

Approved by EQAC, October 10, 2012

**FAIRFAX COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ADVISORY COUNCIL
MINUTES**

DATE: Wednesday, July 11, 2012
TIME: 5:00 P.M.
PLACE: 106 Herrity Building, 12055 Government Center Parkway,
Fairfax, VA

MEMBERS PRESENT

Stella Koch (Chairman, At-Large)	George Lamb (At-Large)
Jeff Allcroft (Springfield)	Robert McLaren (At-Large)
Linda Burchfiel (At-Large)	Talia Schmitt (Student Member)
Johna Gagnon (Lee)	Rich Weisman (Sully)
Patricia Greenberg (Hunter Mill)	Glen White (Mason)

MEMBERS ABSENT

Larry Zaragoza (Vice Chairman, Mt. Vernon)	Frank Divita (Braddock)
Frank Crandall (Dranesville)	

STAFF

Kambiz Agazi	Noel Kaplan
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GUESTS

Erin Abrahams	Sayed Nabavi
Randy Bartlett	Bill Nell
Abby Berger	James Patteson
Liz Crowell	Justin Pistore
Ellen Eggerton	Bill Schellsteve
Marianne Gardner	Charles Smith
Diane Hoffman	Dan Southworth
Davood Majidian	Tim Stevens
Dave Molchany	Meghan Van Dam
Karyn Moreland	

**JOINT ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ADVISORY COUNCIL (EQAC)/
ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE MEETING**

Briefing on the Fairfax Forward Effort - Meghan Van Dam of the Fairfax County Department of Planning and Zoning provided a briefing on Fairfax Forward. This is an effort to develop a new model for comprehensive planning in Fairfax County, as a replacement to the Area Plans Review (APR) process. She provided the following for obtaining further information on this effort: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpz/fairfaxforward.htm; DPZFairfaxForward@fairfaxcounty.gov.

As background, she noted that, in the fall of 2011, DPZ held community meetings and conducted an online survey to evaluate experiences with the most recent Area Plans Review process as part of the APR Retrospective. They sought feedback on what worked well and what needed improvement, in order to determine how to proceed with future planning efforts. Since that time, they have been reviewing input and developing an alternative means to manage and review the Comprehensive Plan, as a replacement to the APR process.

She discussed both positive and negative aspects about the APR process as identified in public comments. For example, people stated that the APR process was an inclusive process, which allowed for anyone to nominate a change to the plan at any scale within a magisterial district, but the proposed changes were too focused on individual amendments and too reactive to individual nominations. The process became too parcel-specific and the outcome of amendments that were adopted was more like a rezoning document with very specific development conditions.

Other people noted that APR allowed for many opportunities for community involvement, such as submitting nominations, participating in task forces, and speaking at public hearings; however, it was no longer common for communities to envision their future by submitting nominations. Instead, more common was the reliance on task forces as a means to simply review nominations. Finally, they heard that APR allowed the review of a number of nominations relatively efficiently, but the structure was too rigid and oriented to the process. There was little opportunity to modify nominations, and the process did not allow for countywide amendments or a means to amend the Policy Plan. As a result, many parts of the Plan were not reviewed and not enough emphasis was placed on monitoring the Plan as a whole.

The Fairfax Forward effort, developed in response to these inputs, incorporates four primary goals:

- The review of the Plan should continue to occur in a systematic and structured manner that maintains an order to the review and expectations about timing.
- Community involvement needs to be expanded. Especially important to this involvement should be an increased amount of general education about the Comprehensive Plan and planning goals, so that we have a more informed public that is involved earlier in the process through more wide-ranging participation strategies.
- The model also should allow for more flexibility in the review and the ability to review what makes sense. The geographic boundaries of studies should be logical and correspond to planning areas. There should be some relationship of the proposal to long-

standing policy and the Concept for Future Development, which is the guiding vision of the Plan, and reasonable modifications should be allowed to the proposal when necessary.

- Need to emphasize monitoring the implementation of Plan recommendations and to keep all parts of the Plan up to date and relevant. This includes the ability to monitor where planned development potential is available in the county and whether we are achieving the policy goals.

As an initial step in working towards these goals, DPZ has worked to bring parts of the Plan up to date and into a more usable format, including an evaluation of the State of the Plan and a Plan amendment database. They have brought the Comprehensive Land Use Plan Map and the Concept for Future Development up to date, and are currently working on editorial updates to portions of the Plan.

The State of the Plan was published in May 2012 and focuses on the last ten years of planning and development activity. The document, available online, provides amendment statistics, planning trends that have emerged from proposed amendments, and compares existing and planned development potential in activity centers.

The Board of Supervisors adopted a revised Comprehensive Land Use Plan Map on June 19th, 2012. The map has been converted to an electronic format, using Geographic Information Systems technology to include amendments, adopted since its last publication in 1995 and some existing conditions. The map is available online now and will continue to be updated routinely as future amendments are adopted.

