

**FAIRFAX COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION  
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE/ENVIRONMENT  
QUALITY ADVISORY COUNCIL  
THURSDAY, APRIL 17, 2008**

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Walter L. Alcorn, At-Large  
Frank A. de la Fe, Hunter Mill District  
Jay P. Donahue, Dranesville District  
Earl L. Flanagan, Mount Vernon District  
James R. Hart, Commissioner At-Large  
Kenneth A. Lawrence, Providence District  
Timothy J. Sargeant, At-Large

**COMMITTEE MEMBER ABSENT:**

Rodney L. Lusk, Lee District

**PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF PRESENT:**

Sara Robin Hardy, Assistant Director, Planning Commission Office  
Linda B. Rodeffer, Clerk to the Planning Commission

**ENVIRONMENT QUALITY ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Stella Koch, Chairman  
Robert McLaren, At-Large  
David Schnare, Springfield District

**DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ZONING STAFF PRESENT:**

Noel Kaplan, Senior Environmental Planner, Planning Division (PD)

**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND ENVIRONMENT SERVICES STAFF PRESENT:**

Jimmie Jenkins, Director  
Judith Cronauer, Engineer IV, Code Analysis, Land Development Services  
John Friedman, Director, Code Analysis, Land Development Services.  
Michelle Brickner, Director, Site Development Services  
Randy Bartlett, Director, Stormwater Management

**OTHER COUNTY STAFF PRESENT:**

Zack Fields, Land Use Aide, Board of Supervisors' Chairman's Office  
Marlae Schnare, Board of Supervisors, Springfield District

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Michael Rolband, President, Wetland Studies and Solutions, Incorporated

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Chairman James R. Hart called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m., in the Board Conference Room, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax, Virginia 22035.

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Chairman Hart said the said the first item on the agenda was approval of minutes, followed by a discussion of protection of riparian buffers.

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Commissioner Lawrence MOVED THAT THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES OF MARCH 27, 2008, BE APPROVED.

The motion was seconded the motion and carried unanimously.

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Judith Cronauer, Code Analysis, Land Development Services, Department of Public Works and Environmental Services (DPWES), explained that the Board of Supervisors (BOS) had adopted a Policy Plan Amendment which addressed stream and buffer area protection upstream of resource protection areas (RPAs) and environmental quality corridors (EQCs) on February 25, 2008. She said when the amendment was authorized, the BOS had asked staff to examine strategies to encourage reforestation and protection of headwater areas to complement the Policy Plan. She said staff had made two presentations to the Board's Environmental Committee concerning the impacts of extending riparian buffers upstream, including considerations that must be addressed prior to establishing a regulatory approach. She said the Board's Environmental Committee had agreed with staff's recommendation that the Planning Commission's Environment Committee, in partnership with the Environmental Quality Advisory Council (EQAC), address these considerations and solicit stakeholder input. After discussion, Chairman Hart requested that committee members send their suggestions for participants to Ms. Cronauer within the next week. Ms. Cronauer said she would then compile a list of the recommendations for the committee's review.

In response to a question from Commissioner Lawrence, Chairman Hart said he did not think a deadline to accomplish this task had been established.

Ms. Cronauer said staff's preliminary list of considerations to protect riparian buffers had been distributed and requested that additional considerations be sent to her. (A copy of the list is in the date file.)

Ms. Cronauer suggested scheduling several work sessions with the Planning Commission's Environment Committee, EQAC representatives, and stakeholder representatives. She recommended the sessions be scheduled for 2 to 2 ½ hours to allow time for discussion and consensus. Chairman Hart suggested an ending time for the work sessions be established and

that committee meetings start at 7:00, instead of 7:30, to allow more time for in-depth discussions.

Ms. Koch and Dr. Schnare discussed the role of EQAC in this process.

In response to a question from Chairman Hart, Ms. Cronauer said she envisioned that the work sessions would produce options to be presented to the BOS Environment Committee which would then provide direction as to whether to work toward a regulatory approach or to conduct broader outreach once the considerations had been narrowed down.

Responding to a question from Commissioner Alcorn, Jimmie Jenkins, Director, DPWES, said it was his understanding that the BOS desired a regulatory approach. He said because there were a number of issues that needed to be addressed, staff had suggested the involvement of the Environment Committee, EQAC, and stakeholders.

Commissioner Alcorn suggested a two-step process: first, determining options; second, deciding how to implement them.

Mr. Jenkins suggested the process start by meeting with all stakeholders to identify issues and then establishing a focus group to work on them and report back to the larger group. Michelle Brickner, Director, Site Development Services, DPWES, said staff had consulted with the County Attorney's Office about the regulatory authority that could be used for protection of buffers.

Commissioner Hart suggested that smaller groups be established with a designated spokesperson to address the group as a whole. He said although a consensus may not be able to be reached, options could be narrowed down to be included in a document to be presented to the BOS for advertisement.

Commissioner Lawrence commented that it might not be possible to get the desired number of riparian buffers because the County was almost built-out. He asked if consideration had been given to a hybrid approach whereby something else would be done to mitigate the effects of insufficient buffers. Dr. Schnare said he thought this was a good idea, but had been told by members of EQAC that it was a different issue.

Michael Rolband, President, Wetland Studies and Solutions, Incorporated, said spending one whole day with the stakeholders to narrow down the issues would be more beneficial than several short meetings.

Commissioner Sargeant recommended the following steps: (1) education about the issues; (2) definition of regulatory and legal issues; (3) best practices; (4) discussion of pros and cons; (5) consideration of options; (6) staff analysis of options; (7) subcommittee review and comment; (8) Environment Committee/EQAC review and comment; (9) staff review of Committee comments; (10) Environment Committee vote; (11) recommendation to the Planning

Commission. He suggested having several meetings rather than one long one and thought the entire process would take about six months.

Referring to Commissioner Lawrence's suggestion about a hybrid approach, Ms. Koch recommended reading *The Eight Tools of Watershed Protection* which presented a hierarchy of ways to protect watersheds, the first three of which were: land use, land conservation, and buffers. She said further down the list was stormwater management which was similar to Commissioner Lawrence's suggestion which could perhaps be looked at separately.

Mr. Jenkins said he would review the comments made tonight with staff and propose a process at the next committee meeting.

Commissioner de la Fe requested that the issues be defined. Commissioner Lawrence agreed especially if the issue was not buffers. Commissioner Alcorn recommended that staff present a proposal for the scope and process of the project at the next committee meeting.

A committee meeting was scheduled for May 15, 2008 at 7:30 p.m., to continue discussion on this topic.

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The meeting was adjourned at 8:14 p.m.  
James R. Hart, Chairman

An audio recording of this meeting is available in the Planning Commission Office, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Suite 330, Fairfax, Virginia 22035.

Minutes by: Linda B. Rodeffer

Approved: May 1, 2008

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Linda B. Rodeffer, Clerk  
Fairfax County Planning Commission