

**Baltimore Commission on Sustainability**  
**April 24, 2012 Meeting Report**

**Date:** Tuesday April 24, 2012 from 4-6 pm

**Location:** Department of Planning Boardroom, 417 E. Fayette St. 8<sup>th</sup> Floor

**Subject:** Commission on Sustainability April 2012 General Meeting

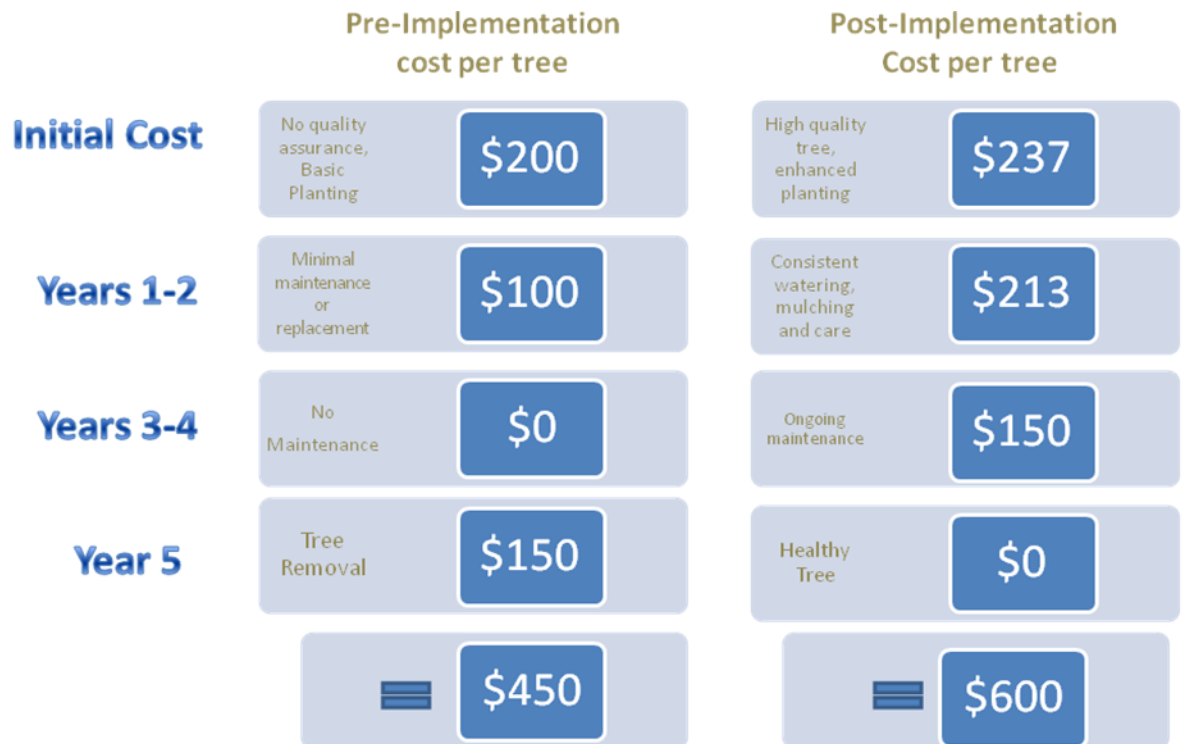
**In Attendance:** (*Commissioners*) – Davis Bookhart, Cheryl Casciani, John Ciekot, Ray Ehrlich, Lynn Heller, Brian Knight, Keith Losoya, Sharon Middleton, Ruth Ann Norton, Scot Spencer, John Quinn, Jake Ruppert, Mary Washington, Ed Whalen  
(*Staff*) - Beth Strommen, Alice Kennedy, Abby Cocke, Holly Freishtat

**Meeting called to order:** 4:05 pm

**Topics addressed:**

- Minutes approved with amendment to reflect Davis Bookhart objection to solar panels being exempt from stormwater fees as part of USGBC legislative agenda, March 24, 2012 meeting. Ed Whalen moves and Sharon Middleton seconds.
- Chair Report
  - Annual Report has been created and released. Thank you to staff led by Alice.
  - Reached out to Town Creek Foundation, submitted proposal for funding, and received funding for communications platform, travel (go to or bring people here), convening a statewide conference on sustainability communications and issues.
  - Tuesday May 1<sup>st</sup> Town Creek is hosting a conference in Baltimore on Climate Change Communications. Cheryl and Lynn to attend.
  - Annapolis testimony, it was good to be present and have a voice at the table. Learning experience.
  - Mary Pat Fannon will be coming to May meeting to debrief on General Assembly Session
  - Legislative process at the State level – we tried it out, it went well. Seeing where we are in this as a Commission.
- Staff Report
  - We have a new intern, Cat Weiss who will be working on a rat survey with farmers and also a catch all for other projects.
  - We are expanding in the office. Coastal Communities Initiative Grant. Awarded for an Hazard Mitigation Planner for the Adaptation Plan. Running very fast with this.
  - Ribbon cutting occurred at Back River for 1 MW solar project.
  - Newark & Philly coming to Baltimore for a site visit May 30<sup>th</sup>.
  - Holly Freishtat Food Policy
    - Working on food desert retail Strategy for Baltimore City. Attracting grocers to the City
    - 14% of land commercially zoned. And 85% of residents in food deserts are employed
    - Came back from US Conference of Mayors in Boston with Mayor. In depth discussions
    - Farm Bill – from a Mayor’s perspective, everything getting slashed that effects urban populations

