

**FAIRFAX COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ADVISORY COUNCIL
MINUTES**

DATE: Wednesday, March 12, 2014
TIME: 5:00 P.M.
PLACE: Conference Rooms 9 and 10, Fairfax County Government Center,
Fairfax, VA

MEMBERS PRESENT

Stella Koch (Chairman, At-Large)	George Lamb (At-Large)
Larry Zaragoza (Vice Chairman, Mt. Vernon)	Robert McLaren (At-Large)
Linda Burchfiel (At-Large)	Alex Robbins (Providence)
Frank Crandall (Dranesville)	Glen White (Mason)

MEMBERS ABSENT

Hana Burkly (Student Member)	Michael Sanio (Hunter Mill)
Johna Gagnon (Lee)	Rich Weisman (Sully)

STAFF

Kambiz Agazi
Noel Kaplan

GUESTS

Katie Boyle	Tim Haley
Laura Grape	David Molchany
Susan Hafeli	Howard Stone
Christopher Haley	Mark Thomas
Michael Haley	

The meeting convened at 5:00 P.M.

The first item on the EQAC agenda was a joint meeting with the Fairfax County Environmental Coordinating Committee. This summary addresses items from the joint meeting, followed by items discussed at the regular EQAC meeting.

1. Joint meeting with Fairfax County's Environmental Coordinating Committee

Following a warm welcome from Stella Koch, Noel Kaplan, and Kambiz Agazi, Deputy Executive David Molchany provided an overview of the Fairfax County FY 2015 Advertised Budget Plan. Talking points from Mr. Molchany's presentation are attached to these minutes.

EQAC was pleased to hear that the funding for environmental programs is in the proposed budget, including the proposed increase of ¼ cent in the stormwater service district tax rate.

Mark Thomas, Senior Staff Aide to Chairman Sharon Bulova, provided an update on the Private Sector Energy Task Force. He noted that the work of the Task Force was completed in 2012, and he reviewed the Task Force's eight recommendations. A centerpiece of the recommendations was support for creation of an independent energy alliance that would be a private sector entity. He indicated that there had been challenges inhibiting the establishment of the energy alliance, noting waning private sector interest resulting from increased economic uncertainty at the regional level (i.e., implications of federal budget debates and related actions). He noted that three of the six people he had been working with on the energy alliance concept had lost their jobs and that he has since been working with the Chamber of Commerce to try to rebuild this small group.

Larry Zaragoza suggested that the county consider hosting a forum to bring businesses together to discuss the Task Force recommendations and seek volunteers to help. Stella Koch suggested that awards and county recognition should be offered to business leaders. Noel Kaplan noted the county's Environmental Excellence Awards program, and Mark Thomas added that opportunities for recognition could be available through the county's Exceptional Design Awards program. After continued discussion, Mr. Thomas referenced an effort by the Chamber of Commerce to catalogue all businesses in Fairfax County; he noted the lack of a similar green business catalogue. Laura Grape noted a "Green Games" recognition effort in Arlington County that spurs competitive spirit in support of green efforts among Arlington County businesses.

Susan Hafeli (Utility Analyst, Fairfax County Department of Cable and Consumer Services) provided an update on the Energy Action Fairfax program, for which a pilot public outreach effort was funded by the county's Energy Efficiency and Conservation Community Block Grant. She noted that this pilot outreach effort, which ended in September 2012 per the grant's deadline, was intended to educate residents about ways to reduce energy consumption and achieve cost savings through energy improvements, energy audits and behavioral change. She noted that this effort focused on seven participating communities, and included energy audits of selected homes within the communities, with the recognition that there would be broader community benefits due to similarities of homes within the participating communities. She also noted the establishment of a residentially-oriented website with energy efficiency and conservation tips. She discussed challenges and opportunities now that the grant has ended, highlighting a need to leverage resources. She noted that staff continues to be available to speak with interested communities and that an objective of the program is to expand it to the business community, including establishment of a Green Business program. She identified short and long term objectives for the website and the program in general. EQAC members engaged Ms. Hafeli in further discussion regarding energy outreach efforts.

