

Approved by EQAC, February 25, 2010

**COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
COUNTY OF FAIRFAX
SUMMARY OF THE ANNUAL PUBLIC HEARING OF THE
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ADVISORY COUNCIL**

DATE: NOVEMBER 30, 2009

The public hearing commenced at 7:30 P.M. in the Board Auditorium of the Government Center. A remote public hearing testimony site was established in room 221A (Woodlawn) of the South County Center, with communications between sites established through a two-way audio and visual communication hookup via Fairfax County Cable Channel 16.

There were 11 speakers, five of whom provided written testimony either during or after the public hearing. The speakers were:

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| 1. Gilbert Morrison (Government Center) | 7. Catherine Voorhees (So. County) |
| 2. David Kyle (South County) | 8. Roger Diedrich (Govt. Center) |
| 3. Chip and Austin Dain (Government Center) | 9. Glenda Booth (South County) |
| 4. Judy Dain (Government Center) | 10. Brian Morrissey (Govt. Center) |
| 5. Rodney Loges (South County) | 11. Ross Shearer (Govt. Center) |
| 6. Claudia Thompson-Diehl (Government Center) | |

Four others provided written testimony but were not present at the public hearing:

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| A. Marty Schirmacher | B. Mark Sajbel |
| C. Kathi McNeil | D. Flint Webb |

Unless otherwise noted, participants presented testimony as individuals rather than on behalf of groups.

1. Gilbert Morrison, Lake Beverly Forest Civic Association

Mr. Morrison raised concerns about visual pollution, including debris from auto accidents, flares, campaign signs, mowed grass in medians and along curbs, grass growing over curbs, crushed curbs, signs on poles and stuck in the ground, shopping carts, debris from trucks, trash thrown from vehicles, construction debris from road work, spilled cans of paint and drywall compound, and cigarette butts. Mr. Foster expressed appreciation to Mr. Morrison for his comments, noting that there had been some attention given to these issues by EQAC.

2. David Kyle, Mason Neck Civic Association

Mr. Kyle raised concerns about noise from I-95 and Richmond Highway near the bridge over the Occoquan River, particularly as heard in the area along Old Colchester Road. He indicated that there had been a vast change in noise impacts,

especially with the recent widening of I-95. He requested that a noise study be performed by VDOT to see if improvements can be made.

3. Chip and Austin Dain

Chip and Austin Dain, both students at Woodson High School, had, in advance of the public hearing, provided EQAC a copy of a brochure that they had prepared regarding recycling of compact fluorescent lights, rechargeable batteries and packing materials. A copy of the brochure is attached to this summary. At the public hearing, they raised concerns about perceptions of hazardous materials, particularly compact fluorescent lights, expressing their view that most people don't know how to dispose of these properly. They recommended that there be an educational effort in this regard and that recycling opportunities for compact fluorescent lights and rechargeable batteries be expanded. Chairman Koch noted her recent presentation to the Board of Supervisors of the Annual Report on the Environment and the high level of interest expressed among board members in regard to recycling issues. Several EQAC members commended Chip and Austin for their efforts.

4. Judy Dain

Ms. Dain spoke briefly to the issue of bicycle lanes on county roads. She expressed her view that it is too dangerous to commute by bicycle in Fairfax County, particularly because of the steep gutters/fall-offs that characterize many of its roads. She stressed a need for the Comprehensive Plan to add bicycle lanes to roads, especially near Metro stations, parks and business parks. She acknowledged cost issues but stressed the benefits of bicycle commuting. Mr. Lamb recommended that Ms. Dain review the county's comprehensive map of bicycle facilities and get involved with biking groups. He noted the difficulty in getting land donations through proffers. There was additional discussion regarding the benefits and costs of bicycle lanes.

5. Rodney Loges, Harborview Civic Association

Mr. Loges thanked EQAC for providing the remote testimony opportunity at the South County Center. He raised concerns about noise impacts in the area of Old Colchester Road, noting traffic increases on I-95 and Richmond Highway and implications of BRAC changes. He asked if a study could be performed to find out where sound walls can be built.

Mr. Loges also raised concerns about runoff along Giles Run just upstream of Massey Creek. He stated that the creek is filling in with rock and debris, the entry road to his community is often under water, and it's rapidly getting worse. He asked if a study could be performed regarding the causes and solutions of the sedimentation problem.

Chairman Koch suggested that Mr. Loges contact the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District regarding the sedimentation/flooding issue. She also suggested that he report to the county any suspected erosion and sediment control violations. Mr. Crandall reiterated this suggestion. Ms. Gagnon noted that the Mount Vernon District Supervisor's office should be informed of his concerns. Dr. Zaragoza echoed Mr. Loges' drainage concerns; in regard to the noise issue, he suggested that EQAC could check with the Virginia Department of Transportation to find out what testing procedures may be possible.

