

**Commission on Sustainability**  
**January 13, 2021, 4:00pm--6:00pm**

**MINUTES** (Video of meeting is available [here](#).)

**Commissioners in attendance:** Mia Blom, Miriam Avins, Earl Johnson, Lisa Ferretto, Donzell Brown, Kurt Sommer, John Quinn, Ben Zaitchik, Inez Robb

**Updates: Commission and Office of Sustainability**

- Plastic Bag Ban postponed until July 9, 2021
- Recycling is scheduled to restart January 19th
- DPW offering tree disposal options
- Monthly newsletter sign-up encouragement

**The Environmental Justice Journalism Initiative [www.EJJI.org](http://www.EJJI.org) (Donzell Brown)**

- Environmental scientists and journalists concerned about lack of diversity in environmental stories especially in black and brown communities
- “Our environment, our story” to promote young people to tell their own stories
- Alliance with National Aquarium: 16 students will be learning journalism, environmental science, city planning. Moving them toward advocacy, internships, job placements, university introductions
- Provides mentorship, resources, support for entering environmental science, journalism
- Requests students be invited to present to Commission
- Dr Dewitt asks for environmental input for solar panels manufacturing

**Plastic Bag Ban Update**

- Brief overview of bill and outreach efforts to date; overall goal to encourage use of reusable bags
- Office of Sustainability has an ethics exemption to collect donations to purchase and distribute bags for low-income households
- Currently we have identified multiple places to distribute than bags (including food distribution sites)
- Earl Johnson: We should have prepared the community, flooded the market with visible bags before the ban. We need to make them more avail. Bags need to be replaced down the line.
- Dr. Dewitt can share with faith-based groups to advocate that it’s not a tax, it’s for environment
- Lisa Ferretto: can businesses create bags, can there be a note on how to clean the bag?
- Commissioners will be asked to share thoughts on organization who need bags.

**General Assembly 2021 Legislative Session: Review**

- General assembly will be moving at a faster pace this year, so there is a quicker turnaround for submitting written testimony
- Co-chairs shared a list of legislation related to Sustainability Plan, which was updated to include suggestions from Commissioners about additional bills to support. After support vote today, Co-chairs will share list with the Mayor's Office of Government Relations
- Volunteers are needed to craft the written testimony using templates provided by Co-chairs
- Vote: All are in favor.

Next meeting: February 17, 2021