

Climate Action Coffee Sept. 29, 2021 Message to Takoma Park City Council

Greetings Council Members. My name is Judy Rosenthal from Ward 2 and I am representing Climate Action Coffee, which is part of Takoma Park Mobilization and TALLE, Takoma Alliance for Local Living Economy.

We are planning to appear regularly at these sessions to share the Good, the Bad and the Actionable in our community regarding our Climate Emergency as Randy Gibson explained last week.

Climate Action Coffee (CAC) focuses on local and regional climate action and education. We meet weekly on zoom, every Wednesday morning 8- 9:30. Participants include residents throughout the region, but we are mostly residents from all Takoma Park wards except Ward 6. We encourage Ward 6 residents in particular to join us. All city residents interested in climate action are invited to Climate Action Coffee Wednesday mornings on Zoom at: <http://tpmobilization.org/talle>

Now for tonight's climate testimonial: The Good, the Bad and the Actionable.

First, the Good. Last week Anna Mische John, the newly appointed Vegetation Maintenance Supervisor, joined us for a conversation on how we might work together on projects in the city. We share several viewpoints on moving forward, including native plant advocacy, appreciation of our parks' maintenance challenges and agreement on the need to support resident engagement.

Next, the Bad: Regarding Dorothy's Woods, we received word that there is still no definitive answer on how or when we might proceed with our proposal of developing a demonstration garden at Dorothy's Woods. The proposal is to restore a portion of habitat there and provide a model to residents of a sustainable and resilient environment. The City attorney went so far as to recommend that all activities, even litter removal, require pre-approval and supervision.

And the Actionable: 2 things – as I mentioned, 1) we would love to have representation from Ward 6 as our efforts and projects should reflect the whole city so we welcome anyone wanting to join us

2) Our Pollinator group has worked on educating and encouraging the planting of more native species to expand the "green corridor" which will lessen the distance pollinators need to travel to seek nourishing resources. And as we encourage more pollinators to our green spaces, we also need to think about their winter needs. To that end, with fall approaching and leaves soon to come down, we ask the city to encourage residents to **leave the leaves** to provide the protection and habitat needed through winter. The Xerces Society says "...the vast majority of butterflies and moths overwinter in the landscape as an egg, caterpillar, chrysalis, or adult.... these butterflies use leaf litter for winter cover. For example, the Great Spangled Fritillary and the Woolly Bear Caterpillars tuck themselves into a pile of leaves for protection from cold weather and predators. Red-banded Hairstreaks lay their eggs on fallen oak leaves, which become the first food of the caterpillars when they emerge. Luna Moths and Swallowtail Butterflies disguise their cocoons and chrysalises as dried leaves, blending in with the "real" leaves... Bumble bees rely on leaf litter for protection as do spiders, snails, worms, beetles, millipedes, mites, and more—that support the chipmunks, turtles, birds, and amphibians that

rely on these insects for food....Leaves also provide valuable organic matter and build up healthy soil.” After working so hard to attract pollinators to our yards, why remove leaves that protect and provide for them in winter?

We encourage the city to work on educating residents, local landscapers, and city staff of the value of leaving the leaves, and including this information in the Insider and in the City Newsletter for example.

Thank you for your time and willingness to address the Climate Emergency.

Climate Action Coffee will be back next week to share more.

Judy Rosenthal on Behalf of Climate Action Coffee

Notes:

<https://xerces.org/blog/leave-the-leaves>

<https://xerces.org/blog/moving-beyond-flowers-natural-nesting-habitat-for-bees-and-other-insects>

<https://www.nwf.org/Latest-News/Press-Releases/2019/09-25-19-Leave-the-Leaves>