Stella Koch provided a brief discussion of a stream relocation project in Great Falls that has been proposed by a property owner. She noted the owner is requesting to move a stream in order to provide room for a swimming pool. She expressed her concern about this proposal and noted that staff from the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services was aware of similar community concerns. She expressed optimism that DPWES staff would review this proposal appropriately.

The next EQAC/ECC joint meeting was scheduled for July 9, 2014.

2. Election of officers for 2014

George Lamb moved that Stella Koch be reelected as Chairman and that Larry Zaragoza be reelected as Vice Chairman for 2014. Alex Robbins seconded the motion, which carried by a unanimous vote.

3. Development of EQAC testimony for the FY 2015 budget hearing

Stella Koch sought the council's guidance on what to include in EQAC's budget testimony. She made a motion that she be authorized by the council to testify at the public hearing and to focus on two key budget items presented in the last Annual Report on the Environment: (1) a quarter-percent increase in the Stormwater Service District rate; and (2) support for the proposed Environmental Improvement Program projects. The motion was seconded by Larry Zaragoza and passed by a unanimous vote.

4. Approval of meeting minutes

The draft minutes for each of the following EQAC meetings was approved as presented, with each vote unanimous:

- April 10, 2013 (moved by Larry Zaragoza, seconded by Alex Robbins; Bob McLaren abstained).
- October 9, 2013 (moved by Larry Zaragoza, seconded by George Lamb; Bob McLaren abstained).
- November 13, 2013 (moved by Alex Robbins, seconded by Glen White; Bob McLaren abstained).
- January 13, 2014 (moved by Bob McLaren, seconded by Linda Burchfiel; no abstentions).

Noel Kaplan was asked to provide hard copies of the January 13 public hearing summary to the Board of Supervisors, per EQAC's standard practice.

5. Review of issues identified at the January 13, 2014 EQAC public hearing and discussion of future EQAC agenda items, including the scheduling of a joint meeting with the Fairfax County Park Authority Board

The Public Hearing summary was discussed, along with EQAC follow-up and other related issues. Some highlights included:

- Noel Kaplan's review of a handout he had prepared summarizing the issues and recommendations that had been identified at the public hearing (including six key areas of emphasis regarding testimony relating to climate change and energy).
- Concern about the lack of a clear course of action for follow-up to a concern that was raised about turtles crossing a highway in the Kingstowne area.
- Climate change adaptation in low-lying and tidal areas.

- The replacement of the Wildlife Biologist.
- The scheduling of a joint meeting with the Fairfax County Park Authority Board.
- Charles Smith's acceptance of a position with DWPES-Stormwater and EQAC's regard for his efforts with the Park Authority.
- The potential for hydraulic fracturing in the George Washington National Forest.
- The preparation by county staff of a "Fairfax County Sustainability Initiatives" document that would highlight county activities supporting sustainability.

EQAC agreed to invite the Chief of Police and other staff from the Fairfax County Police Department to EQAC's April 9 meeting to discuss the Wildlife Biologist position. EQAC accepted Noel Kaplan's suggestion that he review the invitation with Kambiz Agazi and Stella Koch before sending it.

EQAC agreed with Kambiz Agazi's suggestion for an EQAC review of the draft Fairfax County Sustainability Initiatives document--A draft would be shared with EQAC and would be discussed after its circulation. It was anticipated that the document would be provided to EQAC in April and discussed at EQAC's May meeting. EQAC members would be provided with about a month to review and comment on the draft.

Stella Koch asked Kambiz Agazi to provide a briefing on the climate change and energy items from the public hearing and for Larry Zaragoza to develop a set of questions to ask to guide this discussion. She suggested that this discussion be held subsequent to the circulation of the draft Sustainability Initiatives document.