6. Claudia Thompson-Diehl, Reston Association

Ms. Thompson-Diehl read from a prepared statement, a copy of which is attached. Her testimony focused on her opposition to potential cuts in the budget of the Fairfax County Park Authority, with particular concerns about possible cuts to environmental/nature center programs and forestry staffing. Mr. McLaren expressed his view that there was not appropriate balance within the Park Authority in regard to active recreation and resource protection. Mr. Crandall expressed concern about possible cuts to the invasive species management efforts of the Park Authority. Chairman Koch noted that EQAC would be receiving a briefing on the Park Authority budget at its January 13 meeting and asked that Ms. Thompson-Diehl be invited to that briefing.

7. Catherine Voorhees

Ms. Voorhees raised concerns about intensive development in the Hollin Hall neighborhood, particularly the construction of large houses on small lots. She noted that waivers of stormwater management best management practice requirements are being granted for these developments and expressed her view that these waivers are inappropriate. She raised concerns about impacts of the new development on erosion of drainage ditches and streams, and resulting sedimentation. She displayed a map identifying the locations of parcels that had, until recently, been characterized by one house on two lots but that have recently been developed with one house on each of the smaller lots. She provided this map to staff; the map is in the public hearing file and is available for review upon request.

Ms. Voorhees questioned how the county could allow for the doubling of density without any BMP controls. She noted that she had raised this concern to the Director of Land Development Services, who replied that exceptions of BMP requirements can be provided to the minimum extent needed to afford relief. She noted that she had recently brought this issue to the attention of the Division of Chesapeake Bay Local Assistance, Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation.

Subsequent to the public hearing, Ms. Voorhees copied EQC on e-mails she sent to DPWES-LDS staff in regard to this issue, along with related documents. She also sent an e-mail in regard to this matter directly to EQAC. The e-mail to EQAC is

attached to this summary; the other materials are in the public hearing file and are available for review upon request.

8. Roger Diedrich

Mr. Diedrich read from a prepared statement, a copy of which is attached. His written testimony references several attachments; these attachments are not included with his written statement as an attachment to this summary; however, they are included in the public hearing file and are available for review upon request.

Mr. Diedrich's comments focused on the Cool Counties Climate Stabilization Declaration and county efforts in support of this declaration. He referenced a September 21, 2009 presentation from staff to the Board of Supervisors' Environmental Committee and expressed concerns about staff's representation of greenhouse gas emissions reductions from the Fairfax Connector bus system and from waste management practices (in that neither were reflective of reductions from 2007 levels). He questioned EQAC acceptance of the staff figures and expressed concern that the board may not have a clear picture on this issue.

He asked EQAC to be specific in its requests to the Board of Supervisors in regard to Cool Counties-related efforts, stating his view that it would be possible and helpful to have a rough estimate of county emissions (in advance of the formal inventory) to provide a proper context for discussions of reductions.

Mr. Diedrich also expressed concerns about the recently-adopted county energy policy, criticizing a lack of community input and what he described as a very undesirable result. Ms. Burchfiel asked for elaboration on his concerns regarding the energy policy. Mr. Diedrich referred Ms. Burchfiel to a letter from the Sierra Club describing problems with the policy, noting that it doesn't tie into the climate change initiative. Chairman Koch asked for a copy of the Sierra Club letter. Mr. Diedrich asked if anyone on EQAC had reviewed the policy.

9. Glenda Booth, Audubon Society of Northern Virginia; Friends of Dyke Marsh

Ms. Booth thanked EQAC for the remote testimony opportunity at the South County Center. She identified a broad suite of issues of concern and followed her testimony with written comments summarizing these issues. Her written comments are attached to this summary. She identified the overall context of her review of the EQAC report as focusing on: unhealthy streams; unhealthy air; wetland losses; sprawl; limited natural areas remaining; and an unhealthy Potomac River and Chesapeake Bay.

She provided an overview of several issues of concern per her review of the Annual Report on the Environment:

- She commended EQAC for including information about the Wetlands Board but felt that two important initiatives have been omitted: The Wetlands Board's living shorelines policy and mitigation policy.
- She commended EQAC for discussing climate change and recommended the following: reduced energy use; cessation of building along the shoreline; shifting of transportation funding to more of a public transit focus; and reduced sprawl.
- She noted the county's tree canopy coverage goal of 45% by 2037. She asked if this could be increased to 50% to align with the American Forests recommendation of 50% tree cover in suburban areas. She also asked if the Tree Conservation Ordinance could be strengthened. She expressed her view that there is a need for better protection of tree save areas during construction, and she also raised concerns about soil compaction around trees. She recommended better fencing around tree save areas, more natural landscaping and a cessation to "volcano mulching" of trees.
- In regard to air quality, she raised concerns about the possible loss of the Mount Vernon monitoring station.
- She raised concerns about increasing traffic along Richmond Highway relating to BRAC, and she noted that there are opportunities to revitalize the corridor with mixed use, sustainable, transit oriented development.
- In regard to trash and recycling, she referenced data from the Alice Ferguson Foundation and expressed concern about the need for more trash cans and better recycling opportunities in the schools. She thanked EQAC for highlighting the cigarette butt issue and recommended exploration of San Francisco's approach to the issue—a tax designated to cover cigarette litter removal. She recommended strengthened enforcement of the anti-littering ordinance.
- She stressed the need for better education regarding invasive species.
- She expressed concerns regarding the balance between natural resources and active recreation in county parks. She supported restoration of degraded areas, natural landscaping in parks and evaluations of natural resources of county and school land before selling or transferring it.
- In regard to stormwater runoff, she stressed the need for smaller parking lots and controls on infill development. She raised concerns that watershed plans are not being considered during the zoning process and that VDOT hasn't been a player in the development of these plans.
- She suggested that grass not be planted in order to deter increasing geese populations.
- She raised concerns about bird mortality resulting from height and illumination of communications towers. She suggested that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service be consulted when making permitting decisions. She also recommended that a number of guidelines on the placement of towers

