

FREDERICK COUNTY SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION

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www.sustainablefrederickcounty.org

December 17, 2025
Minutes of Meeting

Welcome

Amy Rembold, Chair, opened the meeting at 3:00 pm.

Attendance:

Members

<input type="checkbox"/> Brad Crim	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rebecca Kraft	<input type="checkbox"/> Laurie Jenkins
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Evan Hull	<input type="checkbox"/> Mark Sankey	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Amy Rembold
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Carl Gallegos	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jonathan Haywood	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mitchel Jackson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Robert Robey	

Public Officials/Staff Liaisons:

<input type="checkbox"/> Shannon Moore, Director, Frederick County Division of Energy and Environment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Nilima Rawal, Liaison, Sustainability Commission
<input type="checkbox"/> Rayla Bellis, Climate and Energy Manager, FCDCE	<input type="checkbox"/> Renee Knapp, Frederick County Council Member liaison

Approval of the Minutes for December 17, 2025 meeting: Comr. Gallegos made a motion to approve the minutes. Comr. Kraft seconded the motion. Minutes approved.

DEE Update –

Shannon Moore

- A new Project Manager position (Climate & Energy) is about to be posted, covering EVs, environmental justice, sustainability, and equity.
- The department is deep in budget season and has released a strategic plan update and a recent newsletter highlighting accomplishments. There are 76 projects currently in design or construction, the most ever at once. Despite losing over \$3 million in federal funding, the past year saw significant achievements:

- Community-wide Climate & Energy Action Plan was released (with input from 1,000+ people). 75 acres reforested last year; 575+ acres total through Creek ReLeaf.
- 100+ homes received no-cost energy improvements via Power Saver Retrofits.
- Nearly 2,000 septic pump-outs supported with rebates.
- 105+ tons of litter removed through cleanups.
- 4,256 gallons of fuel saved via EV fleet adoption, and an electric fire truck arriving in February.
- The Green Homes Program won a regional Climate & Energy Leadership Award.
- Upcoming events:
 - Climate & Energy Happy Hour – Feb 5.
 - Mobilize Frederick Climate Summit – Feb 27–28.
 - Power Saver Retrofits and rebate programs are still enrolling, but funding is nearly exhausted (more funding coming).
 - County salt management plan- is about to be released to reduce salt use.
 - Active enrollment for Creek ReLeaf is ending soon but our strong partnerships helped achieve success despite funding challenges.

Comrs. Rembold

- Dr. Sabrina Fu will guest speak at the January meeting; agenda topic to follow.

This month's focus is on educational videos to build shared understanding of data centers' water and electricity use and their impact on the power grid. New speaker suggestions for the coming year are welcome.

- PennFuture produces videos and total under 40 minutes. The purpose is informational, to support future discussions.
 - Water usage - <https://youtu.be/XPb6PYPoal8?si=Euen6pY6xlbGkqyF>
 - Power usage - <https://youtu.be/x7TSavktVal?si=NEPznuwOGXmnaege>
 - Power grid impacts - <https://youtu.be/5JWSZNLfNd4?si=iAGE8EbJgzpjR0R>

Video played at this time.

Comment from Comr. Gallegos: Data centers being built near Adamstown (just over a mile away) are directly impacting the area. There has been an overload of information, much of it repetitive. The Public Commission reduced the size of the data center overlay zone due to public pressure. The State legislation required a comprehensive data center impact study (environmental, energy, and economic), which Governor Moore vetoed, and the legislature then overrode it due to the importance of funding and impact analysis. The future viability of the data center overlay zone is now uncertain pending further study.

Old Business

- Data Center Overlay Update: Comr. Robey –There was a Maryland Department of the Environment meeting in Adamstown focused on noise impacts from nearby data centers, primarily loud, low-frequency generator noise, while largely overlooking constant, high-frequency noise from chillers that operate 24/7 and lack clear impact data. Requests have been made for better information on chiller noise and limits on generator testing hours. Meanwhile, the county capped data center development at 1% of county land (about 4,200 acres), with a working group suggesting 2,500 acres; the campus was reduced to 2,000 acres, though its future size remains uncertain.
Comr. Gallegos: The original site is 2,200 acres; the overlay zone is 1,700 acres.

Comr. Robey: Data Center Data Bill – study from Northern VA about a year ago, called the JLARC Bill (Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission), with a broad range of information on data centers. An additional study was discussed by Comr. Gallegos, but was ignored due to political pressure – part of the county working group.

Shanonn Moore: There are environmental inspectors in the area, but they may not have evidence that they are operating on the brownfield site. Still, they have multiple violations, including drilling and failing to contain groundwater. Issues continue, but are being monitored and tracked through free well testing for those who reported their wells were contaminated. It is essential to verify information, not rely on hearsay. Data centers are required to apply for their own permits. Both Rowan and another person is working on usage. The states pushed back with some permits because there may not be enough water for the supply. Water permitting should ensure no issues. Senator Karen Lewis Young sponsored the data center space-related environmental bill, as did Senator Katie Fry Hester, who is also active and may be a good resource speaker.

Comr. Kraft: Water quality issues – the video did not provide a water discharge number. Issue with cooling; reports showed nitrate contamination. Wanted to know if there are estimates for how much wastewater is being produced, and what the rules are when they are built, related to cooling. Request for a speaker to talk about water quality issues.

Comr. Gallegos: Ask whether someone from Adamstown, Maryland, Dept of the Environment can join the commission and discuss the issues as well.

Comr. Rembold: Will request and confirm whether Sen. Young can serve as a speaker for the commission.

- MPRP: Comr. Rembold – a lot of pushback; landowners allowed hunting on their lands, but had some pushback because the surveyors were feeling unsafe on the properties.

- Green Infrastructure Plan Update: Comr. Rembold - should come out soon and was released to the council. Will circle back with the exact date.
- Student Recognition: Comr. Rembold – meeting was conducted with the subcommittee with Comr. Hull. We will reach out to various Frederick County public schools to coordinate with their science curriculum staff to identify a way for students to present during our meeting. It's in the beginning stage.

Bee City Subcommittee: Comr. Rembold – Collective meeting with City and County, with many members, including pollinators and representatives, as required. Currently in the early stages, progressing very well. The county is ensuring it is passed by the lawyers for legal compliance. Comr. Rembold will look into IPM for the state training.

Shannon Moore – Rayla has been working on that and will need to identify who will deliver the announcement and the proclamation for the county. With the IPM, the Parks have their pest management plan and will coordinate to provide IPM training for master gardeners and others with similar expertise, as required and requested, and will share it so everyone, especially with the Bee City team, can learn from it.

Nilima – The next Bee City meeting is on February 11, 2026. It is not confirmed yet but has been agreed upon.

Commissioners Relevant Interests – All

- Comr. Gallegos: Data centers and MDE to present insights to the commission.
- Comr. Robey: Individuals directly impacted by the MPRP regarding the line being blocked, and what is the status?

No Closed session

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

The Commission meets the third Wednesday of each month at 3:00 pm. The next meeting scheduled will be on January 21st, 2026 online.

Comr. Robey made a motion to approve. Comr. Jenkins seconded the motion.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.