- Public Markets
  - Received two grants \$100,000 from Abell and \$50,000 from Kaiser
  - Animal Codes – amazing breakthrough with health department regarding animal regulations in City. We got what we asked for and now can have more chickens, goats, rabbits and bees. Able to join elite Cities with very little effort.
- Preservation MD Renovation Conference – Greening Home
- Office of Sustainability part of City team creating proposal for PSC Exelon Funds through Customer Investment Fund. Seeking additional funding for Energy Challenge
- Met with representative of International Green Construction Code – working with HCD on how to integrate with LEED, and BCGBS, and building code
- Tree Program – Erik Dihle
  - Benefits of Urban Tree Canopy
    - Lens is Outcome Budgeting
    - One tree will have \$90,000 in direct benefits
    - Better Schools
      - Addresses Environmental Education Requirements
    - Safer Streets
      - Reduces traffic speed by 3-15 mph
    - Stronger Neighborhoods
      - Increases residential and commercial property values by \$15-25,000
    - Sustainability
      - Reduces stormwater runoff by 30% in the leaf system and up to 30% in the root structure
      - Decreases temperatures by 5-15 degrees
      - Cuts energy costs by 15-35%
  - Baltimore City’s Canopy Crisis
    - Lack of a shared vision for increasing the tree canopy
    - Scarcity of resources and insufficient resource partnering
    - Inadequate planting and maintenance specifications
  - Strategic Action Plan
    - Goal 1 - Identify and target high-priority planting areas in Baltimore City
    - Goal 2 - Achieve a healthy tree canopy through coordinated planning, planting and maintenance
    - Goal 3 - Synchronize current resource utilization and future fundraising efforts
  - For Goal 1 – came up with a priority map, US Forest Service assisted with overall map. Target neighborhoods that are priority lists.
  - Goal 2



- Goal 3
  - Community Participation
  - Lower Cost and Higher Buy-In
  - Increased Canopy
- Further Recommendations
  - Compose and sign a Memorandum of Understanding between city agencies and other partners to assure that this partnership continues
  - Redirect resources saved through the implementation of the Strategic Action Plan to future tree planting and maintenance efforts
  - Increase funding for tree care to positively impact public opinion and grow the canopy
- What we are achieving
  - Planting more trees in 2012
  - Need Better data from other agencies
- Ruth Ann Norton question: Grand Prix trees – what is happening with those? Answer: 150 being planted this month
- Mary Washington question: Are there special plans to reduce mortality die to the summer? Yes, changed specifications for contract plantings – first thing that was done. Contract plantings require them to care for tree for 24 months period. Spring planting as good or better.
- Question: How many trees in Baltimore? Answer: don't know. A lot of efforts need to be on private lands. 125,000 street trees and developed park land.
- Davis Bookhart question: assume trees lost have higher canopy cover so trend could actually be loss of canopy? Answer – yes that is possible
- Jake Ruppert question: is goal of doubling total canopy? Yes. JR: then if not counting 80% of tree canopy, and three areas to effect in chart, then doesn't make impact. Erik: looking at right of way, parkland and undeveloped parkland. Effort we are able to make within City jurisdiction.

- Landscape Manual will affect private development trigger point is 5,000 square feet now at 20,000 square feet.
  - Davis comment: anytime anyone builds in Baltimore they are building to entire footprint. Beth answer: trees in footprint or mitigation in areas close by
  - Sharon Middleton: Urban Affairs and Aging committee: could look at this and ask questions from an RFP standpoint as part of hearings. Look at approve sunsets and add requirement for caliper and canopy
  - Anne Draddy: biggest thing is residential private property and reaching those residences.
  - Erik: do have a matching grant from Constellation for outreach efforts
  - Lynn Heller: What about cutting trees down on private property? Any examples in other cities? Is there a role for us to think about this? Examples for a model in terms of legislation?
  - Erik: Falls Church Virginia and would love to see that change in tree ordinance.
  - Jake Ruppert: ensure that solar access laws work on sync with any tree ordinances
  - Geoff Stack: any work being done to change attitudes regarding lawns?
  - Erik: Can we increase our no mow areas? And advocate for on private lands
  - Rebecca Ruggles: educational component for City Schools environmental literacy standards
  - Abby – Keisha Matthews at City Schools is drafting those now.
  - Erik Dihle: Budget currently 2.95 million, significant decrease over last two years. Advocating on backlog and pruning. #1` thing to do structurally prune and take care next time hurricane comes not come down in storm. Saving money and increase canopy at quicker rate.
  - Mary Washington: question re: backlog? Where are these trees? Erik: streets, and right of ways.
  - Private homeowner responsibility to maintain their trees.
  - Mary Washington: reality is that people won't and can't afford to do maintenance.
  - Cheryl – lots of issues have come up. Terrific if sub-committee staffed by Beth and Abby highlight areas where Commission can help.
  - Looking at trees as capital infrastructure needs help with.
  - Sharon Middleton: have Erik present to City Council during one of their luncheons
- Climate Action Plan Update
    - Moved forward with discussion of looking beyond 2020. How to meet reduction by 2020 and aspirational longer term goals beyond 2020.
    - Draft recommendations available for review before the Town Hall
- Annual Report 2012
    - Published and released
    - Major change in design and layout
    - Added features such as the Strategy Implementation Status chart. Gives people overview of all 131 strategies from plan.
    - Stories in clued a Partner Highlight and Neighborhood Spotlight.
    - The neighborhood spotlights opens the door to add additional information regarding neighborhood sustainability indicators as we move forward with conversations about this either with Jacob France Institute or looking at EcoDistricts
    - A couple of metrics were dropped for this year. Waiting for better clarification on data
    - Set up for easier data collection for next year and beyond.

- General Comments
  - Davis Bookhart
    - 3<sup>rd</sup> Year for the Climate Showcase gearing up non-profits to engage
- Meeting adjourned: 5:59 pm

**Upcoming Events:**

- Next Commission on Sustainability Meeting: Tuesday, May 22 2012, 4 PM at 417 East Fayette Street, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor