



Residential Advisory Council Meeting (RAC) February 21, 2023 | 5:30 p.m.

Attendance: Jason Mitchell, Yolanda Winkler, Richard Luna, Keita Wells, Blair Adams, Audree Jones-Taylor, Shamija Jackson, Marco Merrick, Angela Cole, Carol Thomas, Dantwan Broady, Howard Hughes, John Czczulin, Crystal Parker, Rosalind Griffin and Vincent Ustach

Transcribers: Carmellita Green and Jamilah Johnson

I. DPW “Did You Know” Updates/Changes - Dr. Jason Mitchell, Director

- Introduced Ms. Blair Adams, Director of Communication
Director Adams started her career with DPW a month ago, transitioning from the Fire Department to become the Director of Communications. She is excited about the opportunity of telling the positive stories of DPW and its dedicated staff daily.
- BMORE LOVE (Volunteer Network)
Currently, there are a total of 8,265 registered volunteers for the BMORE LOVE Volunteer Network. Twenty-one events have been successfully scheduled around the City. Our top three zip codes are 21215, 21217, and 21223. We have 26 schools registered for the Eco Warriors, a new environmental conscious K-12 competition for children and schools.

The topic that garnered the most interest is cleaning and greening initiatives and gardening. Training on composting and gardening is highly requested by the communities. The least interesting topic is stormwater projects. However, everybody that volunteers can get stormwater fee credits.

- Electronic Water Billing Incentive
We have almost about 2,000 people registered for the Paperless Billing Program that signed up to get electronic water bills. That equates to 1% of Baltimore City’s customers. As an incentive to get people motivated, we will add a 5% credit towards customer’s next bill who signs up. It saves us \$0.64 a month to have customers electronically pay water bill, which helps lower our costs.
- Baltimore County Recent Boiled Water Advisory
When DPW lose pressure in any of its water systems, we are required to issue a BWA (Boiled Water Advisory) as a precautionary measure. This simply means residents in the impacted area of the BWA may be required to boil water before internal use until the BWA is lifted. DPW dedicated workers managed the Spark Community matter in less than two (2) days.

II. Let's Hear from You – RAC Members

This portion of the meeting is dedicated to hearing and possibly implementing creative ideas/suggestions discussed.

- Topics of Interest

Angela Cole: Good evening everyone, I think I mentioned in the previous meeting about Clean Corps. Is there a way we could find out what organizations who are running Clean Corps groups and if individuals want to engage in volunteer work or obtain a position, how could RAC access that information?

Yolanda Winkler: The Clean Corps groups are being coordinated by the Office of Planning with Solid Waste assistance. They have an entire section about Clean Corps on their webpage that lists the communities and individuals that are involved. There was also press release about Clean Corps that was shared with each of you.

Howard Hughes: I would like to know more information about DPW's involvement with gardening and composting. Specifically, I would like to know the proper way to compost and the materials needed. I have a regular garden and a compost garden; maintenance tips would be useful.

Yolanda Winkler: At Farmers Market events, they have the capability to do composting and give out some free composting containers and information. These events will start back up shortly. We also have our Growth Center, I'll make sure Carmellita shares the schedule with you. We are going to be in district 6 on May 6th from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the Liberty Grace Church of God. We are also going to be at the Pimlico Public Safety Training Center on April 16th from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. We will share that information as it relates to each of you and offers of other services that DPW may have around cleaning and greening.

Howard Hughes: Are the clean and green grants made through DPW or Baltimore Green Space?

Yolanda Winkler: I would say our initiative is funded through the Volunteer Network in terms of clean and green. We also work with the Mayor's initiative for his spring cleanups. Mayor also has clean and green initiatives for those areas that are very challenging including a clean task force managed by City Deputy Administrator Alan Robinson.

Keita Wells: Mr. Hughes, if you look on the Volunteer Network website, we're going to begin putting resources on there for grants and grant information for cleaning and greening.

Rosalind Griffin: I am interested in learning how DPW liaisons make themselves visible, particularly in the northwestern area/districts. There is prominent illegal dumping in some of these spaces.

Yolanda Winkler: I'll start off by saying I recently attended a forum held at Poly/Western High School in Northwest Baltimore and addressed some of the concerns that were raised particularly about DPW and our responsibilities. The five (5) largest service agencies all have liaisons. That's the Mayor's Office, Housing, Rec and Parks, Department of Transportation, and DPW. We have six (6) liaisons. The others may have three or four, with the exception of the Mayor's office. Each of my liaison are assigned to 2 Council Districts where they function as the eyes and ears on the street. They are proactive in terms of areas of need and work in the field twice a week. They are required survey the Districts of responsibility and report any service needs, noting all the concerns. All findings are documented in a field report which they submit to me weekly. On my behalf, Carmellita will resend DPW's liaison assignment list to you.

Rosalind Griffin: There were several areas of concern including Fallstaff and Northwest High School where dumping recently occurred.

Yolanda Winkler: We will coordinate some canvassing activity and notify the residence. I will send the liaison of that District to take pictures and document the exact conflicts. After this is completed, I will work on escalating the issues. However, I would like to inform the members that the investigation of service requests is the responsibility of Code Enforcement, which is under Housing. DPW will clean the lot, but we clean it up only after Code Enforcement has done their investigation to see if there are any identifiers of the illegal dumping that we can attach to an individual or a business.