EQAC requested that May be targeted for a joint meeting with the Fairfax County Park Authority Board, with funding of the FCPA natural resources program being the major issue for discussion.

EQAC agreed to have a discussion regarding the hydraulic fracturing issue, to be scheduled as early as the April meeting if there would be time-sensitivity. Linda Burchfiel agreed to identify individuals who could be invited to speak to EQAC, including both someone who could speak in opposition to hydraulic fracturing in the national forest as well as someone who could provide an industry perspective. Noel Kaplan was asked to circulate to EQAC members the notice of an April 4 discussion of hydraulic fracturing by the Potomac Watershed Roundtable. He was also asked to get a copy of correspondence on this issue that had been transmitted by Fairfax Water and to let Fairfax Water know about EQAC's discussion.

6. Annual Report on the Environment: Continuation of discussion of the report preparation process and possible changes

EQAC continued its discussion of the Annual Report process and the report's format. Comments received from EQAC member conversations with members of the Board of Supervisors were noted.

Stella Koch recommended that the summary document focus more on broad policy and less on detail. Bob McLaren stressed the need for detailed data to provide support for EQAC's conclusions and recommendations.

EQAC members discussed the various audiences for its report. Information regarding website hits for the report was requested. It was also suggested that there be improved outreach about the report once it is published. Stella Koch suggested that notices should be sent to schools to provide information about the report.

Noel Kaplan noted EQAC's earlier request for contact information for environmentally-oriented boards, authorities and commissions. He noted that he was seeking information from the Clerk's Office and that, for privacy reasons, he would be provided only with the BAC member lists by district and not contact information for each BAC member.

EQAC agreed to continue to consider the report preparation process while moving forward with the 2014 report. EQAC agreed to condense the report drafting process such that all chapters would be reviewed no later than September, with the information-gathering process to begin in April with chapter author assignments and with reviews of information needs. Noel Kaplan was asked to present a revised report timeline and to prepare a "slots" document so that EQAC chapter authors would sign up for review slots at the July, August and September meetings.

7. Chairman's items

The Chair had no items to report.

8. Council member items

In reference to EQAC's discussions earlier in the evening, Glen White offered a comment on how technology has made a positive impact on society in several ways. He stressed the need for appropriate regulation of these advances as well as monitoring of their implementation, noting that these technological advances have many benefits but also may be damaging without proper oversight. He identified mobile computing, information sharing and drones as examples and extended this perspective to hydraulic fracturing as well.

Larry Zaragoza noted that he had spoken on his own behalf at a public hearing regarding the proposal for the ESI construction/demolition debris landfill in Lorton. He noted division in opinions of the speakers at the public hearing.

9. Staff items

Noel Kaplan noted that Jeff Allcroft has resigned from EQAC and that EQAC therefore needs a new representative on the Tree Commission. There were no volunteers.

Noel Kaplan noted that student member applications were due in April and that EQAC needed to establish a student member committee to review the applications. He noted that Rich Weisman had expressed interest in serving on the committee. Bob McLaren also volunteered, and it was assumed that Hana Burkly would be the third member of this committee.

Noel Kaplan noted that the Environmental Excellence Award nomination process would be rolled out on or around March 24, with a May 30 deadline.

Noel Kaplan noted that the Board of Supervisors would soon be considering whether to amend the county's Noise Ordinance, with authorization of a public hearing anticipated in the mid-spring time frame. He asked if EQAC wanted a briefing on this issue.

Noel Kaplan reviewed data from the six years during which EQAC offered a remote testimony site for its annual public hearings. He stated that, in this six-year period, there were a total of 16 speakers at the South County Center, which is an average of less than three per year. He expressed his view that this limited turnout did not justify the resources needed to provide the remote testimony opportunity, and he noted that similar concerns had been expressed by the Director of the Department of Cable and Consumer Services, which has been providing EQAC with the technical and broadcast support that has been needed to provide for the remote testimony site. He noted the considerable cost and staff resource needs to support the South County testimony site and recommended that EQAC stop offering this opportunity. There was general support among EQAC members for this view. Mr. Kaplan added that he was coordinating with the Department of Information Technology and Office of Public Affairs to determine if there might be an opportunity for an alternative to the remote site through information technology. While there would be challenges that would need to be addressed, he expressed interest in continuing to look into this idea.

