He thought staff's work was important to the Commission's work because the Commission would perceive the complexity and urgency as more people experienced extreme impacts.

MOTION BY MR. MATEYKO, SECONDED BY MS. RYPKEMA: TO APPROVE THE AUGUST 9, 2022 MINUTES AS AMENDED.

MOTION PASSED. VOTE 7-0

AYE: SMITH, CHAJES, O'DONNELL, MATEYKO, RYPKEMA, PALANISAMI, O'CONNOR.

NAY: 0.

ABSENT: HUNTLEY.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT:

There was no public comment.

3. ENERGIZE DELAWARE

Ms. Smith suggested to move the Final Community Day Discussion Item to after the Energize Delaware presentation.

Mr. O'Donnell thanked Jim Purcell, Energize Delaware, and explained the Commission was concerned with how the grant funds were collected, spent, and what types of projects were involved; since the money was collected in Newark, the Commission felt the funds should remain in Newark.

Mr. Purcell explained the Empowerment Grant began as a result of the merge between Exelon Power and Delmarva Power where the Public Service Commission indicated a need to support low- and

moderate-income communities regarding energy efficiency. Energize Delaware was asked to facilitate a \$4 million grant which only dealt with low to moderate-income Delmarva customers at the time. Two years later, Energize Delaware started the Energy Equity Fund, a community fund at the Delaware Community Foundation. Energize Delaware contributed \$2 million sourced from the regional Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Initiative in the Mid-Atlantic area, raised \$2.5 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds from the State to facilitate energy efficiency programs in low- and moderate-income communities, and raised \$500,000 in corporate and foundation funds. He appreciated the opportunity potentially partner with the Commission and the City because Energize Delaware worked with municipalities across the State in many different capacities. He stated Energize Delaware provided support for energy burden, which was typically an issue for utilities, and worked across different sectors in housing and health and identified a close correlation between energy efficiency and the health and safety of a home. He informed Energize Delaware had worked with TidalHealth, BB Health, and Christiana Care to develop pilot projects to improve home energy efficiency and safety. The organization concentrated on building green and sustainable businesses in downtown business districts, especially in disadvantaged communities; he believed in the importance of learning how to be energy efficient and sustainable. Energize Delaware created access to clean and renewable energy like solar opportunities or electric utilities and held a long-term goal of creating jobs in the renewable energy space and supported training, job development, placement, and job sustainability.

Mr. Purcell spoke on the Empowerment Grant which, in addition to being a granting organization, was a convener that prided itself on bringing different sectors together to share best practices and leverage public and private funds for projects. There were three grants available. The Empower Efficiency Grant offered up to \$75,000 for a one-time capital improvement project focused on energy efficiency or climate resiliency for communities, like feasibility studies for solar energy and the grant was available all year round on Energize Delaware's website. The Empower Neighborhood Grant, which was larger at \$75,000-\$250,000 engaged a neighborhood, community-based organization, or non-profit serving low- and moderate-income communities. The largest grant was the Empower Ecosystem Grant which offered \$250,000 to \$1,000,000 and Energize Delaware hoped applicants would hit all their mission goals with their project. He explained the two larger grants would run from October 3 until November 18 while the Empower Efficiency Grant was open all year round. He understood the Commission set aside funds for energy efficiency and environmental justice for the City and revealed Energize Delaware was willing to match the Commission's contribution with funds from its grant program.

Mr. O'Donnell thanked Mr. Purcell for the presentation and explained the Commission's yearly budget was sourced from the Green Energy Fund, for discretionary utilization. The Commission offered grants for solar panels on individual houses but realized the program was not equitable for the whole City and only a handful of individuals benefited. He believed the benefits of the Commission's actions should be felt by communities that needed the most help and Energize Delaware fit with the Commission's goals. The Commission worked on several small projects over the year, and the remaining funds returned to the City. Mr. O'Donnell thought the Energy Equity Fund would use the funds to benefit the City. Mr. O'Donnell clarified the Commission would not decide at the meeting but wanted the information to for a future vote and Mr. Purcell understood.

Ms. O'Connor had no comments.

Ms. Palanisami asked if Mr. Purcell knew which areas would benefit if the funds were donated to the organization and Mr. Purcell explained Energize Delaware would work with the Commission to target the funds in the most impactful way for the community.

Ms. Rypkema had no comments.

Ms. Smith wondered how Energize Delaware identified where the greatest needs were in an area. She knew people could imagine where there might be a need, but it was not clear from the presentation, she asked for Mr. Purcell for specifics or past fund applications. Mr. Purcell explained the funds would be used to perform feasibility studies or strategic plans, and if the Commission was interested in targeting longer term approaches to energy efficiency and climate resiliency, the organization would use the funds to conduct workshops and education in the community. He noted the approach was currently used at the Kingswood Community Center in Wilmington that had a self-help weatherization program where Energize Delaware provided counseling, services, and guidance on weatherization. He informed Energize Delaware funded Habitat for Humanity to conduct a refrigerator replacement program for residents interested in using Energy Star Efficient appliances and the program was one he could help facilitate for Newark. Energize Delaware had worked with neighborhoods in southern Delaware with an insulated skirting program for mobile homes with the help of Habitat for Humanity which saved consumers up to 25% on utility bills.

