

**FAIRFAX COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION  
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE  
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2010**

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

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

COMMITTEE MEMBER ABSENT:

Walter L. Alcorn, At-Large

FAIRFAX COUNTY STAFF PRESENT:

Noel H. Kaplan, Senior Environmental Planner, Environment and Development Review Branch (EDRB), Planning Division (PD), Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ)  
Maya P. Dhavale, Planner III, EDRB, PD, DPZ  
Ellen N. Eggerton, Green Building Ombudsman, Land Development Services, Building Plan Review Division, Department of Public Works and Environmental Services  
S. Robin Ransom, Assistant Director, Planning Commission Office  
Kara A. DeArrastia, Deputy Clerk to the Planning Commission

OTHER PRESENT:

Linda Burchfiel, Sierra Club

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Chairman James R. Hart called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m., in the Board Conference Room, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax, Virginia 22035.

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Commissioner Flanagan MOVED THAT THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES OF OCTOBER 6, 2010 BE APPROVED.

Commissioner Lawrence seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

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Ellen Eggerton, Green Building Ombudsman, Land Development Services, Building Plan Review Division (BPR), Department of Public Works and Environmental Services, delivered a presentation on green building energy monitoring and data collection. She also reported that residential and commercial development projects designed to attain certain thresholds of green building design were eligible for shorter waiting times during the site plan and building plan review processes. Ms. Eggerton added that as the County's Green Building Ombudsman, she assisted with the building plan review process and addressed questions on LEED certification.

Ms. Eggerton responded to questions from Committee members regarding enforcement of green building proffers and development conditions. She said County staff did not review green building features because this was beyond the minimum Building Code requirements. She also explained that BPR staff members enforce the minimum Building Code requirements as required by State law and applicable proffered building limitations such as height, but site reviewers verify that site-related proffers were in compliance with County Code and Zoning Ordinance requirements.

Commissioner Lawrence presented the following recommendations:

- 1) Determine the need for a checklist to verify the proper execution of proffers and assign responsibility to a particular staff member to oversee this;
- 2) Designate a staff member who would be responsible for verifying the proffered installation of ENERGY STAR appliances in new buildings by requiring that the building owners/operators provide copies of the purchase orders and installation receipts; and
- 3) Consider the wording of proffers to ensure their enforcement, absent a complaint.

Commissioner Sargeant commented that simply knowing that staff had checked off a list of proffers was insufficient. He suggested that staff members with applicable subject matter expertise ensure that green building proffers and development conditions were actually implemented and a method be established to measure their effectiveness. He explained that numerous municipalities have been developing community energy plans to help achieve reductions in their carbon footprint and greenhouse gas emissions.

Ms. Eggerton pointed out that 95 percent of the buildings in the County already existed and the County gained only a small percentage of new buildings per year; therefore, efforts to make existing buildings energy efficient would achieve greater greenhouse gas reduction for the lowest cost.

Committee members, Ms. Eggerton, and Noel Kaplan, Senior Environmental Planner, Environment and Development Review Branch, Planning Division, Department of Planning and Zoning, discussed the need for public outreach and education to encourage building owners and homeowners to install ENERGY STAR appliances and other energy efficient products; monitor energy and water consumption and analyze and compare the data collected; and retrofit/renovate their buildings to achieve improvements in energy efficiency and carbon reduction.

Commissioner Lawrence explained that he supported the monitoring of data on actual consumption of water and electricity in new buildings in the Tysons Corner area and other high density nodes, but he did not support comparing data between individual residential, office, and commercial units because it would not be helpful. He said he envisioned that specific proffers applicable to green building projects in Tysons and other transit-oriented development areas would reflect the applicant's commitment to use energy meter devices and install computing capability as part of the buildings' own control systems.

Chairman Hart said he would ask Commissioner Murphy whether a Land Use Process Review Committee or Committee of the Whole meeting should be scheduled to receive a briefing from staff on the proffer enforcement process.

Answering questions from Commissioner Flanagan, Mr. Kaplan explained that the County's Green Building Policy set an expectation that zoning proposals for nonresidential development and multi-family residential development of four or more stories within the County's growth centers incorporate green building practices sufficient to attain certification through the LEED program or its equivalent, although it was not a mandate. He noted that an applicant would typically proffer the establishment of a green building escrow and upon demonstration of the attainment of certification, the escrow would be returned to the applicant.

Commissioner Sargeant said it would be informative to learn about the County's overall strategy to achieve carbon reduction and other green initiatives and how existing buildings were addressed in this strategy.

Chairman Hart suggested that staff inform the Committee as to the next steps and if the issue of green building proffer enforcement and monitoring should continue to be discussed.

Ms. Eggerton asked that Committee members provide her with additional questions or requests for information.

Chairman Hart thanked Ms. Eggerton for her informative presentation.

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Chairman Hart announced that the following Committee meetings would be held at 7:00 p.m., in the Board Conference Room:

- Wednesday, January 19, 2011 – Continue the presentation on green building energy monitoring and data collection and review the first draft of a strawman on the Green Building Policy;
- Thursday, February 3, 2011 – Continue the presentation on stormwater management.

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The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 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: Kara A. DeArrastia

Approved: February 3, 2011

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Kara A. DeArrastia, Clerk to the  
Fairfax County Planning Commission