



Strategic Guidance for the Chestertown Environmental Committee

January 17, 2019



Brief History

The Chestertown Environmental Committee engaged in a strategic planning exercise in November, 2018. Committee member Greg Farley led the exercise, using the Appreciative Inquiry method. That method asks the following questions:

- What led me here?
- What is my high point?
- What do I value?
- What is changing?
- What's the best future I can imagine?
- What will it take to get us there?

The Appreciative Inquiry process:

- Focuses on the positive,
- Builds on existing strengths, and
- Asks participants to picture the best possible future for their organization.

This document maps prompts and participants' responses to them, and concludes with a list of action items for each of four topic-focused working groups, which we called "Breakout Teams." Together, these actions represent the will of the Environmental Committee and should guide its actions into the near future.

STEP 1: DISCOVER

What do you like best about this Committee?

- Small community; environmental ethos; “things get done”; small college and small town working together
- Sense of potential and nimbleness
- Committee is connected to & helps to create community: listens to people through education programs; captures information and uploads to this team
- Unique area (water, Bay, rural, history, culture, college): “incubator” for doing good things, and environment worth protecting
- People on the committee: people connected to multiple aspects of the Town

What is the BEST THING this committee has done?

- Earth Day festival – high visibility, good attendance;
- Sustainable Maryland Certified has statewide influence, Town Council and Mayor helped out with effort
- Plastic Bag Ban (extend to single-use plastics now)
- Relationship to College (on-campus improvements as models – water filling stations, rain garden, bees, etc.)
- Engage with new people!

STEP 2: DREAM

What does the BEST FUTURE COMMITTEE look like?

- More nimble, be more selective (“drop the rock” of trash 2x/week)
- Goals to be measurable, achievable
- “Stack up the wins”
- TO DO:
 - Build a list of priority tasks for a “sustainable, resilient Chestertown” and rally around them;
 - Use available resources (leverage passion of campus and student groups);
 - Learn about/engage with need for community service by student groups;
 - Engage with Rotary, etc., to collaborate on events and common goals, and identify resources;
- Engage with minority and elderly groups; *and*
- CELEBRATE – publicize successes better (methods TBD)

DRAW

STEP 3: DESIGN

What does the BEST FUTURE CHESTERTOWN look like?

GREEN:	YELLOW:	RED:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walking paths (+8G, +1Y) • Public multi-stream recycling & new waste management strategy (+5G, +1Y) • Roadside trees (+4G, +1Y, -1R) • Solar roofs & Community solar(+4G) • Stormwater improvements(+3G) • Destination playground (+2G) • Bike lane (+2G) • Energy Efficiency (esp. for older homes) (+2G, +1Y) • Healthy fish (+2G, +1Y) • Arts (+1G, +1Y) • Ride-sharing service (+2G, -1R) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pocket parks (+4Y, +2G) • Public Art (+4Y) • Public EV charging (+4Y, +1G) • Armory as green hotel (+3Y, +1G) • Resilient coastline (+3Y) • Riverwalk (+3Y) • Teaching about self-reliance, responsible purchasing (+2Y, +1G) • Bike path with separate walking path (+2Y) • Zero Carbon Town (+1G, -1R) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete streets (-1R) • Zap transportation (-1R) • River grasses (-1R) • Solar tractors (-1R) • Stepne Manor multi-use development (-3R, +2Y) • Wave/hydro power (-3R, +1Y) • Eastern Shore Academy (-3R) • Solar roads/walkways (-4R) • New hotel (-5R)

STEP 4: DELIVER

INDIVIDUALLY, think about answers to the following questions:

How do we get to that BEST FUTURE CHESTERTOWN?

- *What actions does this committee need to take?*
- *What resources do we already have? What will we need?*
- *How do we acquire resources (including human ones)?*
- *How can we innovate? Improvise?*
- *What practices, former goals, etc. can we leave behind?*

This question was resolved by discussion of the drawings produced in Step 3.

RESULTS:

WHAT WE WANT: 4 Breakout Teams

1. Administration
2. Energy
3. River and Habitat
4. Waste Stream Management

ADMINISTRATION Breakout Team

ADMINISTRATIVE GOAL: The Town of Chestertown should view the Chestertown Environmental Committee (CEC) as a valuable partner helping to develop practical solutions to environmental challenges facing our town.

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Develop bylaws, membership and recruitment procedures, and present that document to the Town Council.
 - a. Investigate: where does the Environmental Committee fit into the Town constitution or charter, and does that status need to change in order to enhance effectiveness?
 - b. Work to increase Committee representation from racially diverse constituencies via active outreach and recruitment efforts.
 - c. Develop a description for an Environmental Committee Recording Secretary, and work to fill that position with a Committee member.
2. Investigate whether the Environmental Committee has, or can acquire, 501(c)3 status to seek grants and raise funds for environmental initiatives.
 - a. Alternatively, ask the Town Council if the Town is willing to serve as a fiduciary agent for grant funds.
 - b. Ascertain whether the Town's preference is for the Committee to pursue public-private partnerships to help acquire and manage grant funds for environmental projects.
3. Continue coordination with the Town Manager, Bill Ingersol, to identify steps that CEC can take that will be of real practical value to town management.
 - a. Including but not limited to waste management/recycling challenges and potential solutions
 - i. The Committee needs to be aware of the political and social-justice implications of the Town's existing relationship with trash hauler Wallace Henry and family.
4. Look for opportunities to change purchasing policy and practice (recycled paper, fewer chemicals, less herbicide)

ENERGY Breakout Team

ENERGY GOAL: Enhance energy efficiency and renewable energy production for Chestertown town buildings and residents, in a just, equitable, and fair manner.