Mr. Purcell added electric vehicle (EV) car share programs were started with a non-profit in the Lewes area and Ms. Smith asked him to elaborate. Mr. Purcell stated Energize Delaware worked with a non-profit in Lewes that served individuals in shelters, and the non-profit would purchase two vehicles and chargers to help with transportation. Ms. Smith knew there was housing in Newark for families in transition and thought a similar program would help. She asked how the workshops provided value to the participants and Mr. Purcell answered the weatherization workshops provided a weatherization kit for self-installation. Energize Delaware provided energy auditors who performed a full energy audit; the homeowners would be offered grants, rebates, or low interest loans to help with needed upgrades depending on income levels. Ms. Smith informed she had an energy audit conducted on her house and asked how Energize Delaware reached out to communities needing assistance. Energize Delaware publicized workshops and had non-profit partners that canvassed neighborhoods. The Help Initiative successfully canvassed in Wilmington, Dover, Milford, and Seaford by going door to door to provide information on available services. Ms. Smith asked if the participants needed to be homeowners. Mr. Purcell stated the owner of the home would need to have given permission if there were any improvements made to a home.

Mr. Mateyko asked if Energize Delaware reached low income communities such as the Hispanic communities in Georgetown and Millsboro and Mr. Purcell confirmed. Mr. Mateyko asked if the program combined energy efficiency with demand reduction through provision of shading vegetation. Mr. Purcell continued and explained the process was called “greening” or green landscaping; research proved bushes and trees blocked wind and severe weather and, in many instances, the more vegetation there was, the less heat buildup there was in an area. Energize Delaware investigated white roofing which had proven to be effective in reducing heat buildup and a program in Philadelphia performed similar programs.

Mr. Mateyko stated the Commission had a unique joining of issues: nature and the Sustainability Plan. The Commission looked at energy reduction through plants which would have an impact in as short as two to three years. He believed the process was essential due to the heat rising to levels seen in California. Mr. Purcell confirmed solutions such as Mr. Mateyko’s were exactly what Energize Delaware was searching for and trying to implement.

Ms. Chajes was not sure of the current Federal poverty level and asked Mr. Purcell to elaborate. Mr. Purcell did not have the statistics on hand, but noted they were posted on the organization's website. He knew for a family of four, 300% of poverty would be around \$65,000 a year. He believed the number was a step up because 200% of poverty would be somewhere around \$40,000 to \$45,000 a year. Energize Delaware targeted a group that would not normally qualify for other assistances. Ms. Chajes appreciated the group's previous work and asked if there was data on which projects were most effective in reducing emissions. Mr. Purcell answered the organization inspected housing and ensured there was a good air-ceiling seal, had good quality insulation in place, and that all windows and doors had a tight seal; from there, appliances were a huge contributor to energy inefficiency. Energize Delaware was waiting to receive the initial study from its refrigerator replacement program facilitated through Habitat for Humanity. He thought an appliance recycling program would be an efficient project for the City because residents would be recycling old appliances and replacing them with energy efficient appliances. He believed the program was the easiest and most cost efficient they had to offer. Ms. Chajes asked if Energize Delaware had any supply chain issues and Mr. Purcell confirmed and stated there had been some issues and cost overruns but revealed Habitat for Humanity had a strong relationship with Home Depot and Lowes.

Mr. O'Donnell informed he had an energy audit done five years ago and received a prioritized list of problems to fix to save money. The list included actual numbers and he thought the audit would be a useful tool for anyone who wanted to save money and become more energy efficient. He supported funding for the audits and thought there should be more visibility because the audits were available for everyone. He thought a lot of low-income housing was rented which would benefit from having weatherization, but he understood the process needed to go through the landlord. He asked how Energize Delaware built relationships with landlords and Mr. Purcell explained Energize Delaware developed a split incentive because as upgrading multifamily homes would be costly. Energize Delaware knew there was a lack of affordable housing, but he emphasized there was a lack of affordable, energy efficient, healthy, and safe housing. He worked with Milford Housing Corporation, Applied Energy, and other non-profits to create a partnership with landowners to provide seed money to make the upgrades, but only if the landlord agreed not to increase rent for the next three years. Mr. O'Donnell asked Energize Delaware's overhead costs and Mr. Purcell estimated between 10/15%.

Ms. Smith asked if Energize Delaware worked with the Newark Housing Authority (NHA) and Mr. Purcell responded he did not have a current relationship with NHA but thought the multifamily program had worked with the NHA in the past. Ms. Smith knew the housing was subsidized and thought the community would use the funds provided. Mr. Purcell agreed and thought Energize Delaware would identify the community as a target to work with; Energize Delaware was willing to help the landlord make improvements to lower utility costs for the residents while the landlord held steady on rent for the next three years via a strong contract. Ms. Smith thanked Mr. Purcell for his time and asked if 15% of the funding would go to overhead costs. Mr. Purcell agreed and stated the money would help develop partnerships with the community and create the evaluation plan. He reiterated Energize Delaware would match the Commission's contribution. Ms. Smith thought there would be cost savings for the NHA, because all the houses would be similarly outfitted, and auditors would not start from scratch with each evaluation. Mr. Purcell agreed and added Energize Delaware had worked with larger apartment complexes across the State.

Ms. Palanisami asked how soon the Commission would work with Energize Delaware if the funds were donated. Mr. Purcell stated the timeline was based on the initiative and believed Energize Delaware

could meet with the Commission as soon as it was prepared but cautioned the plan may take a couple of months to create and for implementation in January.

Ms. Smith asked if Energize Delaware would match funds if the Commission created the program and Mr. Purcell reiterated the Commission would indicate the focus and Energize Delaware would facilitate the process.

Mr. Mateyko asked if Energize Delaware would facilitate a series of community meetings with discussions on energy efficiency, demand reduction, and increasing walking in the City; Mr. Purcell confirmed.

