

askHRgreen.org | Water Awareness Committee Meeting Summary Thursday, July 23, 2020

Pursuant to the declared state of emergency in the Commonwealth of Virginia in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and to protect the public health and safety of the Committee members, staff, and the general public, the askHRgreen.org Water Awareness Committee meeting was held electronically via Zoom. These electronic meetings are required to complete essential business on behalf of the region. A recording of the meeting is available on the website.

Attendees:

Rachael Gaul, NO
Cyndi Masterstaff, NN
Jerry Hoddinott, CH
Tamara Clore, SU

Lacie Weaver, HRSD
Katie Cullipher, HRPDC
Rebekah Eastep, HRPDC

1. Meeting Summary

The May meeting summary was accepted without changes.

Action: Summary approved.

2. askHRgreen.org Event Schedule

The current listing of outreach events is as follows:

9/12	Go Green Market	Yorktown
9/17-9/20	Isle of Wight County Fair	Windsor
10/3	Virginia Beach Master Gardeners Fall Gardening Festival*	Virginia Beach
10/3	Arlo's Shed Radio Promotion	Chesapeake
10/8-10/14	Suffolk Peanut Festival	Suffolk
10/10	Lynnhaven River Now Fall Festival*	Virginia Beach
10/16-10/18	Poquoson Seafood Festival	Poquoson
11/10	Sensible Seafood Fest - Rescheduled	Virginia Beach
3/27-3/28	2021 Daffodil Festival	Gloucester
6/19	RiverFest	

Impact of COVID-19 on fall event season still uncertain. HRPDC staff will stock the trailer with supplies like hand sanitizer and disinfectant cleaner. Safety precautions will be taken and HRPDC staff asked Committee members to share any safety plans/guidelines adopted locally.

Newport News Waterworks will take over hosting the askHRgreen trailer for FY21-FY22. HRPDC staff will be servicing locks before the next event.

Action: Committee members should share any public event guidelines developed locally.

3. FY21 Media Campaigns & Promotions

HRPDC staff are working with RCS to develop a master media plan for FY21. Committee campaigns are primarily tied to national outreach campaigns with fixed dates:

- Imagine a Day Without Water paid media campaign (October – Imagine a Day Without Water)
- Fixing Leaks paid media campaign (March – Fix a Leak Week)

- Value of Water paid media campaign (May – Drinking Water Week)
- askHRgreen social media branding campaign – ongoing

HRPDC staff has asked RCS to consider ways to extend campaigns beyond one to two-week paid media campaigns. For example, the Hampton Roads Show has a pet segment on Thursdays that would pair well with the Stormwater Education’s scoop the poop campaign.

Action: HRPDC staff will coordinate with Red Chalk Studios to schedule FY21 media plan.

4. **Imagine a Day Without Water**

The Committee discussed partnering again in October with local coffee shops and breweries on the Imagine a Day Without Water promotion. Given COVID-19 limitations, HRPDC staff recommended producing a simple video with partners talking about the importance of water to their business. The Committee would need to purchase supplies to support this campaign.

The Committee no longer supports the concept of partnering with coffee shops and breweries due to limited staff time, prohibition on public gatherings, uncertainty of possible business closures, and other COVID-19 impacts.

Norfolk mentioned tying this year’s campaign into appreciation for essential workers and the important role water plays in hand washing and sanitation during the pandemic. The focus could also be a morale booster for water and wastewater employees. HRPDC staff recommended a more generic “thank you” message that could be hosted on locality websites, social media, etc. throughout the year. The video could incorporate a photo slideshow and short video clips with a scripted voice over. Stock video could be used to tie in other important roles of water during the pandemic (medical personnel, fire protection, business (coffee/beer), etc.). Could request a sound bite from AWWA leadership about water/wastewater employees as essential staff.

Action: The Committee should collect images and videos for use in an appreciation campaign for Imagine a Day Without Water. HRPDC staff will work with RCS on further developing the strategic approach.

5. **Printing & Promotional Items**

HRPDC staff have received all promotional items ordered by the Committee. Committee members should notify HRPDC staff if other supplies are needed.

Norfolk mentioned seed paper postcards which could be fun alternative for any in-person outreach needed this year.

Action: None.

6. **Roundtable**

- Chesapeake - outreach about fund availability to assist with water bills through CARES Act funds, staffing issues caused by COVID-19 positive employees and quarantine, working at reduced staffing levels has been a challenge, offering assistance for building flushing as establishments reopen
- Norfolk - inquired about vendors and processes for digital form conversion and collection of digital signatures, encrypted security, mass file upload, etc. Decreasing water usage due to business closures, staff continue to work from home and limited staff availability

- Newport News - low flow business outreach through door hangers with system flushing info to about 300 businesses, thankful for resources developed by the Committee in response to building reopening, awaiting answer on a free rain barrel for Arlo promotion
- HRSD - staff working from home as possible, working on virtual tour of SWIFT to serve as a virtual field trip for schools this fall.

Action: None.

7. Staff Reports

- Budget – The current FY21 budget was provided for review.
- Digital Marketing Report – HRPDC staff provided the Digital Marketing Report for June. Website activity was down but social media engagement continued to be strong. The hydro flask giveaway had the most engagement during June. The Committee would like to do another hydro flask giveaway for Imagine a Day Without Water due to the popularity and success of these promotions.

Action: Add hydro flask giveaway to Imagine a Day Without Water plans.

Next Meeting: The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, August 27, 2020.