

Approved by EQAC, October 13, 2010

**COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
COUNTY OF FAIRFAX
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ADVISORY COUNCIL (EQAC)
MINUTES**

DATE: August 11, 2010

TIME: 7:15-10:15 PM

LOCATION: Conference Rooms 4 and 5, Fairfax County Government Center

MEMBERS PRESENT

Stella Koch (Chairman, At-Large)
George Lamb (Vice Chairman, At-Large)
Linda Burchfiel (At-Large)
Frank Crandall (Dranesville)
Marie Flanigan (Providence)
Ned Foster (Springfield)

Johna Gagnon (Lee)
Robert McLaren (At-Large)
David Ouderkirk (Hunter Mill)
Kevin Sun (Student Member)
Rich Weisman (Sully)
Glen White (Mason)

MEMBERS ABSENT

Frank Divita (Braddock)

Larry Zaragoza (Mount Vernon)

STAFF SUPPORT

Noel Kaplan

GUESTS

Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority
Mike Jeck; Neal Phillips; Sandy Hoch

Federal Aviation Administration, Washington Airports District Office
Chad Carper; Chris Osburn

Fairfax County Department of Transportation
Charlie Strunk; Chris Wells

Fairfax County Airports Advisory Committee

Carol Hawn
Robert Ackerman
Penny Chaboudy
Robert Devery

Barbara Kreykenbohm
George Page
Robert Peter

The meeting convened at 7:15 P.M.

Runway operations at Washington Dulles International Airport: Discussion with the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority (and Federal Aviation Administration)

Matters discussed:

- Presentation from Mike Jeck, Noise Abatement Office, Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority, on MWAA activities and, in particular, noise activities surrounding Washington Dulles airport.
- Mr. Jeck discussed the various runways in use at Dulles Airport and the ways they are operated relative to existing wind patterns (e.g., south flow; north flow), including implications to the Chantilly area, central Fairfax, and eastern Loudoun County (e.g., Ashburn).
- Noel Kaplan (county staff) asked how the actual noise levels compared with those levels included in the projections from the Environmental Impact Statement for the new runways. MWAA staff replied that they do not have the data needed to perform this assessment, and referred interested users to the noise monitoring data on their web site (under Airscene), at <http://mwaa.com/dulles/2542.htm>. Chris Osburn (Federal Aviation Administration) noted that, as a result of economic conditions, the number of operations at the airport are lower than what had been expected (and therefore lower than what had been projected/modeled in the EIS).
- Linda Burchfiel (EQAC – At-Large) asked about who controls the landing patterns at Dulles, and MWAA staff replied that the pilots control the landings.
- Frank Crandall (EQAC - Dranesville) asked about the use of data from the Potomac TRACON (Terminal Radar Approach Control) facility. MWAA staff referenced its new aircraft tracking system with online flight track and noise data (see above).
- Bob McLaren (EQAC – At-Large) suggested the use of historical data for trend analyses.
- MWAA staff reported that there have been two properties near Dulles Airport that have been mitigated for noise issues, with both properties located in Loudoun County.
- Linda Burchfiel asked about Fairfax County zoning policies relative to airport noise. Noel Kaplan provided an overview of the county's zoning requirements and Comprehensive Plan policies based on noise contours associated with projected airport operations. He also noted land use compatibility strategies including a large buffer provided by MWAA as well as nonresidential zoning near the airport.
- MWAA staff reported that Dulles Airport operational levels are down, due to the economic recession, and their 2025 airport use projection may not come to fruition until 2040. They said that 15 years ago they identified a 60 decibel contour associated with long-range operational projections (based on five runways) and there were no affected residential lots in Fairfax County except for a small number of larger lots south of the airport.
- MWAA staff described the changes in noise levels from planes over the past several decades, starting with the older, Stage 1, planes, and progressing through

Stage 2 (1990-2000), and now onto Stages 3 and 4, which are much quieter. They said that each 10 dB reduction provides a 50% reduction in noise. MWAA staff reported that they have 40 noise monitors in its system (for both of its airports), including one at the lady's tee at a golf course near the Pleasant Valley neighborhood. They described the temporary closing of an active runway, and projected that the remaining future runway (the 5th runway) would be online by 2018.

- MWAA staff described the number of complaints they get about noise from local residents. They said that they currently receive about 22 complaints per month for Dulles, for 300,000 – 400,000 flights per year, when all runways are operating. This is a reduction from historical records, when they used to receive 3,000 complaints per year, based on when they had only 150,000 flights per year. Now that a runway is closed, there have been approximately 500 complaints per year.
- Stella Koch (Chairman – EQAC, At-Large) asked if there are any disclosures given to home buyers near the airport. MWAA staff reported that there is notification for renters in a development south of the airport (Chantilly Crossing). Noel Kaplan noted that such disclosures are not required by Fairfax County zoning but that, per Comprehensive Plan policy, commitments to disclosure are negotiated for zoning applications near the airport.