Ms. Smith thanked Mr. Purcell for the presentation. Mr. Purcell appreciated the opportunity to meet the Commission and looked forward to a partnership. Ms. Smith asked Mr. Purcell to coordinate with Mr. O'Donnell and the Commission would consider further actions.

Mr. Mateyko asked if October 3 to November 18 was the timeline for the large grants and Ms. Smith confirmed and stated the small grant was more flexible.

Mr. O'Donnell thought if the Commission had \$50,000, Energize Delaware would match what was left after the overhead fees, and the Commission could pledge the left over funds toward the end of the year to be sent to Energize Delaware.

Ms. Smith did not think additional meetings with Energize Delaware were necessary.

Mr. O'Donnell agreed additional meetings might be redundant and he preferred the convenience of allowing Energize Delaware to use the money as it saw fit, and Ms. Smith agreed. Mr. O'Donnell believed Energize Delaware was used to micromanagement and the Commission would defer to the group's judgement.

Ms. Rypkema stipulated that the money would benefit Newark and Mr. O'Donnell agreed. Ms. Chajes thought the more efficient programs and could be applied to the City, likely at NHA locations.

Mr. Martindale was unsure if Energize Delaware was aware of the Efficiency Smart program which tried to accomplish many of the same goals, and he thought the Commission may be able to amplify the program. Ms. Smith believed Efficiency Smart performed her house audit. Mr. Martindale informed the Commission should consider speaking with Efficiency Smart to determine if a similar or better match was possible.

Mr. Martindale stated the only item the Commission spent in 2022 actuals was the tree giveaway program in the spring and the City would host one in the fall. He did not recall the total for the giveaway and reminded the Dickey Park Community Garden was discussed last meeting. Staff was still waiting for a response on the \$15,000 grant from the Delaware Division of Public Health (DPH). He explained the number accounted for the Commission funding the entire project, but should the grant funding fail, the total remaining was \$35,108.06. Ms. Smith asked if Mr. Martindale accounted for the \$7,500 for the reservoir plantings and he confirmed. He adjusted the amount and the actual remaining total was \$42,618.06.

Ms. Smith thanked Mr. Martindale for the financial update and asked if the Commission wanted to investigate Efficiency Smart going forward. She wondered if Efficiency Smart would be a better and more cost efficient way to utilize the funds.

Ms. Palanisami was unfamiliar with Efficiency Smart. Mr. Martindale stated the Commission had discussed them earlier in the year. Ms. Palanisami did not believe Efficiency Smart was marketing in the City and Mr. Martindale revealed the marketing was mostly through the City.

Ms. Smith asked how the CAC would assess the two entities and Mr. Martindale offered to reach out to Tom Coyle, who presented earlier in the year, and see if he would be available to present information to the Commission. Ms. Smith thought the Commission should send Mr. Coyle the Empower Grant information to show Efficiency Smart what the Commission was already looking at with Energize Delaware as well as the areas the Commission thought of like the Newark Housing Authority. She clarified she had nothing against one organization or the other, but the City was already working with Efficiency Smart, and they might be more familiar with the City.

Ms. Chajes thought there would be enough time to decide in October and Mr. Martindale requested that the latest decision be made at the November meeting.

4. FINAL COMMUNITY DAY DISCUSSION (SEPTEMBER 18, 2022) – SHEILA SMITH & BETH CHAJES

Ms. Smith noted no information was covered the previous month and Mr. O'Donnell confirmed. Ms. Smith asked if everyone had gone to a community day and explained the Commission would set up a table with displays of its initiatives like anti-idling, recycling, light bulbs, and the new streetlights. She asked for suggestions on giveaways because the Commission had accommodated a lot in the past. She reminded Community Day had not been held in two years and she remembered the Commission had tote bags, straws, and a few other items to give out. She intended to organize the Lights Out Newark event and informed she and Ms. Chajes ran a game for kids at Green Fest.

Mr. Mateyko asked if Ms. Smith would bring the Delaware Naturally posters and she confirmed. She had cards of the invasive plants ban and listed some of the plants. She asked if the article had been published in the Newark Post and Ms. Chajes had not seen a Conservation Corner in quite some time. Ms. Smith submitted an article a couple of weeks ago about invasive plants. Mr. Mateyko saw the materials at Lowes and Ms. Smith stated she dropped off posters at every nursery in the State.

Ms. Chajes planned to present the Conservation Corner articles with QR codes and knew there would be one about energy, but she was willing to present around four or five articles. Ms. Smith suggested the article about the invasive species be included and Ms. Chajes explained the article had to be published online to make a QR code. Ms. Smith realized Community Day was a week away and asked for other ideas.

Mr. O'Donnell suggested displaying EVs and offered to bring his Leaf or Tesla if the City's EV did not work out. Ms. Smith noted the reserved spot would be on the street and not necessarily near the table. Mr. O'Donnell suggested people could go see the electric vehicles. Mr. O'Donnell brought his Leaf to the Green Fest along with the City vehicle and opened the hoods to show participants; everyone declared their next car would be an EV.

