

**FAIRFAX COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ADVISORY COUNCIL
MINUTES**

DATE: Wednesday, April 11, 2012
TIME: 7:00 P.M.
PLACE: Room 111, Fairfax City Hall, 10455 Armstrong Street, Fairfax, VA

MEMBERS PRESENT

Stella Koch (Chairman, At-Large)	Patricia Greenberg (Hunter Mill)
Larry Zaragoza (Vice Chairman, Mt. Vernon)	George Lamb (At-Large)
Frank Divita (Braddock)	Robert McLaren (At-Large)
Angela Greenberg (Springfield)	Kat Pfleeger (Student Member)
	Rich Weisman (Sully)

Frank Crandall (Dranesville) participated through a telephone connection.

MEMBERS ABSENT

Linda Burchfiel (At-Large)	Johna Gagnon (Lee)
Marie Flanigan (Providence)	Glen White (Mason)

STAFF

Noel Kaplan

**MEMBERS PRESENT FROM THE FAIRFAX CITY ENVIRONMENTAL
SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE AND CITY STAFF**

Judy Fraser (Chairman)	Stephanie Eggermann
Matthew Cooper	Thomas Kennedy
Susan Crate	Bruce Knight
Adrian Fremont (staff liaison)	Kelly O'Brien (Fairfax City Planning Dept. staff)

GUESTS

[There was one additional unidentified attendee.]

Meeting commences at 7pm

Judy Fraser - Chair gave welcome and stated that the Environmental Sustainability Committee is relatively new in the City of Fairfax.

Members of both committees gave introductions.

Fraser stated that the first topic is the city and county coordination issues. She asked if this has come up in the past.

Zaragoza –responded saying this is a logical route to take. He mentioned the benefit of exchanging information especially for the Annual Report.

Divita asked what the mission is for the Fairfax City group.

Fraser explained that they are appointed by the City Council to advise them on environmental issues. They are looking for things for which they can provide assistance to the Council.

McLaren brought up watersheds as a topic that does not have boundaries.

Bruce Knight asked what the relationship was between EQAC and the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District.

Lamb –explained that EQAC is more an information gathering entity where different people come and speak to inform the committee. He noted that the Conservation District, which has staff, is more of a hands-on group, adding that the District provides information to EQAC for its Annual Report on the Environment.

Bruce Knight noted that the entity with the largest environmental footprint in Fairfax City is the Fairfax County government; he stressed a need for coordination with the county on environmental strategies in the city. EQAC members responded by noting the county's steps to reduce its environmental impact and the changes that have been made to reduce emissions. With respect to county impacts on the city, Noel Kaplan suggested direct coordination with the managers of county facilities within the city's boundaries.

Kaplan asked whether the city is working towards emissions reductions. Explain that the council does not get to geographic specificity. Freemont explained that the city signed the 2050 compact from the COG report. They tie into the George Mason University greenhouse gas emissions inventory and are working with Northern Virginia Regional Commission.

Fraser explained that they are working on a "Fairfax Green" items to propose to the City Council. They felt the Council should have a green buildings policy and have created a list of recommendations. They offer various options instead of having to go through a third party certification process like LEED[®]. This would provide a more focused green building program and provide more feasible criteria to meet for the city.

Kaplan explained the County's Sustainable Development Policy for Capital Projects, which calls for LEED silver certification for most capital projects. He also noted the broader green building policy in the county's Comprehensive Plan. He noted that the policy references the LEED green building rating systems but that equivalent approaches may also be pursued. He indicated that it would be difficult for county to create its own certification process and that such a process would add another layer of bureaucracy. Kaplan explained that the Tysons Corner plan established a LEED Silver (or equivalent) expectation for nonresidential development rather than a LEED certified expectation; he cited the locational advantage of Tysons Corner as a rationale for this expectation. He explained that the county staff is reviewing the green building policy with the Planning Commission Environment Committee.

Discussion continued about LEED. Koch stated that there was a certainty about LEED and Lamb spoke about the extensive discussion about LEED in the Tyson's planning. Kaplan discussed implementation issues, noting that many developers had proffered to the provision of escrowed funds that would be tied to attainment of LEED certification.

Knight asked if the green building policy came about through an EQAC recommendation or if it came about through another process. Kaplan noted that the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services had been applying LEED in its capital projects and that then-Chairman Connolly championed a broader application of the concept through Comprehensive Plan policy.

There was discussion about the Council's involvement in the county budget and comments to the Board about the lack of funding for certain environmental projects. Koch expressed her view that the county government responds most positively when presented with only a small number of "asks" at one time. She cited the example of stream assessments, watershed planning and watershed project funding as an area for which the Board responded favorably over time to several incremental "asks" leading to a greatly improved and comprehensive effort.

