

**Committee for a Better Environment**  
**Davis Hall, College Park**  
**June 2, 2014 (May Meeting)**  
**7:00 PM**

<u>Members</u>	<u>Present</u>	<u>Absent</u>
Suchitra Balachandran	X	
Gemma Evans	X	
Benjamin Mellman		X
Janis Oppelt	X	
Kennis Termini	X	
Donna Weene	X	
Macrina Xavier		X

Guests Present: Bill Gardiner, Assistant City Manager, Steve Beavers, City Liaison, Denise M. Palmer, Contract Secretary

**1. Review and approve 4/28/14 meeting minutes**

The committee reviewed the minutes from the April 28, 2014 meeting and Ms. Weene made a motion to approve the minutes as revised. Ms. Evans seconded it and the motion was unanimous.

**2. Financial report**

The committee passed several motions listed below to fund several workshops and events.

**3. Events:**

**a. Community Cleanup – 5/3/14 – recap**

Ms. Oppelt gave a report for Ms. Xavier that several people showed up to volunteer for the cleanup and it was successful.

**b. Bike to Work Day – recap**

Mr. Beavers reported that the event was successful and that CBE spent approximately \$1,000 for massages, DJ, gifts and refreshments.

**c. Future workshops – bats, composting, rain barrels, native plants, possible forested site tour?**

Ms. Oppelt suggested a workshop for one to two hours for a Forested site tour – 15 in attendance was the suggested number. She has a speaker and suggested \$150 for the speaker fee. She can finalize the date and the speaker is available for the tour in the evenings between 6:00 or

7:00 p.m. Ms. Weene made a motion for the Forested workshop. Ms. Oppelt seconded the motion and it was unanimous.

Ms. Oppelt reported that she has located the invoice from Aqua Barrel for 55 gallon rain barrels that were previously purchased at \$2,200 for 23 barrels. Mr. Beavers suggested contacting Debbie Weller at the Department of the Environment for 100 gallon rain barrels. Ms. Balachandran suggested contacting The Bowie Lion's Club also.

Ms. Oppelt suggested that they research the best options and suggested September for the workshop. Mr. Beavers will check with his contact for a possible date for the workshop and Ms. Balachandran will contact Bowie Lion's Club.

Ms. Termini suggested a workshop on bat houses, which cost \$50 each. She suggested the workshop be held at Davis Hall and purchase 18 bat houses. The workshop could be held late June or early July. The cost would be \$900 for 18 of them. Ms. Balachandran suggesting having people attend the workshop and then they can sign up for a bat house if they so desire. Bats consume insects and the bat houses would be for residential use. They can be attached to the side of a house and one bat house holds up to 100 bats. Ms. Weene suggested putting some at Duval Field.

Ms. Evans made a motion for \$200 for a speaker fee and refreshments. Ms. Weene seconded the motion and it was unanimous.

Ms. Termini reduced the amount to 12 bat houses at \$600 (buy 12 and give them out to the first 12 people). If there is a need for more, it will be decided at a later date. Ms. Oppelt made a motion that CBE purchase 12 bat houses at \$600. Ms. Termini seconded the motion and it was unanimous.

Ms. Termini suggested a Canning Preserves Workshop at the Old Parrish House. She suggested \$100 speaker fee for Christiane Williams and approximately \$50-\$75 for preserves. Ms. Weene made a motion for the Canning Preserves Workshop. The motion was seconded by Ms. Balachandran and it was unanimous.

The committee agreed to hold off on the composting and native plants workshops for now.

**4. a. Permaculture Update (council presentation, education & signage, volunteer opportunities)**

The proposed pilot project would be along the Trolley Trail and CBE has to decide if they should move forward to work with the Neighborhood Design Center to design the signage. The Design Center is located in Riverdale and they work with communities on a pro bono basis to revitalize neighborhoods. An application would have to be filled out. Ms. Oppelt made a motion to pursue a relationship with the Neighborhood Design Center for a Permaculture site. Ms. Termini seconded the motion and it was unanimous. The project fee can come out of this year's budget. Mr. Gardiner suggested an amount \$1,876 – \$4,100 for plant material if council approves the pilot plan. Mr. Beavers indicated that it would come out of CBE budget and it can be phased in. If the project is fully expanded, it would be phased in for five years or more. The Neighborhood Design Center would also talk to residents that are in opposition to the project to educate them. The current pilot project is located on Sheet 1 of the proposed plan which would

run from Greenbelt Road to the Tecumseh section. Ms. Evans indicated that the idea of starting the site next to the school would be an opportunity for students to be exposed to the site. Mr. Beavers reported that Brenda Alexander agrees to start with the project as outlined on sheet 1 and that council would probably go along with it.

Ms. Balachandran suggested involving the University of Maryland and the various groups of volunteers that have expressed an interest in volunteering.

**b. Business recycling – update**

Ms. Balachandran made a motion to co-sponsor Urban Ore meeting to be held on June 12 in City Council Chambers. Ms. Evans seconded the motion and it was unanimous.

**c. Pesticides – discuss next steps**

Ms. Termini indicated the presentation given at CBE’s April meeting by the two guests from Takoma Park was an excellent presentation. Ms. Evans suggested that the committee think about the next steps in the process. Ms. Oppelt went to EPA website and looked at the list of minimally invasive pesticides and suggested starting with a brochure.

**d. Tree & Landscape Board meeting – recap**

This topic was covered under Forested discussion in 3c.

**5. New Business**

**a. City fence ordinance – impact on home gardens**

Ms. Balachandran reported that community gardens and front yard gardens should be encouraged. She suggested that the committee follow up with this topic at its next meeting.

Mr. Gardiner reported city council adopted a city plan for Sustainability to create city goals and policies and bring them under one tent.

**b. Bat houses**

This topic was covered in item 3c.

Ms. Oppelt made a motion to purchase produce bags (50 full size, 50 garden sacs), mesh for a total of \$450. Ms. Weene seconded the motion and it was unanimous.

Ms. Termini suggested an additional workshop on snakes for educational purposes to be discussed at upcoming meeting.

**6. Next meeting date – 6/30**

The next meeting will be held on June 30, 2014 at Davis Hall at 7:00 p.m.

There being no further business for discussion, the meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Denise M. Palmer, Contract Secretary