The Board of Supervisors also adopted an updated Concept for Future Development and Land Classifications System and Concept Map on June 19th, 2012. This was last endorsed by the Board of Supervisors in 1990. This new update converts the map to an electronic format with an update to reflect future Metrorail stations in Tysons Corner and in the Reston-Herndon Suburban Center. Some of the land classifications are updated as well to reflect current policy. The drafts will be available online for review and comment towards the end of the summer. And finally, a Plan amendment database has been created that allows amendment history to be searched by geography, type of amendment, and outcome. DPZ is working on developing an online program for this database as well.

Once these tasks are completed in 2013, DPZ proposes to launch into a new planning model, which they believe to be a more contemporary approach to how we conduct planning in this county. This new model would replace the APR process. The format will be changing into an ongoing work program. The work program will track planning activities for a three year period. The work program will be reviewed every two years, informed by plan monitoring efforts. It will have four components: Activity center planning, Neighborhood planning, Policy Plan and countywide amendments, and Board authorized Plan amendments and special studies.

A primary difference of this approach from APR relates to the previously mentioned statement of collaboration. The new format seeks to encourage a greater amount of general education about the Comprehensive Plan and more proactive, community involvement in planning studies. The

format will allow opportunities to conduct outreach activities, such as land use colleges, which provide general information about planning and promote dialogue about the Comprehensive Plan without attachment to a particular proposal. During studies, there will not be a one-size-fits-all approach to public participation, but rather an individualized plan developed to meet the needs of the particular study. In general, the intention is to engage the community earlier in the process, while ideas are being formed, and through a wider range of engagement methods.

George Lamb commended the staff on this effort and asked about the process for developing the State of the Plan. Staff replied that it was done internally by DPZ.

Stella Koch asked about the process for transitioning from site-specific reviews to ones that are community-specific.

Bob McLaren noted the difficulties with getting communities involved with these types of efforts and noted there might be an interest in considering special studies. Staff noted the potential use of social media.

Analysis of Options for Dulles Toll Road Ramps to Tysons – Seyed Nabavi, a Senior Transportation Planner with the Fairfax County Department of Transportation, gave a presentation on work that has been done by FC DOT to examine potential options for additional highway ramps to connect the Dulles Toll Road with Tysons Corner. With Mr. Nabavi was Karyn Moreland, Chief of the Capital Projects Section of FCDOT. Mr. Nabavi stressed that the ramps issue, and the Boone Boulevard Connection in particular, was different from the extension of Boone Boulevard, although there has been confusion between the two. He noted that the Boone Boulevard extension would be a first step in: creating the envisioned street grid and expanded roadway network for Tysons; improving connectivity and parcel access due to the loss of the Route 7 service roads; providing one leg of a parallel road system on both sides of Route 7 (Greensboro Drive is the other leg); considering context-sensitive solutions; and minimizing community and environmental impacts.

He noted that the recommended cross-section for a Boone Blvd. extension is the following:

- 12' wide landscaped median (or single-left turn lanes as needed)
- Two 11' travel lanes in each direction
- 5' wide bike lane in each direction
- 8' wide parking lane in each direction
- 5'-6' wide landscaped buffer
- 8'-10' wide sidewalk

Turning back to the effort to develop options for consideration for ramp connections between the Dulles Toll Road and Tysons Corner, Mr. Nabavi outlined the project schedule as follows:

- Study Kickoff May 24, 2011
- Data Gathering & Analysis June - August 2011
- Alternatives Workshop September 2011
- Monthly Progress Meetings Ongoing

(Including representatives from FCDOT, the Virginia Department of Transportation and the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority)

- Selection of Preferred Options September 2012

In working on preferred options, FC DOT developed nine scenarios including providing upgrades to existing Route 7 and Spring Hill Road interchanges, using the year 2030 as the basis for the options analysis. They determined that improvements to existing Route 7 and Spring Hill Road Interchanges were not cost effective based on the minimal added capacity. They compared three preferred alternatives against the “No Build” Alternative. Further, they measured the Network Performance of each preferred option and compared traffic operations. He said that their goal is to have a preferred option by December 2012.

Mr. Nabavi noted that the need for three ramp connections was identified (one connecting with the Boone Boulevard extension, one connecting with Greensboro Drive, and the third connecting with Jones Branch Drive) and described the preferred options that were identified. He reviewed the pros and cons of the options and described the next steps in the process.

EQAC’s ensuing discussion focused on the component of one of the Boone Boulevard connection options that would affect the stream valley of Old Courthouse Spring Branch.

