

**FAIRFAX COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ADVISORY COUNCIL
MINUTES**

DATE: Wednesday, November 12, 2014
TIME: 7:15 P.M.
PLACE: Hidden Oaks Nature Center

MEMBERS PRESENT

Stella Koch (Chairman, At-Large)	David Smith (Braddock)
Larry Zaragoza (Vice Chair, Mt.Vernon)	Rich Weisman (Sully)
Matthew Baker (Student Member)	Clyde Wilber (Springfield)
Alex Robbins (Providence)	

MEMBERS ABSENT

Linda Burchfiel (At-Large)	George Lamb (At-Large)
Frank Crandall (Dranesville)	Robert McLaren (At-Large)
Johna Gagnon (Lee)	Glen White (Mason)

STAFF

Kambiz Agazi	Noel Kaplan
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GUESTS

Susan Datta	David Molchany
Bill Greenleaf	Scott Sizemore

The meeting convened at 7:15 P.M.

Briefing on the FY 2016 Fairfax County Budget Process

Matters discussed:

- Briefing from Susan Datta, Chief Financial Officer and Director, Department of Management and Budget.
- Review of budget calendar.
- Revenue projections for FY 2016—not looking strong. Forecasts to be featured in a presentation to the Board of Supervisors on November 25.
- Heavy reliance on real estate taxes for revenue (approximately 70% of the county's revenue).

- Economic factors causing there to be little growth in real estate values, and implications to the FY 2016 budget—characterization as not being a “doomsday” budget, but not growth either.
- Anticipation of a recommendation for a ¼ cent increase in the Stormwater Service District fee.
- Anticipation of a recommendation for \$535,000 in funding for the Environmental Improvement Program, but no increase in that amount.
- Comparison with Arlington County’s economic/revenue situation.
- Support for redevelopment along the Richmond Highway Corridor.
- Positive implications of the redevelopment of Springfield Town Center.
- Implications of federal decisions on the county budget—assumption of no increase in federal spending, with a slight decrease this year.
- Assurance that EQAC would be kept apprised of any proposed cuts to environmental programs. Agreement that there is a need for long-term commitment to these efforts.

Motions made: None.

Follow-up actions: None.

Perspectives on PACE (Property Assessed Clean Energy) financing and the need for revision to related state enabling legislation

Matters discussed:

- Presentation from Bill Greenleaf, Executive Director, Richmond Region Energy Alliance
 - Overview of the PACE funding concept.
 - Enabling legislation adopted in 2009; lacks priority lien status.
 - The Virginia PACE coalition and its effort to amend the law such that the PACE loan’s lien status would be equal to the tax lien, along with other changes (i.e. a provision allowing localities to charge fees to offset costs).
 - Anticipated introduction into the 2015 General Assembly of such a bill.
 - PACE programs around the county, with examples of implementation.
 - Desire for EQAC to be kept apprised of the status of related legislation.
- Discussion with Scott Sizemore, Director, Revenue Collection Division, Fairfax County Department of Tax Administration.
 - Need for better understanding of how local government roles would play out—i.e., local government role as intermediate between a private lender and a property owner?
 - Need to perform PACE needs analysis to determine if current real estate system can support PACE requirements/functionality and if so, what system changes would be necessary should this idea be pursued (substantial costs to revise the system).
 - Assumption of risk should a building owner walk away from the loan.
 - Costs of the program to the county vs. the program’s benefits.

Motions made: None.

Follow-up actions:

- Bill Greenleaf will keep EQAC apprised of status of legislation.
- EQAC may choose to advise the Board of Supervisors should legislation be introduced.

Discussion of grant funding through Virginia's Stormwater Local Assistance Fund (SLAF)

Matters discussed:

- A draft memorandum prepared by Stella Koch that would express EQAC's support to the Board of Supervisors for grant funding through SLAF.
- Agreement to change the words "More than 11" to "Roughly a dozen" in the beginning of the third paragraph of the memorandum.

Motions made:

- Stella Koch moved approval of the memorandum as revised. Larry Zaragoza seconded the motion.

Record of the vote:

- The motion was approved by a unanimous vote, with no abstentions.

Follow-up actions:

- Transmittal of the memorandum to the Board of Supervisors.

2014 Annual Report on the Environment—Wrap up

Matters discussed:

- Preparation for the November 18 presentation to the Board of Supervisors.
- Need for a primer to new EQAC members regarding the Annual Report preparation process.
- Desire to make the process more sustainable than it is—there were again many last minute drafts submitted.
- Concept of establishing an EQAC editor in order to relieve staff of that burden.

Motions made: None.

Follow-up actions:

- EQAC agreed to discuss the Annual Report preparation process in February.

Identification of an EQAC representative for the Tree Commission

Matters discussed:

- The need for an EQAC representative—there were no volunteers, although Larry Zaragoza expressed interest in attending the next Tree Commission meeting.

Motions made: None.

Follow-up actions:

- This will continue to be discussed until a representative is identified.

Chairman's items

Matters discussed:

- Stella Koch will miss the December 10 meeting.
- Discussion with Glenda Booth of concerns regarding the county's fall cankerworm spraying program; discussion in December.
- Need for elections of officers for 2015 at the January meeting.
- George Lamb's participation on the interview panel for the new director of DPWES-Land Development Services (Bill Hicks). A thank-you to George Lamb from James Patteson, Director, DPWES.

Motions made: None.

Follow-up actions: None.

Council member items

Matters discussed:

- Larry Zaragoza: Need to have a discussion about the loss of pollinators and efforts being pursued to address this.
- Matthew Baker: Looking forward to the December discussion in light of his Envirothon topic's focus on urban forestry.
- Matthew Baker: Receiving this year's Ellie Doyle student volunteer award from the Fairfax County Park Authority.

- Clyde Wilber: Virginia is drafting a rule for an ammonia standard based on freshwater mussels. It will be difficult to implement, but freshwater mussels are an important part of our ecosystem. Agreement that there would be a presentation on this issue at a future meeting.
- David Smith: Potomac Piranha group is raising awareness and developing innovative solutions to protection and improvement of the Chesapeake Bay and Potomac River. Roughly 70-80 people attended a recent “Hackathon” event at which several potential innovative solutions were identified.

Motions made: None.

Follow-up actions:

- There will be a presentation at a future meeting on Virginia’s development of a new ammonia standard as it relates to freshwater mussels.

Staff items

Matters discussed:

- Public hearing set for January 21, 2015 in rooms 2 and 3 in the Government Center.
 - Video testimony to be accepted.
 - Other testimony options being discussed.
 - Request from a citizen for EQAC to hold its public hearings at more central locations in the future (e.g., the Springfield or Braddock District office).
- Funding of Environmental Improvement Program projects to be discussed at the December 10 meeting.
- Forthcoming meetings of the Planning Commission Environment Committee.
- Kambiz Agazi’s presentation to Faith Communities in Action—inclusion of a slide about EQAC.

Motions made: None.

Follow-up actions:

- Kambiz Agazi’s presentation to Faith Communities in Action to be provided to all EQAC members.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:25 P.M.