

HRVWAC Meeting Summary and Action Items December 4, 2017

Present: Deborah Wessner, Ellen Roberts, Iris Mars, Sara McGarity.

Guest: Patricia Smith

WAC History:

- Not all villages have a WAC.
- Note: The members who are Watershed Stewards should try to plan or participate in an outreach event in the villages that do not have them to talk about what the WACs do and to become a steward; do with Terry Matthews (WSA program coordinator).

WAC Guided Walks through Hickory Ridge Open Space:

- CA Open Space is concerned about liability if someone falls. HOWEVER, they do their own village walks and no one signs a liability release (Iris went on all of them this year – good turnouts), PLUS, the WAC is a committee under the HR Board, which has its own blanket liability policy. These policies are common to nonprofit boards to cover issues that come up when the board is performing its duties. We think this should not be an issue and a separate \$1M policy is not needed, contrary to what Open Space seems to think.
- Deborah will ask Anne about this before April meeting.

Cooking Grease:

- Patricia Smith, a resident, brought an example of a lid that Montgomery County is handing out to try to get its residents to save grease in cans and place it in the trash instead of pouring it down the drains. This is causing sewer lines to clog from grease buildup.
- Does Howard County have a program to deal with this? Can Alpha Ridge create a spot to collect it? Is it recyclable?
- Deborah will talk to HoCo Recycle office about this
- Time for another Log article!

Stenciling Projects:

- Ellen will do the research and estimating on how much material we need to order for the next batch of projects.
- We had a \$500 grant: how much did we spend and how much is left?
- The group agreed to just submit the whole village for approval and get the approval done all at one time.
- Ellen will do the project planning for the remaining Clemens Crossing storm drains.

- Iris is working on Hawthorn and will start work on Clary's Forest; Sara expressed an interest in assisting with Clary's Forest.
- Deborah likes the idea of having a cart/kit for our supplies and will see if a cheap one can be found on Craigslist.
- Someone will need to follow-up with Joan on whether there's enough storage space for it.
- Deborah thought just focus on highly-visible streets; Iris is still interested in getting Hawthorn done, including cul-de-sacs – these people do drain into the Little Patuxent River.
- Education activities need to be done: 1) before the event (let people know what's going on); 2) during the event (talk to people); and 3) after the event (project accomplishments).
- Deborah is following up with Elissa re getting our own set of stencils and adjusting them to fit our storm drains without buckling; Ellen said maybe 1/4 inch needed to be trimmed off so the side stencil can fit on the narrow metal part of the drain.

Door Hangers:

- Use language like “may have an opportunity to...”, to be a bit more positive (Sara).
- We don't want to mark the back side of the flyer if there's no easy solution that the owner can implement.
- A new option available to homeowners is drain pop-ups. These are exit points at the end of downspout pipes that exit in the lawn; when no water is draining, they are flat; when water drains, the lid pops up.
- There doesn't seem to be a watershed mailbox for HR; Deborah will work with the office staff on getting one.

Rain Garden Seminar:

- Deborah is trying to get dates from John.
- Deborah said something about asking people higher up the hill to put in a rain garden so the people lower won't get flooded. Deborah will ask John to recommend areas in HR where targeting an audience would be beneficial to the watershed as a whole by convincing them to put in rain gardens.
- Anne contacted people who had HR approved rain gardens and asked them to send photos; there was one response. We would want permission to be able to visit Spring, Summer, and Fall to capture photos of how the gardens transition throughout the year.

Bright Passage:

- As Iris mentioned in a previous document, she had driven down Bright Passage and stopped by the stream but is not sure where specific owners are having specific problems. Steep drop by the stream where it goes under Bright Passage. No response from WSA on their site visit awhile ago.

Pull and Plant:

- Discussion of how often to do this: depends on volunteers and leaders. That area is not so large that it can't be cleaned up if worked on regularly. Deborah thinks twice a year; Iris thinks more often. MPEA does the events, Iris thinks, February through November, depending on the weather. Iris has volunteered twice this year at the MPEA. Our events can be planned around the MPEA events, plus, they can be done different days of the week: during the week, and weekends, too.
- Possibly put up a yard sign (Sara) – this will inform people of what is going on in the area. Ellen likes this idea for the stenciling projects too. Iris and Ellen will come up with designs to submit for Board approval. Should plan to be done by the end of December for the January Board meetings. We then need to consider: How many should we need? How much do they cost? Are we sharing them or should we get two sets (we may do stenciling in different areas concurrently)?
- Iris suggested targeting via flyer the people in the four adjacent courts that connect to the Open Space to ask for volunteers and to let them know what is happening.
- Deborah submitted a draft of Pull and Plant guidelines she provided for another project. WAC members are asked to review and send comments to Deborah.
- Deborah will check with John McCoy about initiating this season's Pull and Plant, but, once the initial one is done, we should be able to carry on.
- Iris has pictures from the area and will take more in early Spring.
- What to pull when: Garlic Mustard is pulled when it is about to bloom and before the seeds are ready to disperse. Multiflora Rose can be pulled at different times with the right equipment to get the root out.
- Patricia and Iris are trained Weed Warriors.

