

**FAIRFAX COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
THURSDAY, JUNE 1, 2006**

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Walter L. Alcorn, At-Large
John R. Byers, Mount Vernon District
Frank A. de la Fe, Hunter Mill District
James R. Hart, Commissioner At-large
Nancy Hopkins, Dranesville District
Laurie F. Wilson, At-Large

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

None

OTHER COMMISSIONER PRESENT:

Kenneth A. Lawrence, Providence District

PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF PRESENT:

S. Robin Hardy, Assistant Director, Planning Commission Office
Linda Rodeffer, Clerk, Planning Commission

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE/ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ADVISORY COUNCIL
(EQAC) MEMBERS PRESENT:

Frank Crandall, Dranesville District
Stella Koch, Chairman, At-Large
Chet McLaren, Braddock District

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND ENVIRONMENT SERVICES STAFF
PRESENT:

Jimmie Jenkins, Director
Michelle Brickner, Director, Site Development Services
Randy Bartlett, Director, Stormwater Management
John Friedman, Engineer III, LDS
Matthew Meyers, Ecologist III, Stormwater Planning Division
Krystal Kearns, Information Officer II, Stormwater Management

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ZONING STAFF PRESENT:

Noel Kaplan, Senior Environmental Planner, Planning Division (PD)
John Bell, Engineer III, PD
Pamela Nee, Chief, Environment and Development Review Branch, PD
Deborah Albert, Planner, PD

OTHERS PRESENT:

Kambiz Agazi, Environmental Coordinator, Office of the County Executive
Michael Rolband, President, Wetlands Studies and Solutions, Inc.
Laura Giese, Wetlands Studies and Solutions, Inc.

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Planning Commission Vice-Chairman John R. Byers constituted the meeting at 7:30 p.m. in the Board Conference Room at 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax, Virginia, pursuant to Section 4-102 of the Commission's *Bylaws & Procedures*, and indicated that the first order of business was to elect a committee chairman.

Commissioner Hart MOVED TO NOMINATE WALTER L. ALCORN AS CHAIRMAN OF THE 2006 ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hopkins and carried unanimously. Vice Chairman Byers then turned the chair over to Commissioner Walter L. Alcorn, Chairman.

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Commissioner de la Fe MOVED THAT COMMITTEE MINUTES OF APRIL 27, 2006 BE APPROVED. The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.

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Noel Kaplan, Senior Environmental Planner, Planning Division, Department of Planning and Zoning, noted that there were two items on the agenda: (1) a discussion of possible Policy Plan amendment language to strengthen guidance relating to stream and buffer area protection/restoration; and (2) a presentation by Krystal Kearns, Public Information Officer, Stormwater Management Business Area, regarding stormwater management outreach and education.

Mr. Kaplan distributed a handout entitled "Policy Plan Amendment Options to Strengthen Policy in Headwaters Areas," dated June 1, 2006, a copy of which is in the date file. He said the options for consideration were: (1) general policy support under stream protection objective in the Policy Plan; and (2) environment quality corridor (EQC) policy expansion. He said option 1 would incorporate a new statement within an existing objective dealing with stream protection and water quality protection. He noted that this approach would provide general support for riparian or headwaters stream buffer protection and restoration within the overall context of stream protection and water quality. He explained that it would not be directly associated with EQC policy, but would be a stand alone policy stating that it was desirable to preserve buffer and headwaters areas and also recognize that other issues, such as stormwater management and site design, needed to be considered. Mr. Kaplan said option 2 was a more aggressive approach that would amend the EQC policy and expand the EQC in headwaters areas of watersheds. He noted that the pros and cons of both options had been discussed with Chairman Alcorn and Stella

Koch, Chairman, EQAC, and that DPZ staff preferred option 1 because it would provide more flexibility.

Ms. Koch pointed out that regardless of the choice made it would be valuable to track cases to determine if protection had been increased or decreased. Mr. Kaplan said there had been several recent cases where buffer area protection and restoration had been sought and could be used as examples to compare the effectiveness of both options.

Commissioner Lawrence said perhaps a "war-gaming" approach could be used to determine which option would be the best. Mr. Kaplan agreed and said it would be possible to use recent cases, such the development of the Wedderburn property in the Providence District and the Nawls Road property in the Mount Vernon District, to make this determination.