Briefings from the Fairfax County Department of Transportation on the Bicycle and Pedestrian Programs

Bicycling

Matters discussed:

- Presentation from Charlie Strunk, Bicycle Coordinator, on the Fairfax County Bicycle Program. Mr. Strunk noted that it had been quite some time (about 15-18 years) since EQAC was last briefed on the county bicycle program.
- Mr. Strunk gave an overview of the bicycle program, noting that it was approved by the BOS in December 2005 and launched in September 2006, with a goal to provide a comprehensive program to make Fairfax County bicycle friendly and bicycle safe.
- There are four priority elements in the bicycle program – (1) establish a staff position with substantial responsibilities devoted to bicycle facility planning, implementation, and coordination; (2) create a county bicycle route map; (3) identify roadways that may accommodate on-road bike lanes with little or no additional construction; and (4) create a pilot program in a specific area of the county for the establishment of an inter-connected bicycle network.
- The bicycle program noted the following major accomplishments – January 2007 initiated the county's bicycle locker rental program; October 2007 all Fairfax Connector buses were equipped with bicycle racks; May 2008 released the first Fairfax County bicycle route map (second, revised printing in December 2008);

- and, as part of the on-road bike lane initiative, 8.3 miles of roadway have been retrofitted with on-road bike facilities. Future efforts to include 150 new racks to be installed county-wide; 48 additional bicycle lockers coming online; and technical support to be provided to the development community.
- Specific projects were described for Wolfrap Road Bridge, Pohick Stream Valley “VRE 2 VRE”, and the “Bobann Bikeway” to connect Centreville to the Stringfellow Road Park and Ride.
 - Mr. Strunk described the types of safety, education, and outreach efforts they had provided based on two FCDOT/VDH helmet grants, covering over 40 outreach events and development of standards. He described a Regional TIGER II Grant for bicycle sharing, covering 100 bicycles and 16 stations, including a Reston Transit Center Bike station.
 - Rich Weisman (EQAC – Sully) asked about working with developers to improve bicycling infrastructure in the county. Mr. Strunk said that DOT is focused on working with developers to provide rights-of-way (100 – 150 ft) for future bicycle lanes and enhanced bicycle parking, but not for actual development of bicycle lanes.
 - Linda Burchfiel asked about incorporation of bicycling opportunities to the Tysons area. Mr. Strunk described a route going from Gallows Road into Tysons.
 - Mr. Strunk described how it is legal in Fairfax County to ride your bicycle on a sidewalk. The FCDOT likes to see trails paved and used for transportation, and they are experimenting with a resin as an alternative to use of stone dust.
 - In response to a question from Mr. Weisman about improving bicycle safety in a car-heavy area, Mr. Strunk described how some states have passed a law giving cyclists a 3-foot safety zone, however he noted that a similar law did not pass in Virginia. Mr. Strunk noted that he wants to get Fairfax County recognized as a “bicycle friendly community;” however it currently does not meet requirements for education and enforcement.
 - Mr. Strunk noted that the funding for the bicycle program has been greatly reduced in the past year, now relying on a commercial/industrial tax that provides approximately \$200,000 per year to be used for improvements where it used to be \$5,000,000 per year. He said that both AAA (American Automobile Association) and the Fairfax County Police Department have decided to no longer support a bicycle safety program.

Pedestrian

- Presentation from Chris Wells, Pedestrian Coordinator, on the Fairfax County Pedestrian Program.
- Mr. Wells said this program was started in 2002 in response to a spike in pedestrian fatalities in the county. In 2006, the BOS endorsed a goal to invest \$60 million over 10 years in pedestrian infrastructure improvements and they are on track to meet that goal, having designated \$58 million through 2012 to construct over 200 pedestrian improvement projects in high-priority areas of Fairfax County.

- He provided the following historical information: there are 10-20 pedestrian fatalities per year in the county, with an additional 300 injuries per year; and 70-100 bicycle crashes reported to the police per year. He said that Richmond Highway was the worst roadway and Seven Corners the worst area for pedestrian issues.
- He noted that they are working on cross-walks and intersections, with each project taking about 2 years to complete. He said that, for the HOT lanes, every bridge crossing will have bicycling and pedestrian considerations. He described priority lighting projects, at \$5,000 per light, being performed on a demonstration basis but not for whole neighborhoods.
- Mr. Wells described the “3-E’s” for the bicycling and pedestrian programs – engineering, education, and enforcement. One improvement that he said was particularly helpful was the use of countdown signals, which had 80% of the pedestrians understanding, as opposed to 35% who understood the older “walk/don’t walk” signals.
- Mr. Wells discussed some of his education efforts, including “street smart” and “click it or ticket”, but noted the implications of the budget cutbacks in the county. He said the outreach budget for the pedestrian program was cut last year, and for the bicycle program cut this year.
- Mr. Wells noted that there is a \$1-2 billion need to build out the bicycle and pedestrian programs in the county to meet the established plan, with obtaining right-of-ways being a large part of that cost.
- Due to the budget reductions, they are now limited in their maintenance to only the most serious items.
- Marie Flanigan (EQAC - Providence) discussed the plans to make the Merrifield area safer for pedestrians, noting the large size of the intersections there.
- Stella Koch commented about the large size of the sidewalks planned for the Tysons area (up to 25 feet in width).
- Kevin Sun (EQAC – Student) asked about who pays for pedestrian facilities by schools. Mr. Wells said that if it is on-campus, it is paid for by the FCPS; if off-campus, then it is paid for by DOT.