Ms. Smith summarized the plan and requested input on the previous recycling activity. Ms. Chajes believed the activity was appealing to kids and Ms. Smith agreed and added many of the parents were engaged. Mr. Mateyko asked what time the event was being held and Ms. Rypkema answered the event would run from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Ms. Chajes believed the 500 section was near Mitchell Hall and Ms. Smith confirmed. Ms. Smith was happy to drive things over to the spot and she had the giveaway items and the Lights Out handouts. She told members to bring a chair and asked who else planned to come. Ms. Rypkema stated she would be at the event from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. Ms. Smith stated switching shifts allowed other members to enjoy the rest of the Community Day displays. Ms. Chajes said she would be at the table for around an hour or hour and a half; from 12:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. Ms. Rypkema might be there earlier but knew 4 p.m. would be the latest. Ms. Palanisami was available for the morning to help set up and Ms. O'Connor preferred the morning but would also help pack up at the end of the day. Ms. Smith asked if Mr. Mateyko was going to attend the event and Mr. Mateyko had to check his calendar before committing. Mr. O'Donnell stated he would help wherever needed, and Ms. Smith asked if Mr. O'Donnell would cover 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. and he confirmed.

Ms. Smith asked if a City employee needed to remain with the City's electric vehicle and Mr. Martindale confirmed, but revealed he was not available on Sunday. Mr. Martindale worked to find an available City employee and asked in which spot the vehicle should be parked; Ms. Smith answered spot 508 near Mitchell Hall. Ms. Chajes asked if the University would allow the vehicle onto the green and Ms. Smith stated the vehicle would be parked along Delaware Avenue. Ms. Rypkema stated the University did not allow vehicles onto the green without slats of wood or something similar underneath.

Ms. Smith thought having the members there was good teamwork.

5. DELAWARE SOLAR TOUR – BETH CHAJES

Ms. Chajes stated the Delaware Solar Tour was part of a National Solar Energy Association event held partially online and in person. The item was on the agenda because the CAC made an event at the McKee's Solar Park part of the Delaware Solar Tour, which was a State-wide event through the effort of many community organizations including the Sierra club, Delaware Interfaith Power and Light, and the Delaware Electric Vehicle Association. She claimed there was a website of different places they could go to see solar panels in action and the thought of the group was the event would reoccur annually; the problem was no one wanted to take charge this year and the event had gone nowhere. Ms. Chajes made the event a goal she submitted for the annual report with the assumption the event would go forward for another year. The event was no longer State-wide and to keep the goal going for the CAC she wanted to propose working with City staff to have a local event. The event did not have to be tied to the national event but would be CAC sponsored to educate residents about their solar energy initiatives. She thought Energize Delaware would be invited to participate and she summarized the event as a small renewable energy fair which would take place at the McKees' Solar field or the new solar field by Old Paper Mill Road. She believed the event would be in late in October or early November, whatever worked with the City staff schedule.

Mr. Mateyko asked where the event should take place and Ms. Chajes answered at a solar field so residents could visit a site that was normally restricted. She recalled some City staff attended the event last year to discuss the aspects of the solar field and she assumed it would not be expensive to replicate. She asked for member feedback and asked Mr. Martindale for his thoughts.

Mr. Martindale thought the idea would work well because the solar park was brand new. He wanted to have an RSVP process to keep track of how many people would attend but overall thought the idea was plausible.

Mr. Mateyko asked if Senator Tom Carper had ever visited the site and Mr. Martindale was unsure.

Ms. Chajes thought the City could invite officials and Mr. Martindale agreed but did not remember how the ribbon cutting was handled. Ms. Chajes stated the Sierra Club handled outreach to certain parties, and she suggested using Eventbrite or the Parks and Recreation Department to handle the event processes.

Ms. Smith asked if The Newark Partnership (TNP) should be included, and Mr. Martindale confirmed but noted the short timeline.

Mr. Mateyko asked if hot apple cider would be provided and if Senator Carper would attend. Mr. Martindale thought the request was reasonable. Ms. Chajes thought the event would be a good time to learn about Individual Retirement Account (IRA) funds that would be available next year.

Mr. Martindale proposed Saturday, October 15 as a potential date for the event as he was free and suggested October 29 as an alternative. Ms. Chajes asked if November 5 would be too late, and Mr. Martindale answered no, but noted he was usually busy during the early portion of November.

Ms. Rypkema suggested people may be busy with trick or treating or other Halloween events on October 29. Mr. Martindale asked if November 5 was better, and the Commission agreed.

Ms. Smith asked if anyone took the lead on the event and Ms. Chajes offered to take the lead on the City event but added it would not be associated with the National event. She thought guests like Interfaith Power and Light would have a table to discuss its solar programs. Ms. Smith asked if there were new solar utilities on the George Wilson Center and Mr. Martindale explained Seiberlich Trane was working through the process and were dealing with supply chain issues. Ms. Chajes asked if Mr. Martindale had a preference between solar fields and Mr. Martindale noted the Reservoir was a better backdrop for the event but depending on the number of people, the park was not as accommodating, and McKees was stoned over and sometimes muddy. Ms. Chajes clarified that McKees solar field was located at the end of McKees Lane by the dealerships on Cleveland Avenue.

Ms. Rypkema asked if she should reach out to TNP because she worked with the organization in the past and Ms. Chajes confirmed.

6. LIGHTS OUT RECOMMENDATION TO CITY COUNCIL UPDATE – SHIELA SMITH

Ms. Smith corrected the Lights Out discussion was not a recommendation because Council already backed the idea. She explained Lights Out was to get everyone in the City to reduce lighting at night during the spring and fall bird migrations. Songbirds were in the middle of the fall migration and shorebirds had been migrating for some time; the migration would last until mid-November. She was in contact with Bhadresh Patel, Director of Electric, and he stated the energy saving lights project was not functioning yet but she thought the lights should have been working a year ago.