Commissioner Wilson said the language in both options "where consistent with overall site design and stormwater management benefits" seemed to indicate that site design was the priority when consistency with Policy Plan guidance should be the priority. Mr. Kaplan said the language recognized that tradeoffs might be required in some cases and that the policy would not supersede other design and stormwater management goals. Ms. Koch said site design should not be the priority, but should reflect the policy.

Responding to a question from Commissioner Hart, Chairman Alcorn said that staff had been tasked to identify one or two methods to strengthen guidance in the Policy Plan relating to stream and buffer area protection and restoration. He pointed out that there were also other initiatives to accomplish this goal, such as low impact development.

In response to another question from Commissioner Hart, Mr. Kaplan said the proposed amendment would not be a mandate requiring buffer restoration, but would afford an opportunity to look at this issue at the time of special permit, special exception, or rezoning applications.

Commissioner Hart expressed concern about the language "where consistent with overall site design" because a requested change might not have anything to do with site design. Mr. Kaplan responded that the proposed language would not necessarily require protection and restoration but would encourage it.

Responding to a question from Commissioner Wilson, Mr. Kaplan explained that option 2 would call the headwater area part of the EQC whereas option 1 would not. He said that under option 1, the EQC policy would not be changed but would encourage preservation and restoration beyond that.

In response to a question from Frank Crandall, EQAC, Dranesville District, Mr. Kaplan said that the proposed amendment would address development and redevelopment subject to the zoning process but not by-right development.

Responding to a question from Chairman Alcorn, Mr. Kaplan said that he thought both options could be presented for discussion with the understanding that only one option would be selected.

In response to a question from Commissioner Wilson, Mr. Kaplan said he could not support both options because it would be too difficult to determine which one should be applied.

Chairman Alcorn asked the committee members which option they preferred. Commissioner Byers said he preferred option 1 and Commissioner Lawrence said he preferred consideration of both options. Ms. Koch suggested that both options be advertised and as part of the review process a comparison be made of actual cases showing what the outcome would have been under each option. The committee agreed with Ms. Koch's suggestion.

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Chairman Alcorn noted that another part of stream protection was citizen outreach and education.

Krystal Kearns, Public Information Officer, Stormwater Management Business Area, DPWES, made a presentation on stormwater management outreach and education, a copy of which is in the date file. She stated that outreach and education were based on stormwater management program goals of environment protection and public safety. She said that 80 percent of the County's streams were in fair or poor condition and that a Chesapeake Bay Program survey conducted in 2002 had indicated that almost half of the residents believed that industry was the main source of pollution when in fact it was runoff from lawns, agricultural land, and roads. Ms. Kearns noted that although 92 percent of the people surveyed indicated they were interested in helping improve water quality, only 50 percent thought their actions adversely affected water quality. She said outreach included partnerships with organizations such as homeowners associations; volunteer and youth groups; the Audubon Society; environmental workshops; schools; the media; other jurisdictions; and stewardship. She explained that letters, brochures, and websites had been used to inform residents about resource protection area changes that would improve water quality and how their property could be impacted. Ms. Kearns said partnerships and stewardship would be expanded and outreach and education would be strengthened with a focus on schools.

Responding to a question from Chairman Alcorn, Ms. Kearns said that homeowners who had streams located on their property had not been specifically targeted although outreach materials had contained information about what residents who lived along stream banks could do. She also noted that letters had been sent to owners whose property would be impacted by amendments to the RPA policy. Chairman Alcorn suggested consideration be given to targeting owners who had streams located on their property and providing them with information about what they could do to improve them.

In response to a question from Ms. Koch, Ms. Kearns said that the radio campaign had been aired in both English and Spanish and other efforts would be made to reach out to those for whom English was a second language. Chairman Alcorn noted that visual graphics could be used to cross the language barrier.

Michael Rolband, President, Wetlands Studies and Solutions, Inc., suggested that the County offer to assist owners with buffer restoration.

Chairman Alcorn said one more Committee meeting would be held before making a final recommendation to the Planning Commission.

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The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.
Walter L. Alcorn, Chairman

For a verbatim record of this meeting, reference may be made to the audio recording which can be found in the Planning Commission Office.

Minutes by: Linda B. Rodeffer

Approved: January 25, 2007

Linda B. Rodeffer, Clerk
Fairfax County Planning Commission