EQAC Recommendations for the 2011 Legislative Session

- Ned Foster (EQAC - Springfield) discussed two legislative initiatives to be provided to the BOS, both concerning sign enforcement in highway rights-of-way.
- The first initiative concerns strengthening Section 33.1-373 by strengthening penalties and allowing local communities to share in fine revenue. Ned motioned for this and it was seconded by Linda Burchfiel. It passed unanimously.
- The second initiative concerns deletion of a provision in Section 33.1-375.1 that establishes specific restrictions on Fairfax County’s ability to assume sign enforcement authority from the state. The effect of this deletion would be to provide Fairfax County with the same authorities as other localities concerning

sign enforcement in highway rights-of-way. David Ouderkirk (EQAC – Hunter Mill) asked if additional background should be provided on why Fairfax was viewed differently than other localities. Ned did not have this background, and Noel Kaplan reminded EQAC that it would need to take action at this meeting if the proposal was to be considered for the 2011 legislative session. There was a general consensus recognizing that, while better exposition would be desirable, this would not be possible at this time and that it would be better to move forward with what has been drafted than to wait until next year. A motion supporting the proposal as presented was made by Marie Flanigan and it was seconded by Bob McLaren. It passed unanimously.

- EQAC agreed to provide Ned and Noel with editorial discretion as may be needed during the process through which these proposals will be considered by the County Executive's office.

EQAC Comments Regarding the Virginia Department of Transportation's 527 Review Process

- Stella Koch reviewed her efforts to draft a letter to the BOS concerning EQAC's perspectives on the VDOT 527 review process (see draft dated August 11).
- A motion to accept the letter was made by Bob McLaren and seconded by Marie Flanigan. It passed unanimously.

Consideration of the Environmental Excellence Awards Nominations (Continued from July)

- There was a follow-up discussion about a nomination for an award in the "Organization" category, recognizing that the organization in question may be worthy of an award even though the nomination that was submitted may not have reflected this. George Lamb (EQAC – Vice Chairman, At-Large) made a motion to provide the organization in question with an award; however there was no second and the motion failed. Chairman Koch asked for a sense of the Council as to whether to accept a recommendation from EQAC's Environmental Excellence Awards Committee that no award be provided in this category. Eight EQAC members (Linda, Frank, Ned, Bob, David, Kevin, Rich, and Johna) supported this recommendation, George opposed it, and three members abstained (Stella, Marie, and Glen).

Discussion of Publicity for the Environmental Excellence Awards Process

- This topic was tabled for discussion at a later date.

Discussion of EQAC participation on the Fairfax Joint Local Emergency Planning Committee

- Marie Flanigan volunteered to serve as the EQAC representative to FJLEPC.

Approval of the minutes of the July 14, 2010 EQAC meeting

- The minutes were approved by a unanimous vote (motion from Johna, second by Ned, abstentions by Bob, Marie, and Glen).

2010 Annual Report on the Environment: Status Update

- Noel noted that about half of the requested information has been provided to date. He requested that first drafts of chapters, with gaps as applicable, be provided to him by the end of August.

Chairman's Items

- Stella met with Dave Molchany about Fairfax County efforts on energy and reported a much broader scope than described last month by Kambiz. David Ouderkirk and Linda Burchfiel are both serving on committees related to the energy efforts.

Council Member Items

- Frank Crandall noted his positive feedback on the new wildlife biologist and that work on lighting issues were moving along. It was reported that Frank received the Elly Doyle award this year from the FCPA. He is also now serving on the county's Chesapeake Bay Preservation Ordinance Exception Review Committee.

Staff Items

- Noel noted that he has, per the Chairman's request, asked the County Executive to attend the November 10th EQAC meeting to brief the Council about the FY 2012 budget. EQAC asked that this briefing be moved up to the October meeting.
- The next BOS Environmental Committee meeting will be held on October 5th from 1:00 until 3:00 in conference rooms 9 and 10 at the Government Center.
- The next Planning Commission Environment Committee meetings will be held on September 30th (green building policy) and October 6th (stormwater management concepts). Both meetings will start at 7:00 PM.
- EQAC expressed a preference to have its annual public hearing on Monday, November 29th.
- Future meeting topics were described as follows:
 - September 7 – Deer, MS4, and ARE
 - October – Budget, Northern Virginia Regional Commission (conservation corridors), and ARE
 - November – FCPA, Watershed Management, and DPWES Reorganization

Adjournment

- The meeting adjourned at approximately 10:20 pm (motion by Stella, second by Bob).