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Seek a partnership with the Chestertown Main Street committee to better define needs and wants among merchants and denizens of downtown.
 2. Seek a partnership with Delmarva Power to determine appropriate actions, functional limits, incentives, and points of potential collaboration on energy issues.
 3. Increase residential solar power generation
 - a. partner with Solar United Neighbors Co-op
 - b. evaluate direct 3rd party offerings (Tesla, SunRun)
 - c. NOTE: metrics important here
 4. Develop electric vehicle infrastructure
 - a. Offer a letter of support to Washington College ENACTUS for EV ride sharing
 - b. Examine zoning ordinances, and work to amend them where possible, to favor adoption and use of electric vehicles and supporting infrastructure.
 - i. Encourage commercial adoption of EVs and EV infrastructure through code changes.
 - c. Develop EV charging installations
 - i. Define criteria for typical locations (shopping centers, Dixon campus, marina, exercise facilities)
 - ii. Identify and evaluate 3rd party offerings (EvGo, Chargepoint, SemaConnect) and seek partnerships where possible.
 - d. Develop and implement a municipal EV program
 - i. 2019 grant funding via SUS MD (aka Gaithersburg)
 - ii. engage municipal decision-makers
 5. Identify and pursue ways to improve cell-phone reception throughout the commercial district. This effort will support EV use and other energy initiatives.
 6. Educate about efficient home certification
 - a. LEED's home certification, Green Spot, Sustainable MD, building codes changes
 7. Advocate for carbon neutrality, and develop methods to foster its adoption by the Town.
- Seek amendment to the existing Historic District code to amend lead-paint language in favor of removal and abatement, in keeping with environmental best practices.

RIVER AND HABITAT Breakout Team

RIVER AND HABITAT GOAL: The Town's impact on the Chester River will be mitigated and made more positive, with the grand goal of a fishable, swimmable Chester River that attracts both people and wildlife, and supports critical habitat for native species.

ACTION ITEMS:

1. As a first step, do a more thorough visioning process, and check on the current status of the following initiatives:
2. Develop a strategy for initiating, and continuing, partnerships with advocacy organizations in pursuit of intellectual and material resources.
3. Prioritize equitable, fair river access, through the proposed "river walk"
 - a. Determine the status of the path
 - b. Incorporate native plants, pocket parks, and other river-friendly features (if this is not already done)
 - c. Identify shoreline restoration opportunities
4. Marina tasks:
 - a. Design and install a pocket park where existing boat shed is located
 - b. Pursue "Clean Marina" designation/pump out program
 - c. Install stormwater features and native plantings
 - d. Install kayak launch that is more convenient than current Wilmer Park launch
 - e. Introduce biodiesel for boat fuel and talk with Kees deMooy about this.
5. Wilmer Park tasks:
 - a. Investigate the potential for fishing pier and/or temporary docking
 - b. Investigate possible native buffer planting
 - c. Extend the existing living shoreline

RIVER AND HABITAT Breakout Team (*continued*)

RIVER AND HABITAT GOAL: The Town's impact on the Chester River will be mitigated and made more positive, with the grand goal of a fishable, swimmable Chester River that attracts both people and wildlife, and supports critical habitat for native species.

ACTION ITEMS:

6. Green/Complete Streets and Stormwater tasks (*needs further development*):
 - a. Engage with the existing Urban forest Management Plan, presented to the Committee by current members in December 2018.
 - b. Increase downtown tree canopy
 - c. Increase access for bicycles; investigate bike-share options, and partner with the Energy team of the Environmental Committee on green transportation options.
 - d. Seek grants and other philanthropic funding to pursue green-streets projects and stormwater remediation.
 - e. Support Shore Rivers and Town efforts to perform stormwater planning, outreach, and retrofitting.

WASTE STREAM MANAGEMENT Breakout Team

WASTE STREAM GOAL: Develop a develop a viable and efficient approach for improving waste management, recycling, and composting in Chestertown.

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Continue working with the Town Manager, Bill Ingersol, to discuss waste management/recycling challenges and potential solutions.
 - a. Seek to reduce trash waste collection to one day each week.
 - b. Seek to reduce yard waste collection to one day each week.
2. Identify best practices in “equal opportunity” placement of trash, recycling, and compost bins, with appropriate labels.
 - a. Introduce this concept to the Town Council and determine the level of support.
 - b. If the chance arises, work to fund implementation, choose locations, and initiate service.