Bob McLaren asked about who has participated in the options analysis with an environmental background, expressing his view that the ramp option that would affect Old Courthouse Spring Branch was unacceptable from an environmental standpoint. Ms. Moreland stressed that this is an early, feasibility study stage of the process and that a review under the National Environmental Policy Act had not yet been done.

George Lamb also criticized what he viewed as an insufficient consideration of environmental impacts in the identification of options, and he argued that FC DOT missed an opportunity by proceeding this far without getting sufficient community input. Ms. Moreland disagreed, noting that public comments are being accepted. Mr. Nabavi stated that there had been extensive public comments, with many similar concerns raised about the potential impacts to the stream valley.

Stella Koch asked if this effort would need an exception under the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Ordinance. Mr. Kaplan noted that the Ordinance, and the state regulations that guided the development of the ordinance, exempted public roads. Later on, Stella noted her concerns about factoring in costs for environmental/stream/RPA impacts.

Linda Burchfiel asked if the additional ramps are needed given the Metrorail access that is soon coming to Tysons. Staff replied that their model says that at least two additional ramps are still needed.

Staff noted that they have briefed two supervisors (Foust and Bulova) and that Chairman Bulova did not like the draft options, especially the one that would cause impacts to the RPA. In

addition, the Fairfax County Park Authority had comments on the options. Staff will forward the FCPA comments to EQAC.

Ms. Moreland concluded by recognizing the criticism of the option that would impact Old Courthouse Spring Branch but stressing the need to keep this option on the table at this point.

During EQAC's business meeting, Stella Koch asked George Lamb and Bob McLaren to prepare a resolution for consideration by EQAC in August.

Briefing on the Energy Action Fairfax Program – Abby Berger, a consultant with the firm GolinHarris, provided an update on the Energy Action Fairfax (EAF) program, which is being funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Energy under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Further information is available at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/energyactionfairfax; or at energyactionfairfax@fairfaxcounty.gov.

She described the EAF program as a pilot project to:

- Educate county residents on the importance of home energy efficiency and the best strategies for reducing demand
- Encourage residents to take action and tell others
- Generate savings (energy and pocketbook)
- Reduce GHG emissions

The EAF program is centered on neighborhood events and they have been working with the following groups:

- Greater Tysons Green Civic Association
- Greater Wilton Woods Citizens Association
- Jefferson Manor Citizens Association
- Lake Barcroft Community Association
- McLean Citizens Association
- Pinecrest Community Association
- Reston Association

She reviewed some of the program's recent lessons learned from discussions with county residents:

- No dispute there's value in becoming more energy efficient at home, but it's not a top priority
- Tend to pay attention to utility bill only when prices spike
- Taking basic, mostly no-cost/low-cost actions; resistant to larger investments
- Want to know how much energy you can save by taking specific actions (want "homework" done)
- Want to hear from friends and neighbors (word of mouth)
- Value opportunity to get information in a non-sales setting

Further, she noted that 3 out of 4 residents are willing to spend some money to make energy improvements.

She noted that EAF is focused on the following:

- Everyone can “step up to savings”
- There are steps for everyone, no matter how much (or little) you’ve done or know about your home
- Steps range from quick and easy, to moderate do-it-yourself steps to an energy audit by a professional, retrofit and more investment (but deliver bigger returns on investment)
- Education and awareness is first step

She said that they held two focus group meetings in January, and a recent Lake Barcroft festival was one of the first community events held.

Bob McLaren asked if there were any before- and after-studies on contractor effectiveness.

Stella Koch asked about how many residents attend an audit party. Abby noted that their average is 10-15 residents and that they last about 1-2 hours.

Talia Schmitt asked about the largest source in a house for energy loss. Abby noted that the main source is heating and cooling systems. Further, home electronics is a small fraction of that, but that actions about electronic can change behavior. Talia also noted that working on this more closely with schools would be good and offered Woodson High School as an example.

Rich Weisman asked about the EAF plans to do broader outreach throughout the county. Abby noted that they are in the process of preparing videos about energy savings, and are working with the county’s media relations to further perform outreach.

Rich Weisman asked about the plans for this program when the ARRA grant ends (grant ends in October). Kambiz Agazi replied that county staff will spend some time exploring lessons learned; staff hopes to continue the EAF effort in the future at some level, perhaps working with the business community. He noted that we can be a collaborative partner with the schools but cannot provide funds directly to the schools.

Linda Burchfiel attended one of the audit parties and suggested adding success stories and testimonials to the website.

Patricia Greenberg asked about their experiences in working directly with communities, and whether they found champions within a community. Abby replied that it varied by community.

Diane Hoffman noted that “liveable neighborhood” might help with the future aspects of this program.

Dave Molchany spoke about the pilot project funding, and noted that he hoped that the county could actually get budget money to continue this in the future. He liked the idea of videos being developed and noted that this was a great pilot.

