

## Howard County Solar Task Force Meeting – 3/17/2020

### Minutes and Action Items

#### Attendees

Members: Amber Butler, Amy Gowan; Cathy Hudson; Corey Ramsden; Daniel Jacobs; Franny Yuhas; James Zoller; Jamie Brown; Joy Levy; John Dove; Keith Ohlinger; Kelly Hensing; Kevin Lucas; Leah Miller

Guests: Dani Phillips; Josh Smith; Julie Costantino; Lindsey White; Patrick Boddicker; Randi Groat; Ted Mariani

#### Approval of Minutes

- Minutes for 3/3/2020 were approved.

#### Presentations

Josh Smith of KDC Solar presented on agricultural practices under solar, with a focus on sheep grazing and beekeeping.

Lindsey White and Randi Groat of Ernst Pollinator Service/Meadeville Land Service presented on the benefits pollinator habitat under solar.

Both presentations will be made available as pdfs on the Solar Task Force tab of the Environmental Sustainability Board web page at <https://www.howardcountymd.gov/Departments/County-Administration/Community-Sustainability/Environmental-Sustainability>.

#### Discussion and Questions

Howard County Office of Community Sustainability (OCS) is partnering with the Community Ecology Institute's Freetown Farm and Power52 to demonstrate vegetable gardening with raised beds under solar panels. Patrick Boddicker, a Chesapeake Conservation Corps member placed in OCS for the year is managing this effort as his capstone project. The idea is to grow lettuces, bell peppers, and other heat sensitive vegetables and to demonstrate how the micro-climate under the solar panels can extend the growing season into the heat of summer and provide resiliency of agriculture to climate change.

Task Force members discussed "Back to Eden" agriculture and options to scale up the OCS demonstration project by partnering with individuals and organizations interested in growing their own food, which could provide enough labor to make larger-scale crop farming under solar economically feasible.

**Public Hearing**

The Solar Task Force is currently scheduled to take public testimony at a hearing on 4/14/20 from 7:00pm-8:45pm in the Belmont Meeting Room at the Elkridge Branch Library. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, a virtual meeting or other alternative arrangement may be made.