

**FAIRFAX COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ADVISORY COUNCIL
MINUTES**

DATE: Wednesday, February 11, 2009
TIME: 5:00 P.M.
PLACE: Room 232, Fairfax County Government Center

MEMBERS PRESENT

Stella Koch (Chairman, At-Large)	Alex Kim (Student Member)
George Lamb (Vice Chairman, At-Large)	Ned Foster (Springfield)
Linda Burchfiel (At-Large)	Rich Weisman (Sully)
Frank Crandall (Dranesville)	Larry Zaragoza (Mount Vernon)
Doug Denny (Providence)	Johna Gagnon (Lee)

MEMBERS ABSENT

Robert McLaren (At-Large)	Diana Handy (Hunter Mill)
Chet McLaren (Braddock)	

STAFF

Noel Kaplan	Dawn Dhavale
Kambiz Agazi	

OTHERS PRESENT

Rob Stalzer (County Exec.'s Office)
Kathy Ichter (FCDOT)
Dave Molchany (County Exec.'s Office)
Jimmie Jenkins (DPWES)
Randy Bartlett (Storm Water)
Michelle Brickner (DPWES-LDS)
Jeff Smithberger (DPWES/Solid Waste)
Joyce Doughty (DPWES/Solid Waste)
Tom Crow (Health—Env. Health)
Carl Winstead (FCDOT)
Heather Schinkel (FCPA))
Cindy Walsh (FCPA)
R. Scott Wynn (County Attorney)
M. Anthony Barrero, Jr (Fire & Rescue)
Diane Hoffman (NVSWCD)
Chris Orvin (Coalition for Smarter Growth)

Joint meeting with Fairfax County's Environmental Coordinating Committee

Agency briefings on environmentally-oriented lines of business and FY 2010 budget reductions

Matters discussed:

- Overview of the FY 2010 budget shortfall and processes to identify how to address the shortfall (Rob Stalzer)
 - The estimates for the 2010 budget have been consistent for the past several months at a \$650M shortfall.
 - Each agency was asked to identify 15% in prioritized budget reductions based on their General Fund-covered budget. These were presented to the County Executive and briefed to the Board of Supervisors.
 - As a reference, the County spends 53% of its budget on schools and 47% on government operations.

- Presentations of agency environmentally-oriented lines of business and approaches to 15% agency budget reductions as they relate to environmental functions
 - DPWES—Jimmie Jenkins
 - Agencies had to balance responsibilities that are mandated versus County priorities

 - DPWES-Stormwater—Randy Bartlett
 - Reviewed non-stormwater programs
 - Of those, the 15% would be a \$540,000 reduction
 - Core programs would not be affected
 - New funding mechanism based on a dedicated tax were discussed in the EQAC business meeting

 - DPWES—Land Development Services—Michelle Brickner
 - 55 positions have been identified along with contractor reductions. Many of the positions are currently vacant, and some folks have been transferred to other divisions where appropriate.
 - Reduction in County development has led to a commensurate reduction in LDS workload
 - LDS is partially covered by permit fees. The current fees cover 70% of the cost. They are considering an increase to recover 90%. State law does not allow recovery over 100%. The 90% goal provides a balanced legal buffer
 - Some LDS enforcement staff have transitioned to the Strike Force. LDS will maintain the key environmental enforcement responsibility.

 - DPWES—Solid Waste—Jeff Smithberger
 - Solid Waste is funded from enterprise or special revenue funds and is not subject to the 15% reduction.