Bob McLaren asked staff to inform EQAC once a follow-up effort had been identified. He suggested that EQAC could include a recommendation about this in the Annual Report on the Environment. Rich Weisman replied that we already had that recommendation in last year's ARE.

James Patteson asked if there were any metrics on how to evaluate participation and outreach. Dave Molchany replied that COG tried to do this but the website was daunting. Stella Koch noted that the National Wildlife Federation has a "backyard wildlife" effort where you can get personal recognition.

Mr. Kaplan was asked to provide copies of all presentations to all EQAC members. He was also asked to provide to each member the comments from the Fairfax County Park Authority on the Dulles Toll Road/Tysons Corner ramp options.

The next meeting for the joint meeting with the ECC was scheduled for March 13, 2013.

Tour of the Government Center Stream Restoration/Pond Dredging/Pond Retrofit Project
- Justin Pistore and Erin Abrahams with the DWPES Stormwater Planning Division provided an overview and walking tour of stream/watershed projects completed on the Government Center property. They showed two ponds that had been retrofitted and a stream that was restored. These efforts included use of innovative technologies and available dredging equipment.

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ADVISORY COUNCIL (EQAC) MEETING

Consideration of Possible Legislative Initiatives/Positions for the 2013 Legislation Session, Including Uranium Mining – There were three position statements provided to EQAC for consideration. Johna Gagnon moved that all three positions be approved and it was seconded by George Lamb. Discussion covered the following:

- On the position about retaining the moratorium on uranium mining, Bob McLaren noted concerns that it would be premature to draft regulations.
- On the position about third-party power purchase agreements for renewable energy, Linda Burchfiel said that she thinks this legislation has a good chance of passing. Jeff Allcroft suggested a wording change from demand to consumption. Tim Stevens and Bill Nell (representing an environmental group in Falls Church) noted their support for the power purchase agreement.
- On the position about reducing environmental contamination from plastic and paper bags, there was no comment or discussion.

EQAC voted in favor of all three positions. The vote was unanimous. Next step is for these to go to the county's executive office, and in December the BOS will adopt a legislative program.

Tim Stevens also noted consideration of the International Energy Conservation Code (a 2012 update of building codes). He said this was not a legislative initiative; rather it is something that will be considered by the state's Board of Housing and Community Development. It was noted

that the BOS already took a position on this and that no additional action on it was needed by EQAC.

Report and Recommendations from the Environmental Excellence Awards Committee – Bob McLaren noted that there were nine nominations and that they covered all four categories with more than one nomination per category. The following were recommended:

County Resident – selected two

- Betsy Washington, of Lake Barcroft
- Elaine Tholen, working with FCPS

Organization

- Service Source – volunteers in recycling of electronics

Business

- Walker's Grill – restaurant got LEED Gold certification

County Employee

- Ron Tuttle

Bob moved to approve these recommendations and Glen White seconded. EQAC voted in favor of all recommendations. The vote was unanimous. Next step is for a presentation on September 25. Stella Koch volunteered to present the awards.

2012 Annual Report on the Environment – Noel Kaplan reviewed the status of the Annual Report process, noting that agency information request responses are coming in and are being transmitted to appropriate chapter authors. He asked that chapter authors inform him if they need additional input from contributing agencies or if there are critical pieces of information they have yet to have received. Noel noted a deadline of September 4 for draft chapters with recommendations for discussion at the September EQAC meeting.

Noel reviewed the gaps in the chapter author assignments. With Marie Flanigan's departure, Jeff Allcroft agreed to serve as author for the chapter on solid waste. Noel also noted there was not yet an author for the visual blight section.

Talia Schmitt will draft a cover for the ARE.

Rich Weisman recommended that the ARE include a spotlight addition about environmental activities by the FCPS, and circulated a draft of that spotlight. EQAC agreed that it would be a good addition, and Stella Koch would include a note in her cover letter about this. The cover letter would note the powerful impact that the schools have on the environment and that we want to highlight the FCPS efforts.

Approval of the Minutes of the February 8, 2012 EQAC Meeting – Patricia Greenberg moved to approve the minutes from the February 8 meeting and Johna Gagnon seconded. EQAC voted in favor of approval. The vote was unanimous.

Consideration of the June minutes was deferred.

Chairman's Items – Stella Koch noted a July 24 meeting on stormwater management.

Council Member Items – Johna Gagnon noted a green breakfast for July 14 on the EAF effort.

Staff Items – Noel Kaplan noted upcoming Planning Commission Environment Committee meetings on July 12 and 19 about the green building policy. He also noted that he was contacted by the national office of the League of Conservation Voters and that the League was looking to hold a public roundtable discussion in northern Virginia regarding federal air quality standards issues.

Noel Kaplan reviewed future meeting agendas.

Kambiz Agazi noted that the BOS Environmental Committee will hold a meeting on October 2.

The meeting adjourned at 9 PM.