Crate brought up the topic of residential buildings being inefficient and Weisman mentioned that Energy Action Fairfax is a program through the county that will focus on communities with less efficient buildings that will work at the neighborhood level to help households increase efficiency. This is just starting in the county.

Cooper reiterated that the biggest environmental footprint in the city is the county building complex in the city, and he noted similarities in regard to large federal land holdings in the county. He asked what communication the county has with the Federal government in regard to sustainability efforts at federal facilities in the region and asked if this could be a model for county participation in the city's sustainability efforts.

Koch responded that the most of the conversation with government is about transportation. Zaragoza responded that the fed government has not responded as much as the county would like. The reason could be the constraint on the budget.

Koch asked that the city let EQAC know if and when there are county entities within the city that are not being sensitive to the city's environmental needs; EQAC can then pursue this with appropriate county staff.

There was discussion about what is going to happen in the county complex in the city. Kaplan asked if there were specific concerns associated with particular county facilities; if so, he suggested coordination with the agency or agencies responsible for that/those facility/ies. He added that county plans call for the relocation of public safety staff from the Massey Building to a new building that is planned for construction in the Government Center area; he noted that the Massey Building would ultimately be torn down but that he was unsure if there had been any discussions regarding what might be located at that site after the demolition.

There was discussion about the city environmental committee proposing a plan for the City Council. They are looking at what has been successful. They want to show what has been successful in the county.

Koch said to contact EQAC members involved in whatever topic they are interested in learning more about.

There was brief conversation about the involvement of committee and council members on other county or city task forces. Fraser - The city planning commission does not have an environmental committee. Koch explained that the Board does ask EQAC members to serve on different county Task Forces. Fraser responded that the city committee does not serve on other city committees or task forces.

Crate asked if EQAC does anything with education and outreach. Kaplan explained that is not the primary role of EQAC but that it is a role that EQAC's Annual Report provides. He noted that the Annual Report is a comprehensive environmental resource and that this document is provided to both county high schools and public libraries. He noted that the report has been cited on occasion in newspaper articles. Koch said that EQAC focuses on policy and those who are responsible for its development and implementation. Zaragoza mentioned that the report is meant to also speak to the general public. Kaplan mentioned that EQAC also holds an annual public hearing, which is usually held in December just after the publication of the Annual Report. He explained that it is an opportunity where people can speak to the council about any environmental issues of interest to them.

Joint meeting adjourned 8:30pm

EQAC business meeting commenced at 8:35pm

Development of EQAC budget testimony

EQAC considered the draft budget testimony that was prepared by Koch and circulated to all members.

Weisman recommended that there should be more of an energy conservation focus in the Environmental Improvement Program projects. Kaplan noted that the EIP projects identified in the FY 2013 budget were not selected through the EIP process that is under development and noted that staff would be coordinating with EQAC regarding the development of the project selection criteria. Koch stated that EQAC should have a conversation about funding of energy projects and requested that this item be discussed at the joint EQAC/EECCC meeting in July. She requested that an agenda item be added to the June meeting to prepare for this conversation.

McLaren referenced the proposed funding for the Invasives Management Program and stressed that this funding was essential to the program's viability.

Weisman noted an action alert he had seen regarding the need for additional funding for the bicycling program.

McLaren made a motion to approve the budget testimony as drafted; Zaragoza and Divita seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Frank Crandall, who was participating in the meeting via a telephone connection and therefore could not vote on the motion, expressed his support for the testimony.

Annual Report on the Environment

Kaplan asked EQAC to identify chapter authors for this year's Annual Report. He circulated a list of authors from the last two reports.

Angela Greenberg announced that she will be resigning from EQAC as of this meeting and that she will not, therefore, be assisting with the Annual Report. She cited competing demands on her time by business and family issues.

There was discussion about recognizing in the report the coordination that has occurred between EQAC and Fairfax City's Environmental Sustainability Committee. Koch agreed to reference this in the Chairman's letter.

Angela Greenberg noted a comment from an ESC member regarding the need to reach out to multicultural groups; she echoed the concern that was raised.

There was a consensus that chapter authorship should remain unchanged from last year. Kaplan noted a need for an author for the Visual Pollution section. McLaren indicated that he did not want to coordinate the preparation of the Scorecard section this year. Divita volunteered to provide this coordination with the understanding that chapter authors would need to complete their respective Scorecard sections.

Approval of minutes from March 14

Lamb moved to approve the minutes as drafted. Zaragoza seconded the motion. All approved except Angela Greenberg, McLaren and Weisman, who abstained.

