Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC) Meeting Minutes 5/1/18

PRESENT: Chair Sue Beffel; Vice-chair Irwin Flashman; Committee Members Doug Britt, Robin Duska, Carl Mitchell, Eric Weinstein (via phone), Sally Kidd (7:27); Staff Liaisons Katie Shaw, Claudia Thompson-Deahl

ABSENT WITH CAUSE: Committee Members Lois Phemister, Emily Vorek, Board Liaison Eric Carr

GUESTS: None.

I. PROCEDURAL ITEMS

A. Call to Order & Opening Remarks
   Sue called the meeting to order at 7:24 p.m., and a quorum was established. Chair congratulated the RASER Working Group on their new members and accomplishments.

   (Sally Kidd arrived.)

B. Adoption of Agenda
   Carl moved to adopt the May 1, 2018 agenda. Doug seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

C. Adoption of Minutes
   Doug moved to adopt the minutes of the April 3, 2018 meeting. Robin seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

D. Member Comments
   None.

II. PRESENTATIONS, DISCUSSION & ACTION ITEMS

E. Reston State of the Environment Report (RASER)- Update

   The working group met on April 30. 50% of the chapters are done. The group has decided to keep recommendations in each chapter. It is discussing how to monitor and track the progress of the 2017 RASER recommendations as well as what format changes may be made in the references and style guide. It would like the editing and formatting process to be more automated.
Bee information will be added to the invertebrate chapter. A synthesis chapter may be added to highlight important drivers of environmental quality. Elements of the Fairfax County Environmental Vision will be embedded in the report.

The RASER Working Group was recognized by RA as the best Volunteer Group of the Year. It was also nominated for the Fairfax County Volunteer Group award.

RASER will have a booth at the Nature Center’s Spring Festival on May 5. The next meeting will be on June 4.

**F. Outdoor Cats- Update**

The final *Cats in the USA and Reston* paper was delivered to all committee members as well as the RA CEO and Covenants Department. Early response has been that RA cat policy is primarily covered in the Natural Areas Guidelines, and that language in those guidelines may need to be strengthened.

One suggestion is to amend the rules so that the cat topic would be in its own section with specific language indicating that cat colonies are prohibited on RA property.

*Robin made a motion to recommend to the Board that the Natural Areas Guidelines be amended to include the following, “Outdoor cat shelters and the feeding of outdoor cats are prohibited on RA property.” Further that this language be combined with existing language that states “Cats, while on the Common Area, must be walked on a leash”. Doug seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

The committee will further review the guidelines and follow up with any other measures that are not covered. Audubon Society of Northern Virginia will be meeting with Fairfax County on this topic. RA staff is invited to participate. Research on cat policies and regulations in other parts of the country is underway.

**G. Drop Box Management- Filing Guidelines**

The committee reviewed the Dropbox Filing Guidelines, adding that new member access should be requested through the RA Board & Committee Liaison and that project leaders or their designee should be responsible for file maintenance.

*Carl made a motion to approve the Dropbox Filing Guidelines, pending sharing them with the RA Board & Committee Liaison. Robin seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

**H. Development/Redevelopment Issues**

There was a report from members who attended the Coalition for a Planned Reston meeting as well as the Planning and Zoning Committee meeting. Fairfax County has indefinitely postponed a vote on raising the density cap in Reston.
The committee discussed the recent Biophilic City designation regarding future development and how to communicate the recent designation to the County. The committee would like the RA Board to inform Supervisor Hudgins and Chairman Bulova of the designation via a letter. A first draft has been prepared by the EAC.

There was discussion about the biophilic designation in relation to Amazon’s enticement to the region, the effects Amazon may have on density, the current RA Board position on development, and whether analysis is needed to examine impacts as a basis of any recommendation.

A second draft of the letter will be written and shared with the EAC not specifically referencing Amazon, but rather encouraging the County to consider biophilic principles during decision-making and planning processes.

There was also a report from the Hidden Creek Golf Course/Wheelock development meeting. There is pressure from the County to build a 4-acre stormwater retention pond or several small ponds. Surveying is underway. There is an existing wetland that would be excavated for this purpose, and overflow would be to Colvin Run. Easements would be needed from the Fairfax County Park Authority and VDOT. The EAC would like to learn whether having the pond could reduce or eliminate the need for the golf course to draw water from Lake Anne.

I. Fairfax County Environmental Quality Advisory Council Report

There was a report on the May 11th EQAC meeting, which discussed the 2018 EQAC Report. Operations Energy Strategy Targets are being established and a regional energy emissions report will be out this summer. It was also noted that the Lorton landfill is full and will be closed this year.

J. Spring Festival

The Nature Center’s Spring Festival will be on May 5. The committee reviewed volunteer assignments and publicity.

K. RA Energy Usage Report

The 2017 RA Energy Usage Report was shared. Kilowatt usage is down consistently and overall, mainly due to more LED conversions and the closing of the Colts Neck underpass, which had been lit. The committee is interested in any existing written plan or budget for an energy savings program.

L. Announcements, Upcoming Activities & Meetings

Environmental staff participated in the City Nature Challenge in preparation for Reston’s BioBlitz, which will be on June 2. Volunteers can sign up to help online. The link is available on the iNaturalist project page. On May 11, Reston’s BioBlitz will be the topic of an episode of the cable TV show Reston Impact.
This month’s environmental film at the Walker Nature Center will be *Minimalism* on May 25.

On May 10, there will be an innovation breakfast in McLean, sponsored by the Community Foundation of Northern Virginia. The topic is *Changing the Frame of Green Energy*.

III. CLOSE OF THE MEETING

M. Adjourn

*Carl moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:27 p.m. Doug seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

Respectfully submitted,

\[Signature\]

Katie Shaw
Nature Center Manager/Staff Liaison