Watershed Palooza:

- Iris will talk to Georgia Eacker (head of University of Maryland Extension, Howard County) about getting HR master gardeners to help plan and man a table. Wanda (last name unknown) lives in HR.
- Iris will talk to Joan about dates for the Palooza and table set-up (number of tables available and possible, configurations, etc.).
- Do we need Board approval to do the Palooza?
- Deborah will check with the CA WAC team to see if there are any other committed similar projects to avoid conflict.
- Note: some people might not be able to go to an event on a date so having multiple opportunities to do watershed activities is not a bad idea.
- Iris will talk to Bruce Eberle (a Master Watershed Steward on the River Hill WAC who was involved with the RH palooza earlier this year) about planning, logistics, lessons learned, volunteers, etc.
- Iris will check with Bess Caplan in re activities at Wilde Lake. Wilde Lake is being dredged next year.
- Iris listed some possible ideas for the palooza:

- Watershed model from WSA
- Trace Your Watershed: contour elevation mapping sheets.
- Stenciling information table: photos about the project; signup for volunteers; general info about storm drains.
- Clean and dirty water in beakers: samples from different places, maybe before and after a storm.
- Follow the River: map showing our streams and what feeds it. Need to find a way to make it interactive. Put a movable boat on it somewhere? Over and underground (culverts).
- Raindrop costumes (hats).
- Craft table: plastic reduce, reuse: bottle caps, toilet paper rolls, broken dishes (mosaic), ??? Photos of bottles piled up (maybe from WSA). Student art competition from State of Maryland.
- Rain barrel giveaway/raffle.
- Poop mountain: how to make this work – even a big photo can work.
- Seed balls: Anna Farb had an activity for kids at EcoWorks where they mixed clay, water, and wildflower seeds to make balls; throw them in the yards. Can make shapes.
- Invasive species show and tell and plant info.
- Seed giveaways, plant sale and/or giveaway.
- More thoughts: insects – can try to collect them and then put them back, e.g., water striders. Don't have a net, though.
- The team will brainstorm on other workable ideas and see who will come to man tables and how much space we have.

Village Center Redevelopment:

- Deborah will be contacting the office to determine who should be responsible for the stormwater maintenance with a new village center design. Will CA continue to maintain the stormwater pond behind the Giant area or are they planning to grant an easement to the county so they maintain it following the redevelopment?
- Kimco is seeking a change in zoning to build the apartment complex. The complex is not permitted under the current zoning.

Kids Activities:

- Related to the rain garden webinar and other programs for adults: provide a kid's activity concurrent. Rain garden webinar on a Sunday afternoon instead of in the evening? Coloring sheets?
- Kids are off at various times of the year: should we plan a little watershed-related activity for the kids to include in their program at Hawthorn? One of us will need to talk to Joan about the dates for this. One activity to include would be the watershed model, seeds and pots.

Native Meadow:

- Iris will photo the area.
- Iris will ask Georgia about master gardeners and project planning.
- Iris will ask Georgia about where there are other examples of native meadows in Howard County and get photos.
- Iris suggested that we get some feedback from the village residents on whether they like the idea, otherwise, the Board would end up nixing it due to complaints. Get buy-in way ahead of time. Office send out a survey?
- Funding for the project could come from grants (we could seek them), sweat equity (residents, scouts, high school student volunteers), and support from CA. High school students work and monitor as a research project?
- Meadow, if approved by the Board, won't be done until the 2020/2021 budget cycle.
- Just thought of something: the kids can make seed balls to reseed the meadow and have fun throwing them.

Web Page:

- Facts about the watershed: miles of stream, etc.
- Ellen, Sara, and Deborah will get suggestions for the page to Iris.

Miscellaneous:

- At some point, Sara will be busy with family responsibilities and not as active in the WAC, since she's expecting a new addition to the family.
- Pay a company to drive by and scoop up leaves?
- There are poop scooping companies.