Mr. Martindale explained staff was responsible for installing the dimmer nodes on the lights as part of the Energy Saving Company (ESCO) project and were not progressing as quickly as predicted. The City authorized a substantial amount of overtime to make sure the work was completed, and staff was nearing the 85/90% completion point. Ms. Smith thought the project was a boon and hoped if project would be complete by spring migration. She admitted the message was difficult for people to grasp because the initiative was at night and not many people considered birds. She spoke with the head of real estate at STAR campus research from an undergrad student of Dr. Buler at UD who mapped 30 buildings on the University campus and made observations for bird strikes. The student found 49 bird strikes during their study period: 19 of the strikes were at STAR campus and 11 were at the Bob Carpenter Center. She was in touch with the building staff, and she mentioned difficulties in receiving their cooperation due to other priorities. She asked how to engage the UD staff but maintained she would continue to work on communicating with the building staff.

Mr. Martindale asked Ms. Smith if the Commission spoke to TNP regarding the Lights Out initiative. Ms. Smith thanked Mr. Martindale for the reminder and stated she worked with Leann Moore to include information in TNP's newsletter and called Josh Shannon, Editor at the Newark Post, to put an article in the newspaper but she was unsure if the articles were published.

Ms. Rypkema stated UD was establishing a Sustainability Office and all efforts were put on hold until the Office was completed. Ms. Smith asked if Ms. Rypkema was associated with UD staff and Ms. Rypkema had reached out, but they were in waiting. Ms. Smith was told UD staff were waiting as well and Mr. Martindale spoke with John Long, Executive Vice President of UD, who indicated Mr. Martindale would be the City's point of contact when the Sustainability Office was operational; he would facilitate communication. Ms. Smith wanted to speak to UD students to see if they were interested in performing additional bird studies.

Ms. Smith asked the Commission to imagine Newark from north to south. She stated there was a long stretch of woodlands from the left side of STAR campus to the White Clay Creek that was impacted by campus lights. She reiterated her desire for ideas to keep the initiative in the public mind.

Ms. Chajes thought the Bob Carpenter Center would always be open late because students wanted to exercise after dark. Ms. Smith clarified she was talking about the newer Bob Carpenter Center which Ms. Rypkema informed was open until 11pm. Ms. Chajes believed the Center would need shades and Ms. Smith agreed and added staff should install shades or window treatments. Ms. Rypkema stated Katherine Bird, M.S. Student at UD, recommended putting up stickers or chalk paint every five inches on the windows to assist in reducing the light pollution and she would recommend the idea to other students. Ms. Smith did not know what the windows looked like at the Bob Carpenter Center but did not think the idea would work at STAR campus and Ms. Rypkema thought the idea was still worth moving forward and revealed the windows at the fitness center were around 10 feet long on the second floor and would be the largest issue.

Mr. O'Donnell asked if the dimming nodes would pay for themselves in the energy savings. Mr. Martindale confirmed and added the LED light units helped meet the goal. Mr. O'Donnell was glad the City would save electricity as well as wildlife. Mr. Martindale did not remember the exact dimming percentage but knew savings percentages were included in the contract. Ms. Smith recalled 30% and Mr. Martindale believed her estimate was close. He noted the Newark Police Department (NPD) had concerns because higher traffic areas needed more light. Mr. O'Donnell tried to get ahead of potential complaints regarding cost by explaining the program would be saving money in the long run. Ms. Smith asserted many

people were interested in Dark Sky Lighting and asked Mr. Martindale if the City discussed the replacement of the lights at the Maintenance Yard or basketball courts in Phillips Park as she found the lights were very bright and illuminated the little patch of woodlands in the park. She suggested motion sensors, LEDs, or down shielding. Mr. Martindale discussed ideas during the ESCO project, but they were not included because staff focused on larger areas such as Main Street. He believed if the City ever went forward with an additional ESCO project, the Phillips Park lights would be included. He did not think the Maintenance Yard lights would be changed for security reasons; the City stored multi-million dollars' worth of equipment with cameras everywhere and the NPD did not want to miss anything while cameras adjusted to light or darkness.

Ms. Palanisami asked if the City authorized the extra staff overtime and Mr. Martindale confirmed. Ms. Palanisami asked what happened to the contract because the work was not completed on time and Mr. Martindale explained the contract stated staff would facilitate the installation of the nodes. Staff was optimistic about the timeline to completion, but COVID hit immediately following; Seiberlich Trane had been working on the project since 2019 and the project was approved at the last Council meeting before COVID hit. Ms. Palanisami asked if Seiberlich Trane was the contractor and Mr. Martindale confirmed and added staff was able to leverage other items into the contract doing parts of the work themselves. He informed the City authorized a substantial amount of overtime, which was still cheaper than having the contractor do the work with a markup.

7. SB305 DISCUSSION – HELGA HUNTLEY & SHIELA SMITH

Ms. Chajes stated SB305 was a bill that would have increased Greenhouse Gas Emission Reduction Targets for Delaware while laying out a plan to continue to update the goals in the Climate Action Plan. The bill was narrowly defeated in the House Committee and their plan was to reintroduce the bill next year. The Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC) wanted to maintain ownership of the bill but had not done anything since the close of the legislative session. Ms. Chajes understood there would be a series of meetings with legislators and stakeholders to discuss plans. DNREC felt there was more of a need for education and people complained the bill felt rushed but there did not seem to be any problems with the content of the bill. She spoke of a secondary issue with Delaware Municipal Electric Corporation's (DEMEC) response to the proposal, and she thought Dr. Huntley may have more thoughts on the topic. Mr. Martindale spoke to Dr. Huntley the previous week and would defer to her before proceeding.