Crystal Parker: I was wondering how DPW plans to be more active with tracking composting, clean energy, and zero waste. In general, will we have more meetings on how we can aid the City in spreading the word? How do we aid in letting representatives know that clean energy is becoming a more favorable approach?

Yolanda Winkler: Yes, but if you have detailed suggestions on how we can better this process, Director Mitchell and I would love to hear them. If agreed upon, we will push the information to some elected officials as may be required in this case. The second question is an area of discussion I would like my liaisons to participate in, let's further discuss this after we coordinate separately.

Richard Luna: Thank you, Yolanda. One of the items you mentioned was our planning efforts and since the Bureau of Solid Waste is in here, I just wanted to put a plug in for the Solid Waste Management Plan. They're actually having their first virtual public meeting tomorrow night, you all are encouraged to attend.

Marco Merrick: Good evening, everybody. And, kudos again to the hard work that everybody is doing. Yolanda, you mentioned something that I just want to reiterate and expound upon that you and crystal touched based upon. For those who don't know, I'm actually the Chief of Equity and Environmental Justice for DPW. We are very thrilled about this meeting as we do the equity work and we look at environmental justice and injustices in DPW. We thank you all for the time and effort that you enable in this work that we do collaboratively and we also understand that there are those who confuse the

responsibilities of DPW. We are very proactive to be clear about the services we offer. However, feel free to contact us if you do not know, and we can point you in the right direction. Please understand that all of our communities that comprise Baltimore, are not a monolith. We work with individuals with all kinds of backgrounds and all kinds of lived experiences that inform many of our decisions.

Blair Adams: I thank you, Marco and Yolanda, please excuse my interjection. I think it was Crystal Parker who was talking about recycling. If I am correct, then, I'm directing this answer toward you. Recycling and getting information out to our communities is something that is incredibly important to DPW. We want to make sure that we improve our recycling efforts through effective communication. More importantly, we are working to inform our community members and our key constituents about new rollouts, programs, and initiatives, so that you all are kept informed.

And, what we are doing with each of you through RAC presents an opportunity for us to meet with you, meet your community needs, and ask how does that look to you as a community member?

And, also keep you informed about alternative recycling dates while encouraging some active participation from everyone involved.

Audree Jones-Taylor: That is exactly what I was hoping that Blair was going to say because I know they are working on some great initiatives. She's listening, she's on point, so I no longer need to speak. Thank you.

III. How Can We Better Connect – RAC Members

Yolanda Winkler: Several communities want to know who their representative is in RAC. They want your information to connect with you in terms of some concerns because they recognize that RAC has a voice near and dear to Director Mitchell. I want to know how you all feel about that and whether or not the board is comfortable being a voice to the community as it relates to some issues regarding cultural differences and the lack of understanding as to how to dispose of trash correctly. We are working with the Patterson Park community who has this specific need. I'm not aware of any other concerns they may have, but they were interested in connecting with you. How do you feel about that? Do you think it will be too overwhelming? We still have our liaisons. We still have the various individuals in the different bureaus who are very responsive to the community, but we want to know is that something where you would be comfortable lending your voice?

Vinnie Ustach: Can we have an email specifically for RAC members? It would make me more comfortable if I did not provide my personal information.

Yolanda Winkler: That is a good idea, I will look into it.

Crystal Parker: Can we provide a consistent message that goes out to the associations and residents who are curious about our purpose?

Yolanda Winkler: We can create an FAQ sheet that includes different subject matters and how we may respond if you are okay with that solution.

IV. Other Concerns/Comments/Questions - RAC Members

Jessica Morgan: I just wanted to ask, who is the representative for District 11, because there are businesses, for example, the Courtyard Marriott, who wants to participate in the Mayor's Clean-Up. I'd like to connect them directly with the RAC contact from District 11.

Yolanda Winkler: The contact for that District is John Czeczulin, but if you look at DPW's website, it is complete and current with meeting minutes, the agenda, and information about the Residential Advisory Council. We intend to keep it as current as possible so that you can go in there and access information about every meeting. We do take really good notes and record them, I read through those notes before posting to avoid any grammatical errors or misrepresentation of statements.

Jessica Morgan: I have one more question to ask. You suggested referring us to the communities and people who ask for our information. How do you explain the difference between a liaison and a RAC member?

Yolanda Winkler: One of the reasons that the Director wanted to have a Residential Advisory Council was because he recognized that you may be in contact with individuals who may not show up in any database anywhere. In terms of us being consistent and equitable in our practices, we need to create ways that we can reach everyone. I don't think the lines are blurred. I think in Baltimore it's all about relationships.

It's all about relationships and you talk to people whom you know. One of the things you all get to do is potentially be that additional voice to those people that we may not touch and we may not know, but are in direct contact with you. I think the idea of creating an e-mail and share file with FAQ's for all the RAC members would be a great solution.

What we can do is equip you to respond to those individuals that we may not see or may not engage with on a regular basis. If you prefer to have a RAC e-mail and communicate through that vehicle, we can oblige or they can speak with us and we can connect with you if necessary and say that "this particular community person is trying to contact you. Here are their concerns."

If there are no other questions or concerns, I'm going to turn it back over to our Director to close out our evening.

Jason Mitchell: I just want to say thank you again for coming out and engaging with us. As we continue to try to stabilize, sustain and move forward DPW operations, you know we need you as this engagement is ideal. Thank you for taking the time out on a Tuesday night to be with us. We look forward to taking that feedback and moving forward. If I don't see you sooner, have a blessed rest of the month and I'll see you in March.