Preparation for the May 9 and June 13 meetings

There was discussion about the May 9th meeting. Two or three people from the health department will be joining EQAC to discuss asbestos and sewage disposal facilities.

Kaplan asked if EQAC would also be interested in a briefing on the Partnership for a Healthier Fairfax strategic planning effort. There was a consensus supporting such a briefing.

Zaragoza asked if the Health Department staff members are the people to ask about impaired waters and whether or not such waters should be posted with signs warning of impacts of fish consumption and/or contact. McLaren explained that EQAC has brought this up in the past

and nothing happened. Kaplan disagreed with this conclusion and referred to previous staff reviews of this issue. He noted that, if EQAC wishes to discuss this issue further, there would be several agencies interested in participating in that discussion.

Koch stated that a place to start is with waterways that are contaminated with PCBs.

Crandall stated that the collection and testing of samples has been turned over to the Stormwater Planning Division (from the Health Department).

Discussion continued about the contaminated waters and Angela Greenberg suggested looking at past efforts.

After further discussion, EQAC agreed that the issue of impaired waters and posting should not be considered at the May meeting but should instead be discussed at another future EQAC meeting. Specific questions for consideration would include: What are we doing in regard to the identification of and publicity/outreach for contaminated waters? Where does the county stand on the idea of placing signs along contaminated waters? What are we doing in regard to monitoring of these waters? It was agreed that DPWES would be asked to give its recent presentations to the Board of Supervisors regarding the MS4 permit and the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Implementation Plan.

McLaren asked if there had been any recent studies regarding sources of fecal coliform bacteria. It was agreed that this question should be referred to Randy Bartlett.

Kaplan noted that there would be three school-related discussions at the June 13 meeting: FCPS environmental outreach efforts; recycling in schools; and green building efforts for FCPS capital projects. Weisman asked if high school environmental groups would be informed of this meeting. Noel was asked to coordinate with Elaine Tholen (An FCPS Environmental Educator who would be attending the June 13 meeting) on this idea.

Chairman's Items

Koch noted that Mary Wolfe, a past EQAC member, sends her regards.

Koch reminded EQAC that this weekend is the annual Potomac clean up.

Koch noted that she would be providing EQAC's budget testimony on April 12.

Council Member Items

Angela Greenberg stated that there is a public meeting for the I-95 landfill's permit amendment regarding the proposed ash landfill expansion.

Angela Greenberg noted that, in the Solid Waste chapter of the Annual Report, EQAC had identified no issues of note or recommendations; she took issue with this conclusion, stressing her view that there are issues associated with groundwater contamination and monitoring associated with the I-95 Landfill. She cited a county groundwater report that noted contaminant concentrations that continue to exceed background levels and some contaminant levels that are increasing. She focused in particular on monitoring wells and an outfall in Occoquan Regional Park. She noted that, per state regulations, a statistical analysis must be provided by this summer. She expressed her view that EQAC is the only county advisory committee that has the ability to track this issue and implored the council to pay closer attention to this issue. She stressed that, every time there is a proposed permit revision, EQAC should be asking DPWES for the groundwater monitoring report, which will identify where exceedances are. There was discussion about the department's reporting of the ground water testing results and whether they can provide this information at a meeting to EQAC. After further discussion, it was agreed that Angela Greenberg should coordinate with Marie Flanigan about these concerns.

Lamb noted that the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District native plant sale is still open.

Weisman noted that there was a possibility that the "Energy Action Fairfax" residential energy education and outreach program would have its kick-off at the April 28 Arbor Day/Earth Day celebration at the Government Center.

Zaragoza noted that he would miss the July meeting.

Patricia Greenberg mentioned the Northern Virginia Urban Forestry Roundtable on May 31 at Casey Trees in DC.

Koch referenced the tree planting efforts associated with the U.S. Route 15 "Journey Through Hallowed Ground."

Staff Items

Kaplan noted that the Student Member application deadline was coming up and that there was a need for EQAC to appoint a Student Member Search Committee. He noted that Frank Divita and Kat Pfleeger had volunteered to serve. Rich Weisman also volunteered. Kaplan requested a report from the committee at the June 13 EQAC meeting.

Kaplan reported that Kambiz Agazi's surgery went well and that he should be back to work within a week.

Kaplan noted items identified on EQAC's calendar.

Kaplan asked for volunteers for minutes for upcoming meetings.

Kaplan noted that he was approached by a high school student regarding an Environmental Fair to be held on April 19 at Woodson High School. He noted that the fair organizers were looking for environmental groups to attend the fair and discuss their activities; he indicated that EQAC was invited to participate and asked if there were any volunteers.

Meeting adjourned at 9:44pm