Noel Kaplan noted a request from Larry Zaragoza to post all presentations given at EQAC meetings to the EQAC website. He indicated that, per his conversations with other DPZ staff and with the Office of Public Affairs that this is something that could be done but that he would not want to do this retroactively given that he does not have electronic copies of all presentations. There were no objections to the idea of posting presentations on the website.

Noel Kaplan reviewed upcoming meetings of the Planning Commission Environment Committee and noted that the Planning Commission would be holding its public hearing on the green building policy update on April 30.

Noel Kaplan confirmed with EQAC that the requested briefing on watershed plan implementation should be scheduled for the June 11 meeting.

Noel Kaplan noted the retirement of Sterling Wheeler from DPZ, noting that several EQAC members had coordinated with Mr. Wheeler in the past.

The meeting adjourned at 8:25 P.M.

**EQAC / ECC Joint Meeting
Wednesday, March 12, 2014 @ 5pm
Conference Rooms 9&10, Government Center**

Brief Summary of the FY 2015 Advertised Budget Plan

General Budget highlights:

- Balanced budget for both FY 2015 and FY 2016. The proposed FY 2015 Budget maintains the FY 2014 Real Estate Tax Rate at \$1.085 per \$100 of assessed value*. The proposed General Fund budget for Fiscal Year 2015 (July 1, 2014, through June 30, 2015) is \$3.70 billion, an increase of 3.29 percent from the FY 2014 Adopted Budget Plan (The total of all appropriated funds is \$6.95 billion, which includes the General Fund as well as other appropriated funds such as state and federal grants.)
- The average increase in residential assessments (value) countywide for 2014 is 6.54 percent. This means that FY 2015 real estate taxes per typical household will increase \$331.67 in FY 2015. However, commercial values remain a significant concern, remaining essentially level over the last year. Note: The value of a penny on the Real Estate Tax Rate is \$21.9 million in FY 2015. Each penny change in the tax rate equals an average \$50 on a taxpayer's bill.
- The recommended transfer to Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) for school operations and debt service is \$1.93 billion, a 2.07 percent and \$39,113,302 increase over FY 2014. This transfer accounts for 52.1 percent of the proposed county budget expenditures. Although not included in the transfer, the proposed county budget also includes \$72.6 million in additional support for school services including Head Start, school health, resource officers and crossing guards, after-school programming, field maintenance and recreational programs, among others.

Summary of Additional Proposed Budget Recommendations for Environmental Initiatives:

FY 2015 funding of \$535,000, an increase of \$35,000 over the FY 2014 Adopted Budget Plan funding level, has been included for environmental initiatives. In response to an Environmental Quality Advisory Council (EQAC) recommendation, beginning in FY 2014, a new project selection process has been implemented.

The Environmental Improvement Program Committee developed a more rigorous project selection process to support the Board-adopted Environmental Agenda. The Environmental Excellence 20-year Vision Plan (Environmental Agenda) includes six topic areas: Growth and Land Use; Air Quality and Transportation; Water Quality; Solid Waste; Parks, Trails and Open

Space; and Environmental Stewardship. With these topic areas in mind, the Committee developed specific project criteria, solicited requests from County agencies for project proposals, interviewed project teams and ranked each proposal. This new process was reviewed by EQAC and has resulted in funding for several high quality environmental projects in FY 2015.

Specific funding levels include:

◆ An amount of \$150,000 is included to continue the Invasive Plant Removal Program. The Park Authority manages this volunteer program, as well as other invasive removal initiatives. These programs restore hundreds of acres of important natural areas, protect tree canopy, and reach thousands of volunteers. Currently more than 7,700 trained volunteer leaders have contributed 26,000 hours of service since the Program's inception in 2005, improving over 1,000 acres of parkland.