- They are undertaking a significant new program to single-stream the recycling program. This replaces separate recycling containers with a single container and a standard waste truck that collects all recyclables in a single stream. The product is then separated at the station. The benefits are:
 1. a smaller and more efficient collection crew and
 2. common trucks for both trash and recycling
- The savings will offset the need for a fee increase
- Dept. of Transportation—Kathy Ichter
 - A significant portion of the DOT budget comes from state and other sources. The 15% reduction was directed at programs covered by the General Fund.
 - The ones of most concern to the environmental community will probably be related to public transit.
 - Other programs with reductions include the Bicycle Program and Pedestrian Safety
 - The transit budget (primarily Fairfax Connector and VRE) is about \$82M of which \$30M are funded by the General Fund.
 - Targeted reductions were in the least used routes based on Riders/Hour and may particularly effect at-risk riders (low income or without other means)
 - EQAC member comments—Cutting transit impacts the total transit system, not just the individual riders of a particular route. For example, by eliminating particular routes or runs, users may feel the system is not flexible enough for their needs and will opt out or drive. This causes more congestion and pollution. Was the overall impact considered as part of the selection criteria?
- Dept. of Planning and Zoning—Noel Kaplan
 - The DPZ programs are not independent, discreet programs that can be excised from the agency without affecting core county functions, and none of the programs are overstaffed.
 - As such, the strategy will be an across the board 15% reduction. This will be 18 positions, some of which are unfilled.
 - No direct elimination of environmental positions, but environmental function will be affected as this staff is called upon to perform other agency functions.
- Fairfax County Park Authority—Cindy Walsh
 - The total impact will be \$2,622,084.
 - No direct impacts to Natural Resource Management & Protection section but there will be broader environmental impacts associated with cuts to many other functions.

- EQAC member comments—EQAC has advocated for more balance between active and passive/natural park uses. How will the proposed cuts affect that balance?
- Health Department—Tom Crow
 - Most of the Environmental Health programs are mandated. The only non-mandated programs are Air Quality Monitoring and Environmental Hazard Investigations. These were both proposed for elimination to reach the 15% reduction.
 - EQAC member comment—Are mandated program reductions feasible in lieu of program reduction? The mandated programs are already significantly constrained.
 - EQAC member comment—It may not be legally feasible to shut the air quality monitors, due to non compliance with the Clean Air Act and the need to have EPA approval before turning them off.
- Fire and Rescue—Anthony Barrero
 - Propose dropping the full time Environmental Hazards position. Note this is a federally-mandated responsibility.
- Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District—Diane Hoffman
 - The NVSWCD conducts many programs by partnering with other organizations to leverage the County contribution.
 - NVSWCD was asked to propose 15% as well as 100% reductions.
 - The 15% reduction would be one staff person, the NEST program, and the Conservation Currents newsletter.
 - EQAC member comment—The 100% scenario is very dire. Other alternatives for funding are being considered to move NVSWCD out of the General Fund.
- Summary—Rob Stalzer
 - The County Executive’s budget proposal will be released on Feb 23.
 - EQAC member comment—A top 10 as well as bottom 10 list might be appropriate

Motions Made:

- None

Follow-up action:

- None (see Chairman’s Items for follow-up action)

Scheduling of the next ECC/EQAC joint meeting

Matters discussed:

- Scheduling of the next meeting

Motions Made:

- None

Follow-up action

- The next joint meeting will be held on Wednesday, July 8 at 5:00 P.M. in room 232 of the Government Center

Discussion of funding of stormwater programs

Matters discussed:

- Alternatives for funding stormwater programs
- Possible proposal for a stormwater service district, to be funded with a 1.5 cent/\$100 value tax on real estate and activities that would be funded through this revenue source
- Revenue sources for other Virginia jurisdictions' stormwater programs

Motions made:

- None.

Follow-up action:

- EQAC agreed to make a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors on this topic should the proposal for the stormwater service district be included in the County Executive's proposed FY 2010 budget.

Review of Stewardship/Volunteerism drafts

Matters discussed:

- Presentation of a draft Land Use & Transportation section by Rich Weisman and the proposed organization of this section as a template (What you can do, where to learn, and how to participate)

Motions made:

- None.

Follow-up actions:

- Rich Weisman to reorganize the Land Use & Transportation section along the lines discussed
- Others to consider their sections as do/learn/participate
- This issue will be discussed further at the April 2009 meeting.
- Alex Kim has a presentation on mosquito control that will accompany the next discussion.

