

*Approved by EQAC on June 13, 2012*

**FAIRFAX COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ADVISORY COUNCIL  
MINUTES**

**DATE:** Wednesday, May 9, 2012  
**TIME:** 7:15 P.M.  
**PLACE:** Hidden Oaks Nature Center, Annandale, VA

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Stella Koch (Chairman, At-Large)	Frank Crandall (Dranesville)
Larry Zaragoza (Vice Chairman, Mt. Vernon)	Frank Divita (Braddock)
Linda Burchfiel (At-Large)	Johna Gagnon (Lee)
	George Lamb (At-Large)

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Marie Flanigan (Providence)	Kat Pfleeger (Student Member)
Patricia Greenberg (Hunter Mill)	Rich Weisman (Sully)
Robert McLaren (At-Large)	Glen White (Mason)

**STAFF**

Kambiz Agazi	Noel Kaplan
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**GUESTS**

Kris Abrahamson	Martin Thompson
Joyce Crandall	Brian Williams
Marie Custode	Robin Wilson
Whit Field	John Yetman
Pieter A. Sheehan	

The meeting of the Fairfax County Environmental Quality Advisory Council was called to order by Chari Stella Koch at 7:10 pm.

**1. Introduction of Peter Sheehan, Director, Division of Environmental Health**

Noel introduced Mr. Peter Sheehan, the new Director of the Division of Environmental Health. Mr. Sheehan reviewed some of his work history, including work in Missouri, Arizona, and California. He expressed an interest in supporting the work of EQAC. Chair Koch thanked Mr. Sheehan for visiting and said she looked forward to hearing from him and his department in the future.

## **2. Health Department Briefings:**

### **a. Alternative on-site sewage systems**

Mr. Martin Thompson delivered the first of 3 health department briefings-an update on Alternative On-Site Sewage Systems (AOSS). This issue is of interest to EQAC because in 2010, the County, in response to Virginia-mandated actions, adopted emergency regulations for AOSS. The County adopted final regulations in 2011. The initial interest was triggered by concern that these new systems were being mandated and Fairfax County did not have experience in managing them. Today there are almost 700 such systems and they generally seem to be operating well; roughly 50% of new approved systems are now AOSS.

As noted in Mr. Thompson's presentation, AOSS offer an alternative to connection to sewage treatment plant connection or the use of septic systems. They disperse the waste material into soil and are designed to improve the level of treatment. Moreover, they can be used in areas where soils do not drain well enough to support septic systems.

Mr. Thompson reviewed the different types of AOSS, which all require care and receive regular inspections. He also noted that the county collects information on the operations of these systems. He noted that the failure rate of these systems was relatively low (2.6%) but noted that these systems are relatively new to the county and have a limited track record. He stressed the need for awareness among owners of these systems of their maintenance needs. As Mr. Thompson concluded his remarks, it became clear that these new AOSS will allow for development in areas of the County, which people had not previously been able to develop because of the poor soil drainage.

Questions and answers focused on outreach to property owners regarding maintenance, the permitting process and the extent to which the Health Department has sufficient resources to implement needed inspection and education components of the program. Mr. Thompson and Mr. Sheehan both indicated that the Health Department has sufficient staff to administer the permitting program at this time. Mr. Sheehan indicated that, if demands on staff increase as a result of education needs, staff may be pulled from other areas in the Health Department to assist.

### **b. Naturally-occurring asbestos**

Mr. John Yetman provided EQAC with a presentation on naturally-occurring asbestos. He noted that there are about 5,200 homes and 890 businesses in areas with naturally-occurring asbestos. Asbestos is a concern because fine asbestos particles can become suspended in the air and, when inhaled, can penetrate deep within the lungs and trigger lung-related diseases. He presented a map identifying

areas with the potential for naturally-occurring asbestos and noted that this information is available to homeowners and businesses.

Mr. Yetman noted that naturally-occurring asbestos in Fairfax County is found in bedrock and is will not pose a risk to residents unless it is exposed and disturbed through processes such as mining or development. He noted that the only mining operations near this area are reported to date back to before the Civil War. With respect to development, he referenced standards from the Occupational Health and Safety Administration and noted the departmental effort to provide education to county agencies that may pursue development projects in areas with the potential to contain asbestos. In response to questions, Mr. Yetman noted that there are no monitoring requirements for builders. He noted, however, that potential exposures associated with development are limited to the duration of the development process, in that sites are graded and covered after construction—once asbestos-bearing materials are covered, they do not pose a threat of providing a source for airborne fibers.

**c. Partnership for a Healthier Fairfax**

Robin Wilson provided a presentation on the Partnership for a Healthier Fairfax. In her presentation, Ms. Wilson described the partnership as a coalition of community members and organizations that are working together to improve community health. She highlighted the use of the MAPP process (Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships) by the Partnership, describing the process as a community strategic planning process to identify public health issues and develop goals and strategies to address them. She also noted that the county has been awarded a \$2.5 million “Community Transformation Grant” that will be used over a five year period to increase the community’s capacity to promote health and prevent chronic disease.