◆ An amount of \$75,000 is included for Energy Education and Outreach initiatives. This program is intended to increase the awareness of Fairfax County residents and businesses regarding their energy consumption and to encourage them to reduce consumption. Program objectives include educating residents and businesses about home and workplace energy consumption, explaining the energy assessment (audit) process, and encouraging residents and businesses to undertake energy-savings measures.

◆ An amount of \$10,000 is included for the Green Purchasing Program. This program is designed to support two interns to assist in clearly specifying environmental attributes during the County's procurement process. Fairfax County has a current inventory of more than 2,400 contracts and emphasizing environmental attributes such as recycling, energy efficiency, durability and reduced toxicity during the procurement process can contribute to the purchase of green products, creating fiscal and environmental savings.

◆ An amount of \$30,000 is included for a Watershed Protection and Energy Conservation Matching Grant Program. This program is intended to promote community engagement around sustainability and conservation issues. Specifically, the Watershed Protection and Energy Conservation matching grant pilot program would provide financial incentives to empower homeowners through their associations to implement on-the-ground sustainability projects. The initiative would build on current programs that provide technical assistance, hands-on support, outreach and education to Fairfax County homeowners and residents. Projects would improve water quality, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and conserve energy and water. The current program funding level would support printing and materials, matching grants of \$300 - \$2,500 up to \$10,000 total for all grants and two seasonal paid interns to help run the program and conduct the community survey.

◆ An amount of \$170,000 is included for lighting retrofits and upgrades at Fairfax County Park Authority facilities for energy efficiency and conservation. Lighting will be upgraded to LED

fixtures and lighting controls will be installed to manage operating hours more efficiently. These energy saving retrofit replacements will reduce approximately 80 percent of energy usage, improve lighting, reduce the Greenhouse gas inventory and contribute to the dark skies initiative.

◆ An amount of \$92,000 is included to install Water Smart web-based irrigation controllers utilizing ET (Evapotranspiration) weather technology at 20 Park facilities that have existing irrigation systems with the opportunity to reduce energy use, water consumption and reduce environmental impacts.

◆ Finally, an amount of \$8,000 is included to install a Weather Station for efficient water usage at Greendale Golf Course. This system will help measure air temperature, relative humidity, barometric pressure, rainfall, and other weather indicators in order to modify watering requirements. It is estimated that installing this weather station could save 10 million gallons of water per year. Estimated cost savings of more than \$50,000 per year. In addition, an amount of \$58,140 has been provided in Fund 10030, Contributory Fund, to continue partnering with two non-profit agencies to support tree planting efforts throughout the County.

One final item of note – as you know, in its 2013 Annual Report on the Environment, EQAC had recommended an increase of ¼ cent in the storm water service district rate over the current rate of 2 cents per \$100. This increase is included in the County Executive’s FY 2015 Advertised Budget Plan.

Public hearings on the proposed FY 2015 Budget are held in the Government Center Board Auditorium:

April 8, 6 p.m.
April 9, 3 p.m.
April 10, 3 p.m.

Those wishing to speak at a public hearing can sign up online to place their name on the speakers list or contact the Office of the Clerk to the Board at 703-324-3151, TTY 703-324-3903. The public hearings will be held in the Board Auditorium, Fairfax County Government Center and will be shown live on Fairfax County Government Channel 16. You can also provide feedback and comments on the proposed budget through mid-April at dmbinfo@fairfaxcounty.gov . Given the volume of comments, individual responses will not be possible.

As a reminder, budget decisions are not final until the budget is adopted by the Board of Supervisors on April 29. Once approved, the FY 2015 Budget becomes effective on July 1, 2014.

*The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors voted Tuesday, March 4 to advertise a 2-cent cap increase of the Real Estate Tax Rate to \$1.105 per \$100 of assessed value potentially providing \$43.8 million in extra revenue if the new rate were to go that high.