Preparation for the March 11, 2009 joint meeting with the Fairfax County Park Authority Board

Matters discussed:

- Budget impacts on the Park Authority and how reductions were prioritized
- Balance between allocations for the built environment vs. natural environment
- Volunteer coordinator positions--how to continue empowering volunteers
- Consideration of increasing fees or reallocating fee collection among programs
- Discussion on funding for land acquisition versus management

Motions made:

- None.

Follow-up actions:

- Noel Kaplan to forward EQAC's proposed agenda items to the Park Authority and to coordinate the meeting agenda with Park Authority staff

Discussion of the format of the 2009 Annual Report on the Environment

Matters discussed:

- Noel Kaplan indicated that he has crafted a proposal for a more efficient report production and indicated that he would circulate this proposal in advance of the March meeting.

Motions made:

- None.

Follow-up actions:

- Discussion item for the March 2009 meeting

Approval of the minutes of the January 14, 2008 meeting

Matters discussed:

- Format for preparation of minutes
- Review of January 14 draft minutes

Motions made:

- Larry Zaragoza moved for the approval of the minutes as submitted. Frank Crandall seconded the motion.

Record of the vote:

- Approval by unanimous vote.

Follow-up actions:

- Larry Zaragoza volunteered to take minutes at the March meeting.

Chairman's Items

Matters discussed:

- Process for EQAC preparation of recommendations on the FY 2010 budget
- The need for EQAC to identify areas where cuts would be appropriate as opposed to simply preparing a list of cuts that should be opposed.
- Support for the stormwater service district concept

Motions made:

- None.

Follow-up actions:

- EQAC members agreed to review the County Executive's proposed budget upon release on February 23. Noel Kaplan agreed to provide members with an e-mail with a link to the budget
- EQAC members agreed to provide Noel Kaplan with their ideas and priorities regarding the budget by March 4. It was suggested that members consider legal obligations, professional responsibility and financial impact in developing their priorities.
- EQAC will develop recommendations to the Board of Supervisors on the FY 2010 budget at the March 11 meeting.

Council Member Items

Matters discussed:

- Rich Weisman: Request for reduced use of acronyms and abbreviations in presentations and discussions. Stella Koch stressed that council members should interrupt and ask for clarification when needed; otherwise, the assumption is that everyone understands the meanings of the terms that are used.
- Johna Gagnon: Upcoming GreenSprings garden course on Low Impact Development and other noteworthy programs
- Johna Gagnon: Her appointment to the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District Board
- Ned Foster: Introduction. Stella Koch recommended that everyone visit his Web site on Little Rocky Run: <http://www.friendsoflittlerockyrun.com/>
- Alex Kim: Will provide a presentation on mosquito problems at the April EQAC meeting.
- Doug Denny: Concern about funding for environmental initiatives and the possible need for a dedicated environmental fund
- Frank Crandall: Discussion of the effectiveness of the wildlife biologist position in terms of deer hunt effectiveness.

Motions made:

- None.

Follow-up action:

- None

Staff Items

Matters discussed:

- Reminder about the Board of Supervisors Environmental Committee meeting Friday March 6th at 2 pm, conference rooms 9&10, Government Center.
- Reminder of Chesapeake Bay Exception Review Committee meeting on March 4— Briefing by VDOT on “mega projects.”
- A conflict between EQAC’s scheduled April 8 meeting and the first night of Passover—we will be meeting on Tuesday not Wednesday.
- Noel Kaplan will initiate the student member search process for the 2009-2010 term.
- The process for preparation of staff responses to EQAC recommendations is under way. The response document will be transmitted to the Board of Supervisors in March.
- Future meeting agendas

Motions made:

- None.

Follow-up action:

- The discussion with the Department of Planning and Zoning on the Plan Amendment process may be moved to April (note—after further review, this item was kept on the March agenda).
- The April agenda will include discussion of the Stewardship/Volunteerism chapter, follow-up items from the public hearing and Alex Kim’s presentation (and possible resolution) regarding mosquito issues.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:35 pm.