Ms. Wilson noted that the MAPP process involves assessment, planning and implementation. She identified the program’s vision and outlined the four MAPP assessments that have been performed: (1) a Local Public Health System Assessment through which strengths and weaknesses of the public health system were identified; (2) a Forces of Change assessment that focused on trends, factors and events that are likely to influence community health and quality of life, or impact the work of the local public health system; (3) a Community Themes and Strengths assessment that gathered, through several processes, input from the community regarding issues of community importance; and (4) a Community Health Status analysis, that evaluated key indicators and data on health status, quality of life and risk factors in the community. Ms. Wilson summarized the results from each of these assessments and noted that there were several cross-cutting themes that have emerged, one of which has been given the broad heading of “Policy, systems and environmental change.” Each of the cross-cutting themes has been applied in the identification of strategic issues—one such issue has been

identified as “Environment and Infrastructure.” Ms. Wilson added that there is considerable overlap between the strategic issues identified through the MAPP process and the requirements of the Community Transformation Grant; she noted that the grant requirements were being folded into the strategic issues already identified by the Partnership for a Healthier Fairfax.

Ms. Wilson indicated that the next phase of the MAPP process will involve the formulation of goals and strategies for each strategic issue. She noted that strategic issue teams were being formed to address each of the five strategic issues and highlighted the results of the MAPP assessments as they relate to the Environment and Infrastructure Strategic Issue Team. She described the areas of focus for this team and encouraged EQAC’s participation on it. She noted opportunities for involvement in the near term.

Ms. Wilson described a parallel effort that is under way to explore the feasibility of establishing an environmental public health tracking network for the county. She noted that a grant from the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials has been obtained for this effort, which will seek to link environmental health conditions with outcomes through the integration of environmental health data at several geographic levels.

Questions and answers focused on several issues, including the county’s poverty rate, definitions of what a healthy house and healthy work environment are, public outreach efforts on these definitions, impaired bodies of water, social determinants of health and challenges associated with implementation of strategies that will be developed through this planning process.

Larry Zaragoza indicated that he would follow-up with Ms. Wilson for further information about the effort and that he may participate based on this information.

Ms. Wilson provided the following link for additional information  
[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/hd/mapp](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/hd/mapp).

Ms. Wilson’s contact information is as follows: phone 703-246-8799, email:  
[RobinWilson@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:RobinWilson@fairfaxcounty.gov).

After the last presentation, EQAC engaged the Health Department staff in additional discussion. A primary area of interest was lead paint. John Yetman, who manages this issue for the Health Department, noted that the predominant sources of lead are things in the house (e.g., spices, cosmetics and other products from abroad) rather than the house itself (e.g., lead paint). He noted that, of the roughly one dozen cases the department gets each year, there have been no cases of lead contamination that have been linked to drinking water and only one that has been linked to lead paint. He contrasted this with other areas, where almost 100% of lead contamination issues are related to buildings.

**3. 2012 Annual Report on the Environment—Status Update**

Noel Kaplan reviewed the schedule for the Annual Report on the Environment, noting that he was in the process of transmitting requests to agency for information.

**4. Approval of the minutes of the February 8, 2012 EQAC meeting**

Approval of the minutes of February 8 was deferred to the next meeting.

**5. Approval of the minutes of the April 11, 2012 EQAC meeting**

Linda Burchfiel moved approval of the minutes as submitted. Frank Divita seconded the motion. The motion passed by a unanimous vote of the members present.

**6. Chairman's items**

Chairman Koch noted that she will be attending a meeting of the Choose Clean Water Coalition in Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

She also noted that she attended a National Academy of Sciences symposium on uranium mining. She noted that the members of the NAS panel were concerned about the impact of possible mining operations in Virginia. While a number of issues were discussed at this meeting, the panel highlighted the lack of regulations to manage the mining industry, financial assurance, and the much higher rainfall in Virginia than those states where mining is more established--the higher rainfall increases the challenges of managing the spread of any contamination by stormwater runoff. Larry Zaragoza agreed to draft an EQAC resolution, in the form of a legislative position, to strengthen the resolution adopted by EQAC in January, for consideration in June.

**7. Council member items**

George Lamb noted the Green Breakfast on Saturday, May 12.

Frank Divita asked about the resolution from the Tree Commission on the management of tree cover on county park land. Noel Kaplan responded that the resolution was provided to EQAC members for their information and that no specific action had been requested of the council. Chairman Koch noted that, of course, EQAC supports trees. It was, however, noted that the resolution lacked specifics and the intent of the resolution was unclear. Noel Kaplan noted that the resolution would be discussed at the Board of Supervisors' Environmental Committee meeting on May 15.

**8. Staff items**

Noel Kaplan noted that Charles Smith has replaced Heather Schinkel as the Manager of the Natural Resource Management and Protection Branch with the Fairfax County Park Authority. He asked if EQAC would be interested in receiving presentations from Charles regarding the management of natural resources and parks in urban areas and an update on invasives management efforts. EQAC agreed to have these presentations.

Noel Kaplan noted that EQAC would need to vote on any legislative positions for the 2013 General Assembly by the August meeting.

Noel Kaplan noted that a record number of applications had been received for the July 2012-June 2013 Student Member position and that there was a broad distribution of applicants from among the county's public high schools.

Noel Kaplan noted that, on Thursday, May 31, the Planning Commission's Environment Committee would meet to continue its discussion of the county's green building policy. He noted that a follow-up meeting had been scheduled for June 28.

Noel Kaplan noted the Board's Environmental Committee meeting, which will be held on Tuesday, May 15 at 10:00 AM in Conference Rooms 9 and 10 of the Government Center.

Dr. Agazi had no comments.

**9. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 9:45 pm.