be considered, and that environmental impact statements be prepared for each permit applicant for towers.

- o In regard to county revenues, she expressed her view that, if we need enabling legislation, we should pursue it. She expressed support for: polluter pay mechanisms; charges to developers for tree loss; a gas tax; congestion pricing; and water fees to encourage conservation.

Mr. McLaren asked for guidance on the timing of the Wetlands Board initiatives and indicated that he'd follow up on these.

Mr. McLaren asked if there were specific zoning cases Ms. Booth could identify in regard to her concern about a lack of consideration of watershed plan recommendations. She noted that there were several in the Mount Vernon District but did not have details.

Mr. Weisman noted EQAC's concern about air quality monitoring stations; he indicated that the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality was anticipated to issue a report on this matter in the spring. Dr. Zaragoza noted that DEQ was likely to keep the Mount Vernon monitor, as it has the highest ozone levels of the monitors in the county. He also supported Ms. Booth's comments regarding BRAC.

Chairman Koch noted that EQAC's top recommendation regarding stormwater management was an increase in the Service District fee to 1.5 cents.

10. Brian Morrissey

Mr. Morrissey noted his recent review of the report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and characterized the report as an eye-opener. He stated that he wanted to review EQAC's report in order to become better versed in what we're doing in regard to climate change and opportunities for coordination. He stressed a need for public education and awareness on this issue. He noted a recent town hall meeting relating to this matter. He also noted that our sister city in Germany had lowered its greenhouse gas emissions to 1992 levels. He questioned how we're doing in comparison and asked if we could have a parallel plan.

Chairman Koch referenced efforts under way in Stuttgart, Germany and by the Northern Virginia Regional Commission. She asked if Mr. Morrissey had any specific recommendations relating to education.

11. Ross Shearer

Mr. Shearer read from a prepared statement, a copy of which is attached. His presentation focused on three matters: Cool Counties-related efforts, the recently adopted county energy policy, and the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Coordinating Committee.

In regard to Cool Counties-related efforts, he stressed a need for an inventory of operational greenhouse gas emissions. He expressed his view that a baseline level of greenhouse gas emissions is needed to serve as a starting point for planning. He also called for a strategic plan for operational reductions of greenhouse gases.

With respect to the energy policy, he criticized a lack of consideration of climate change or pelagic acidification. He also expressed concern about the concept of incorporation of cost-benefit analyses in the promotion of energy conservation. Finally, he expressed concern that no public comment was sought on the policy prior to its adoption.

In regard to the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Coordinating Committee, he stressed: a need for the committee to address greenhouse gases other than CO₂ released from fossil fuel consumption; a need for community outreach; and a need for outreach to the business community.

Closing

Chairman Koch thanked everyone for coming out and participating.

Written Testimony

Four people submitted written testimony after the public hearing. Each piece of testimony is attached to this summary. The people who provided this testimony, and a summary of the issues they addressed, are as follows:

A. Marty Schirmacher, South County Federation member

- Concerns about illegal signs and the need to enforce the law.

B. Mark Sajbel, Member, Board of Directors, Newberry Station Homeowners Association

- Concerns about limited opportunities for recycling of computers—why not provide drop-offs at the I-95 landfill and I-66 transfer station?
- Criticism of the county for replacing buses with diesel-fueled buses rather than hybrid or electric vehicles.
- Criticism of the county for allowing developers to strip development sites of trees.
- Criticism of the county and Dominion for not giving rebate incentives to homeowners for renewable or energy-saving technologies.
- Overall criticism of the county for insufficient investment in environmental initiatives.

C. Kathi McNeil

- Concerns about potential implications of FY 2011 budget cuts on natural resources—in particular, she's concerned about possible cuts to the Resource Management Division of the Fairfax County Park Authority.

D. Flint Webb

- Several specific comments and recommendations to EQAC in reference to the Air Quality chapter of EQAC's Annual Report on the Environment.