Annapolis Environmental Commission
May 14, 2019

The Annapolis Environmental Commission (AEC) held a special meeting on May 14, 2019 at the Pip Moyer Recreation Center located at 273 Hilltop Lane. Chair Bohanan called the meeting to order at 7:13 p.m.

Members Present: Chair Bohanan, Murphy, O’Leary, Buchheister

Members Absent: Turgeon

Staff Present: J. Guild

Guest Present: Alderman Savidge-Ward 7, Susy Smith, Michael Giblin, Anne Stephenson, Diane Butler, Frieda Wildey, Baby Francis

PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

Chair Bohanan expressed appreciation for those who were able to attend the special meeting. She explained that the purpose of this special meeting is to discuss the changes to the Office of Environmental Policy with the goal of taking a vote on a recommendation to deliver to the Environmental Matters Committee, Mayor and Council. She noted that the AEC will consider the two active proposals specifically Ordinances O-18-19 and O-12-19.

Ms. Smith discussed the Mayor’s proposal detailed in Ordinance #O-12-19 to have an Environmental Policy staff member in the Mayor’s Office since it is the policy side of the City. She noted that currently there is no policy staff member in the Mayor’s Office or on the Council so there is no one to work on the legislative policy side of the City. She believes this is important because it will allow a policy staff member to be available to make policy decisions for the future so there is a “strong backbone on the environmental laws in the City.” She says that Anne Arundel County has the same set up as this proposal. She responded to questions and comments from the AEC relating to the current and proposed structure; the need or not for an environmental policy adviser in the Mayor’s Office and possibly involving the AEC in the development process early.

Alderman Savidge thanked the AEC for volunteering and expressed an interest in hearing the policy recommendations and will also dedicate a portion of the EMC meeting to hear the transition report. He described his proposal detailed in Ordinance #O-18-19 regarding the current structure of the OEP. This proposal is intended to make some improvements to the organizational structure and to address some of the issues that have come up relating to Forest Conservation, No Net Loss, and Stormwater Management. This proposal is intended to provide staff and resources; a team with a dedicated mindset; and regulatory authority. The proposal calls to reestablish the Department of Neighborhood Environmental Program to house the core environmental programs to include Forest Conservation, Stormwater Management and Enforcement. He discussed the proposed organizational structure. He addressed the comment that there is not a policy advisor on the Council explaining that the Council does have a policy advisor which is the Director of Environmental Policy whose job description includes advising the Council. He concluded by addressing some of the language in the Mayor’s proposal and noting that he is open to recommendations from the AEC on his proposal.
In response to a question regarding the status of the legislations, Alderman Savidge went over the status of O-12-19, Charter Amendment 2-19, O-16-19 and O-18-19.

Ms. Guild responded to the comments and noted that the proposed job description of the Policy Advisor needs improvements but indicated that both plans have merit but that these merits will be determined during implementation.

Ms. Buchheister moved to oppose dissolving OEP and moving the position to the Mayor’s Office and support reestablishing a Department of Environment to house the core environmental functions of Forest Conservation, Stormwater Management and Regulatory Authority. And also the AEC opposes using the Stormwater Fees for employees’ salaries since the fees were intended for restoration projects. The AEC support consultation with the Mayor’s Office, Council and the AEC on projects before they are developed. Mr. Murphy seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously in a vote of 5-0.

V. ADJOURNMENT

With there being no further business, Mr. O’Leary moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:58pm. Mr. Murphy seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously in a vote of 5-0.

The next AEC meeting is Wednesday, June 5, 2019 at 7:00pm at 145 Gorman Street.

Tami Hook, Recorder