Mr. Mateyko was unsatisfied with Mr. Garwin, Secretary of DNREC. Ms. Chajes stated Mr. Garwin asked for the bill to be withdrawn and the Chair of the Committee complied but received pushback and brought the bill forward to the hearing.

Ms. Chajes would update on additional hearings on the Bill.

Mr. Martindale clarified that any discussions the Commission members had on the topic were made as individuals and not as representatives of the City of Newark.

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

- September – Reservoir Plantings/ Clover Lawns – Beth Chajes
- October – Plastic Bag Ban –
- November – Tick Species in Delaware – Lauren O'Connor

Ms. Smith submitted an article last month and it still had not been published. Ms. Chajes did not remember volunteering to write an article for Reservoir Plantings/Clover Lawns and Ms. Smith mentioned she was going to do something on plantings, but she switched her topic to the new invasive plant ban list. Mr. Martindale thought the Clover Lawns topic had been a holdover for quite some time because the City installed the Reservoir solar park and there were discussions regarding a white clover lawn at the park that did not come to fruition.

Ms. Chajes wanted to write about the AECOM GHG Inventory and thought the public would be interested. Ms. Smith asked if Ms. Chajes would write the article for October and Ms. Chajes confirmed. Ms. Smith asked if Ms. O'Connor would write the Delaware Ticks article for November and Ms. O'Connor confirmed. Ms. Smith asked if anyone had ideas for the December article and Ms. Rypkema did not have an idea but was willing to write something. Ms. Smith suggested Ms. Rypkema review the Sustainability Plan or anything which may be of interest. Mr. Mateyko offered to write an article regarding soil and leaves cooling for January.

9. OLD/NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Martindale informed the City had around 4,000 customers in the Renewable Energy Program. Ms. Smith asked if the City was promoting the program at Community Day and Mr. Martindale mentioned the City created flyers for the program. Ms. Smith asked for some for the Commission's table for Community Day and he agreed.

Mr. Martindale explained the Reservoir Solar Park Plantings discussion had been postponed because the Commission members wanted Ms. Smith to be present for the discussion. He informed the City installed the new Reservoir Solar Park and reduced a line of trees on the roadside and installed a chain-link fence. Staff assumed people would like to see the solar park, but area residents were unimpressed, so staff considered planting small trees around the perimeter of Old Paper Mill Road to obscure the view from the road. Ms. Smith asked what trees were cut down and Mr. Martindale explained some tall trees were growing into the Delmarva power lines and would have blocked the panels from sunlight. There were also discussions to move the chain-link fence and to plant bushes or small trees to obstruct the fence. Ms. Smith asked about the length of the area for the plantings. Mr. Martindale was unsure, and Ms. Smith asked if the Commission could postpone the discussion. Mr. Martindale confirmed but reminded the fall was a great time for new plantings. Ms. Smith asked if Mr. Martindale wanted to approve funds for the plantings and Mr. Martindale confirmed. Ms. Smith believed \$7,500 was excessive for plantings and Mr. Martindale admitted he was unsure of how to estimate the cost. Ms. Smith thought the Commission would spend less than half of the amount and asked for the dimensions. Mr. Martindale noted the stretch of property was short, but staff did not know the volume of trees or bushes that would adequately obstruct the view. Ms. Smith was willing to put aside some money for trees and asked if any other members had thoughts on the topic. Ms. Rypkema asked if the Sustainability Plan required people to replace trees that were cut down. Ms. Smith confirmed but stated the process was a bit more complicated; she suggested the Commission consider the types of trees later. Mr. Martindale suggested the Commission create a plan in the next month and identify which trees to plant.

Mr. O'Donnell supported allocating \$1,000 for the community relations, environmental protection, and site improvement. Mr. Martindale noted the development behind the site, Nonantum Hills, was not in City limits. Mr. O'Donnell asked if the neighborhood residents offered input and Mr. Martindale answered staff was limited given the space in front of the road. Ms. Smith asked if there was 10 feet between the fence and the road and Mr. Martindale stated the space was not 10 feet but likely

would be if staff moved the fence back. Ms. Chajes asked if the site would still need a gate and Mr. Martindale confirmed. Ms. Smith believed bushes that grew to six or eight feet might be the best option. Mr. O'Donnell believed the area was roughly 100 feet long. Ms. Smith stated the Commission would start funding with \$1,000 and go from there. Mr. Machado displayed a map of the site and the stretch measured around 200 feet. Ms. Smith reiterated the Commission could start with \$1,000 and see how the trees fared. She estimated a sapling for a large tree would be around \$50 and staff did not need large trees. Mr. O'Donnell asked if a motion was required, and Ms. Smith confirmed.

MOTION BY MR. O'DONNELL, SECONDED BY MS. CHAJES: THAT THE CAC CONTRIBUTE \$1,000 OF THE CAC FUNDS TOWARD THE CITY OF NEWARK TO COVER THE RESERVOIR SOLAR PARK ROADSIDE OBSCURATION PLANTINGS AS REQUESTED.

MOTION PASSED. VOTE 7 TO 0.

AYE: SMITH, CHAJES, O'DONNELL, MATEYKO, RYPKEMA, PALANISAMI, O'CONNOR.

NAY: 0.

ABSENT: HUNTLEY.

