

**Neighbors of Northwest Branch
Minutes of Board Meeting
November 1, 2022**

1. Welcome

Present on Zoom: Nora Swisher, Anne Ambler, Kem Morawski, Kristin Backert, Matt Boyer, Melissa Schweisguth, James Graham, and (after the Springsong discussion) Rebecca Henson.

2. Treasurer's report

The treasurer's report from Larry Hush shows a balance of \$8,121.47.

3. Fiscal Agent - Springsong Museum

Nora, Melissa, Larry, Anne, and Matt all read the MOU (Memo of Understanding) Rebecca sent from Springsong Museum. Rebecca then sent an edited version to the pro bono lawyers they are working with and sent it back to Matt who needs to incorporate any changes needed. We can accept the larger donations for them and they will submit invoices of their expenses (Ylla Bishop is the Springsong treasurer). This requires our oversight and we can opt out for a variety of reasons should we see issues. There are some details yet to work out. If and when they get the IRS status they want, we will return the money and close the whole thing out. We can all look at the final version of the MOU when it is done.

Taking on the role of fiscal agent for Springsong means we will be unavailable in this role with Forest Knolls Pool. No one has heard from them and it is too late to do the stormwater control this year anyway, but we do need to contact them and clearly state that we will not be involved at this time.

4. Suffrage Point/Werriem update

Greg Smith of Sustainable Hyattsville sent us a detailed email about the status of the Suffrage Point/Werriem issue. NNWB, Sustainable Hyattsville and Anacostia Riverkeeper sent a letter to Secretary of the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE), Horacio Tablada in late August. Sustainable Hyattsville finally received a response which did not address our concerns and Secretary Tablada made it clear that he intended not to take any of the actions we requested. He said that MDE is working closely with the Prince George's County Department of Permitting, Inspections, and Enforcement (DPIE) to ensure that Werriem is complying. But Sustainable Hyattsville documented sediment loading as recently as October 13, and DPIE's oversight has been extremely poor.

The Prince George's Planning Board plans to convene a public hearing on Werrlien's site plan for the lower parcel, which is in the NWB floodplain, on January 5.

Nora and Greg talked about NNWB supporting his educational aims which include a potential workshop/session to help educate people about the permitting and compliance processes and how to advocate during instances like this. This is very county specific.

It was suggested that we all go down to the area and take a look at the situation. What is needed that we can contribute?

5. Greenscapes Sponsor

There is a Greenscape symposium on February 17, 2023 at Brookside Gardens. Should we be a sponsor? Sponsoring at the \$250 level gives us 3 free tickets, our logo on their website and a post on their Facebook page. We sponsored at this level last year. What is the deadline for this decision? Anne pointed out these symposiums are becoming more geared to landscape businesses than to individuals. She will look into this. We will put off the decision until closer to the deadline.

6. Maryland Campaign for Environmental Human Rights—[do we want to sign on in support?](#) From the proposed Maryland state constitutional amendment for environmental human rights:

“The amendment would ensure that (1) each person, as a matter of human dignity, has a fundamental and inalienable right to a healthful and sustainable environment, and (2) the state, as the trustee of Maryland's natural resources, including its air, water, lands, wildlife, and ecosystems, shall protect, conserve, and enhance them for the benefit of current and future generations.”

A version of this did not pass last year. Anne will look into what happened. Having something in the constitution gives organizations a leg to stand on when suing or demanding clean water/air.

Nora will sign us onto the letter of support for the amendment.

6 Salt Watch Program with Izaak Walton League (IWL)

Options for action include ordering kits and asking the Izaak Walton League to give a presentation as they did for FOSC (Friends of Sligo Creek). Should we invite IWL to give a presentation on this for us? We are a partner in this—we can order kits and use their logo. Does anyone

want to volunteer as Salt Watch coordinator/liaison? If we decide to order kits, the liaison will need to coordinate with IWL people, do the ordering, coordinate any events and communicate with IWL. If anyone is interested in this role, email Nora.

Nora participated last year as an individual. There is an app you download. One takes a photo of an indicator, and the phone records the GPS position. So there is no overhead for us to collect data as the data go directly into the app. The salt monitoring takes place during the winter months. The kits have 3 testing strips—the first to be done any time, the second and third to be done after snow or ice events, presumably in the same place.

Good places to test would be where roads cross, or in tributaries to rivers so we can see where the salt is coming from. You can do this through a computer browser if you do not have a smart phone.

If we decide to do the presentation, should it be in February? Format in-person or zoom? If we do an in-person event, we should do it during the day near major roads and demonstrate the measurement process—January or December??

7. **Winter Events**

All schedule hikes and clean-ups are done. If anyone wants to lead a winter hike, please do. A suggestion from the listening session was to continue the hike where Nora's last hike ended, however, there is limited parking in the community there. Should we park elsewhere and walk to that point? Perhaps December 10 for this hike? Anne to look into location/potential parking.

8. **Next meeting**

Our next meeting will be on December 6. The board will meet at 7:30 for business. Then the community will join us at 8:00 for Eliza Cava's 45 minute presentation on the Story of Streams Report, followed by a 15 minute Q&A session.

Next year is our 20th anniversary—do we want to do something special? To be discussed at our January meeting.