Mr. Martindale revealed the cost for a solar canopy for parking lots was estimated to be around \$2.40 per watt compared to ground mounts which cost around \$1.50 per watt. The difference reflected a 60% higher expense for the solar canopy which cost more because of the material and structural integrity. Dr. Huntley suggested wooden structures for the proposed canopy during the last meeting, but Mr. Martindale informed the City forbade wooden structures due to structural concerns. Mr. Mateyko asked how much a project would cost and Mr. Martindale informed the costs depended on the size of the project. Mr. Martindale spoke to Seiberlich Trane and was told their vendor would not work on any projects for less than a megawatt; the Reservoir Solar Park was 400 kilowatts as an example. Mr. Martindale investigated potential projects to add to another round of an ESCO project, but the plans were not definite.

Mr. Martindale was involved in redesigning the City Hall parking lot and requested an option to add conduits for future solar canopy installation to avoid digging up the new parking lot to add the infrastructure. Mr. Mateyko asked if the City would benefit from new funds provided by the Biden Administration. Mr. Martindale noted most of the incentives seemed to be retroactive to January 1, 2020, and he believed the City would receive some of the incentive for the solar that had already been installed. He thought the incentives made the canopies more comparable in cost to the ground mount system and would make the project more feasible.

Ms. Smith reminded Mr. Martindale to provide the Commission with flyers for the Renewable Energy Program for the Community Day table and asked him if the City would have a table. Mr. Martindale stated Parks and Recreation would probably be in attendance. Ms. Smith asked Mr. Mateyko to present his idea on code changes.

Mr. Mateyko noted the Sustainability Plan was comprehensive, and all the Commission's goals were included but he asked who was supposed to implement work toward the goals and referenced Mr. O'Donnell's fossil fuel infrastructure ban. He thought the goals were impressive and all initiatives were connected but once people started down a de-carbonized road with electric vehicles and walkability there would be a cascade of decisions different than those revolving around the internal combustion car. He asked if the Commission wanted to proceed because the process was daunting. Ms. Smith stated every

action in the Sustainability Plan had responsible entities to push the City closer to its sustainability goals. Ms. Smith informed the City now had the Comprehensive Development Plan V (Comp Plan) and each department in the City was investigating the issues and working towards goals. She stated the Sustainability Plan was not an aspirational document because there was already work underway and the Commission was responsible for holding the City accountable. Mr. Mateyko asked how the Commission held the City accountable and Ms. Smith explained staff from different departments reported on its projects. The last department to address the Commission was the Planning Department which presented the Comp Plan and addressed many of the issues brought up in the process.

Ms. Chajes thought the issue was the Commission often had a vision of the future of the City which involved making plans but was not the Planning Department. She recognized the ideas may have been worthwhile to contribute as public comments, but the Commission could not make the Planning Department act unless the Commission convinced Council to prioritize the issues. She believed the situation was difficult when the Commission had a vision of how life should be and what should be done but the process was difficult to implement.

Mr. Mateyko believed the form-based codes were the planning problem because the section was gigantic. He investigated how to achieve the set goals using greening which included trees, native plants, and soil moisture. He thought some of the process to achieve the set goals fell under the purview of the Commission to lead. He asked how the Commission would take the lead on issues and Ms. Smith asked if he were looking for Code changes. Mr. Mateyko confirmed and added more than 50% of people in the country demanded action. He asserted the City's own Code was the major obstacle in achieving the goals which Council would be able to change with political decisions. He understood the public process would potentially take years but starting consultation immediately would be a reasonable start. He asked why the City had a program for picking up leaves; he knew the storm drains would be clogged but he wanted to find a way for the leaves to remain.

Ms. Smith knew Mr. Mateyko thought everything was connected but she wanted to find a way to prioritize the Code changes; the Commission needed to pick an issue and draft how the policy should be changed. From there, the Commission would invite pertinent parties to discuss the changes so could pass a recommendation that Council change the Code. She believed too many changes were overwhelming and would halt the process. Mr. Mateyko agreed and admitted he did not know the right answer. He looked to Boston Mayor Michelle Wu, who had operationalized large sustainability items in Boston including de-paving, free transit, emergency cooling sites in parks, and dedicating linear strips of land for foot and bike travel. He knew the changes would not come immediately, but work needed to start. Ms. Smith wanted to identify changes which were central to the idea of having a cooler place; she thought the planet would continue to get hotter no matter how fast the country de-carbonized. Mr. Mateyko agreed and thought greening measures could be added to the process as an easy first step.

Ms. Smith wanted the City to implement a Tree Committee because she was continually concerned with the tree canopy. Ms. Chajes asked if the Committee would be for the City and not a subset of the Commission and Ms. Smith clarified the City, because trees currently fell under the Parks Department. Ms. Smith wanted a Committee to consider trees in a critical way and focus on plantings, care, maintenance, and education. She referenced a development on Hillside Road that cut down many mature Red Oaks and was committed to replace the trees with trees and shrubs. She investigated the development recently and noted 50% of the plantings looked dead because the developer had not taken proper care. Ms. Smith asked the Commission members to share ideas and reiterated her suggestion of a Tree Committee.

Mr. Mateyko agreed with Ms. Smith but believed a Committee should encompass other types of vegetation and soil moisture as well. He agreed plantings at Hillside Road were dead. Ms. Smith added the developers built a parking lot that functioned as a heatsink in the back of the lot. Mr. Mateyko suggested the new committee be named the Greening Committee. Ms. Smith recalled the City once had a tree committee and Mr. Mateyko believed the committee could be a subcommittee of the Commission that specifically reviewed private sector items. He thought the Commission could print posters for the program, similar to the refrigerator replacement program and would help inspire change.

Ms. Smith presented a worksheet from Tom Coleman, City Manager, displaying the goals of the Sustainability Plan, the responsible party, and what had already been addressed. She noted many on-going items and that many items had not been started. She asked Mr. Machado to provide the worksheet to the other members because it was a valuable resource to address how projects were being completed and could be amended if needed. Ms. Chajes asked when the document was adopted, and Ms. Smith answered in 2019 after 18 months of preparation. Ms. Chajes asked if the document would be updated every five years and Ms. Smith confirmed. Ms. Chajes thought the process to update the document would begin shortly and the time to make changes and reflect on the goals was at hand.

Ms. Smith asked if the topic should be added to the next meeting agenda and if any departments should present.

Mr. O'Donnell reminded Ms. Bensley was at the last meeting and indicated the Planning Department was extremely busy with Council directives. Ms. Bensley indicated the Commission suggest priorities directly to Council. Ms. Smith asked if a recommendation should be added to the agenda for next meeting. Mr. O'Donnell thought the recommendation would consist of the fossil fuel infrastructure ban and similar initiatives and the sooner they introduced to Council, the better. Ms. Chajes reminded the proposed fossil fuel infrastructure ban would require changes to City Code.

Ms. Rypkema thought the Commission's primary goal should be list prioritization and hoped to ask Ms. Bensley how to proceed. She referred to the Hillside Park development and explained Delaware experienced one of the largest droughts this year and acknowledged the drought did not contribute fully to the dead plantings but was a factor. Ms. Smith was aware of the drought and believed the responsibility fell on the development staff to maintain the plants. She recalled the City had a terrible drought in the 1990's which contributed to the City's decision to build the Reservoir.

Ms. Chajes asked if Mr. Coleman would provide an updated version of the Sustainability Plan worksheet for the next meeting and Mr. Martindale would investigate. Ms. Smith asked if the Commission had an idea which Codes to change and Ms. Chajes suggested changes in Zoning, Building and Maintenance, Planning, and a contract with Delmarva. Ms. Smith clarified she was referring to the "keeping cool issue," and Ms. Chajes stated she was providing an example of the areas of Code to change. Mr. O'Donnell believed the Code changes would go hand in hand and wanted the Commission to review the entire Code from a lens of shading and fossil fuel reduction. Ms. Rypkema mentioned the Lights Out initiative to Ms. Bensley who suggested the Commission keep recommendations to Council simple so the Commission should review the Code all at once but keep recommendations small. Ms. Chajes agreed. Ms. Smith asked if any department should present, and Ms. Palanisami asked if the discussions would be about shading measures. Ms. Rypkema thought Ms. Smith was asking about who would talk to the Commission about Mr. Mateyko's nature-based solutions.

Mr. Mateyko asked if the Commission would spend time at the next meeting to consider the specific direction and formation of a greening subcommittee and to investigate how to approach the new group; he wanted specific context. Ms. Palanisami appreciated that the group would investigate issues the Commission was not. She asked if the Commission would fine people for not maintaining mandated plantings and Ms. Smith informed that the fines were the Parks Department's responsibility: the plants were part of a contract where developers had to maintain and must replace anything that died within two years. Ms. Smith contacted Joe Spadafino, Director of Parks and Recreation, about the development and he confirmed staff would address the developer. Mr. Mateyko noted there was a huge die-off and doubted the issue was the care of the plants. He asked if the separation of individual plant species was working in the new climate. Ms. Smith answered there were two issues in Newark: leaf scorch bacterium that was killing Oak trees, and the Emerald Ash Borer targeting Ash trees. The City's trees were under assault, and she thought staff needed to start planting new trees. Natural forests included trees of all ages intermixed in any area and in Newark, there were many old trees, but the City did not replace them at the rate needed. Mr. Mateyko asked if the topic would be an agenda item for the greening committee and Ms. Smith thought an agenda item would be to determine what the City would do because she did not think the Commission could have a subcommittee. She was on a subcommittee for another commission which took a lot of time and dedication. She thought the purpose was not for the Commission to do things but to ask the City to change the Code and implement changes. She believed the Parks Department was already prioritizing the planting of new trees but needed to increase the pace.

Ms. Chajes pointed out subcommittees were tricky to implement because they could not consist of more than two members of the Commission, or the subcommittee would require a separate public meeting. The new group would need to be approved by the Council and Ms. Smith doubted the subcommittee would come to fruition. She suggested the Commission use some of its 2023 funds to hire a consultant to develop a plan for nature-based solutions. She wanted to put the topic on the agenda for next meeting.

Ms. Smith indicated the Commission had articles lined up for the next few months and the group would discuss Energize Delaware versus Efficiency Smart. She asked if Mr. Martindale would help facilitate communication with an Efficiency Smart representative and Mr. Martindale agreed. Ms. Smith saw the Annual Report assignments on the agenda and Ms. Chajes felt as though they had just gone through last year's report process. Ms. Rypkema asked if the Commission would discuss an earlier start time due to the group consistently running over time. Ms. Smith stated the trend was new for the group and she was not sure why they were running late. Ms. Rypkema felt like the group had run late consistently since she had joined and wanted to consider starting earlier. Ms. Smith wanted to begin and finish on time and Mr. O'Donnell suggested time boxing the items to allow to the Commission to keep time.

MOTION BY MS. CHAJES, SECONDED BY MR. O'DONNELL: TO ADJOURN.

10. NEXT MEETING – OCTOBER 11, 2022

The meeting adjourned at 9:42 p.m.

Philip Machado
Administrative Professional I

/pm