

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE

February 4, 2020

1:30 P.M.

Government Center Conference Room 11

Board of Supervisors Members Present:

Board Chair Jeffrey C. McKay
Committee Chair Daniel G. Storck, Mount Vernon District
Supervisor Walter L. Alcorn, Hunter Mill District
Supervisor John Foust, Dranesville District
Supervisor Penelope A. Gross, Mason District
Supervisor Pat Herryty, Springfield District
Supervisor Rodney L. Lusk, Lee District
Supervisor Dalia A. Palchik, Providence District
Supervisor Kathy L. Smith, Sully District
Supervisor James R. Walkinshaw, Braddock District

Others Present:

Cathy Ledec, Fairfax County Tree Commission
George Ledec, Friends of Huntley Meadows Park
Bob Vickers, Fairfax County Tree Commission
Jerry Peters, Fairfax County Tree Commission, NVSWCD
Ellie Reynolds, Environment Virginia
Rob Whitfield, Fairfax County Taxpayers Alliance
Merrily Pierce, McLean Citizens Association
Barbara Ryan, McLean Citizens Assoc. EP&R
Brian Keightley, Urban Forestry Management Division
John Burke, Fairfax County Park Authority

February 4, 2020 Meeting Agenda:

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/boardofsupervisors/sites/boardofsupervisors/files/assets/meeting-materials/2020/feb04-environmental-meeting-agenda.pdf>

February 4, 2020 Meeting Materials:

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/boardofsupervisors/board-supervisors-environmental-committee-meeting-feb-4-2020>

The following is a summary of the highlights of the discussion from the February 4, 2020, meeting.

Today's meeting was called to order at 1:30 P.M.

Item I Opening Remarks

After a brief introduction from Supervisor Storck, Committee Chair, the Environmental Committee accepted the minutes of October 8, 2019. With no further changes, the meeting minutes were accepted into the record.

Item II Climate and Energy Initiatives

The second topic on the agenda was an update on Climate and Energy Initiatives by Kambiz Agazi, Director, Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination (OEEC).

He began by highlighting the county's climate and energy initiatives from 2007 to 2020. He then gave an overview of portions of the Fairfax County Environmental Vision, adopted in 2004 and last updated in June 2017, with a focus on the Climate and Energy program areas which are associated with the community and government operations.

Next, he explained the Cool Counties Climate Stabilization Initiative, adopted by the Board of Supervisors in 2007. There are three elements of the declaration and guidance document, which asks county governments to take action on climate and energy at the local, regional, and federal levels. The first element of Cool Counties asked counties to conduct community-wide GHG emission inventories. The results of Fairfax County's inventory showed that the building and energy sectors contributed the most to community-wide emissions. As a result, the Energy Action Fairfax program was established to provide energy education and outreach for the community. Several initiatives have emerged from Energy Action Fairfax over the years, including the most recent, Energy Masters, expected to launch in spring 2020. Energy Masters, which will provide weatherization and energy efficiency upgrades for low-income housing residents, is the first of the county's Energy

Action Fairfax programs to focus on equity. Goals and updates for each initiative under Energy Action Fairfax were provided in a table.

Third, he explained the Fairfax County Sustainability Initiatives document and how comprehensive the issues are that face our community. Progress on the county's climate and energy programs are tracked in this document.

Finally, he highlighted the Fairfax County Operational Energy Strategy (OES) document that operationalizes the Board's policies for climate and energy. One of the main goals is in energy use and efficiency. The OES sets a target to reduce 20% of the county government's energy consumption over 10 years, which is equal to approximately 23% of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions for county operations. Updates were shared on how the county is implementing this target, including how the county will be using a state program to partner with an Energy Service Company (ESCO). Once selected, an ESCO will provide building audits and identify opportunities for energy efficiency improvements. The return on investments for these improvements is expected to be substantial. The county is working with Dominion on streetlight conversions in pursuit of the county's energy use and efficiency targets. About 800 conversions have been done to date, per Randy Bartlett, Director, Department of Public Works and Environmental Services (DPWES).

He also gave an update on solar power purchase agreements (PPAs), the use of which will help the county reach its innovative energy solution targets in the OES. He touched on how legislation plays a role in advancing PPAs and how we should be seeing solar panels installed in the county by late spring or early summer of FY 2022.

At the February 2019 meeting, the Board brought forth the Fairfax Green Initiatives Board Matter, which is currently being tracked by staff. The next update will be in May 2020. An interim update was distributed. A memo will also be distributed in the near future to give an update on this Board matter.

He touched on the Joint Environmental Taskforce (JET), which was formed on April 2, 2019 at the Joint Fairfax County/Fairfax County Public Schools meeting.

The Community-wide Energy and Climate Action Plan (CECAP) began with kickoff meetings for the Focus Groups and Task Force in January 2020. The

Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy and Resiliency (C-PACE) program is scheduled to launch in mid-February 2020.

Board Discussion:

Supervisor Gross pointed out that the twenty-year Environmental Vision, which was adopted in June 2004, was omitted from Slide 2. It included six major themes: growth and land use, air quality and transportation, water quality, solid waste, parks, trails and open space, and environmental stewardship. It was a sea change for this county and gave every staff member the opportunity to see where they fit into the Vision. DPWES began to be proactive in making recommendations as a result. Although it was revised in 2017, it began with the work from 2003-2004, which created the buy-in with staff and the community.

Supervisor Palchik commented that she would like more information on Senate Bill (SB) 1061, which would remove the exclusion of residential dwellings with fewer than five dwelling units to be eligible for C-PACE projects. She would like to know more about C-PACE. How do we start to triage these aggressive climate and energy goals with costs and a plan? She would also like to know more about the connection to our transportation system.

Dr. Agazi responded by referring to the goals referenced in the Board's Environmental Vision document to address the transportation and connectivity goals of the county. There are a lot of climate and energy goals built into the core services areas. For example, in the land use section, there are considerations to recognize potential impacts associated with climate change. The Operational Energy Strategy is a good place to look in terms of operational goals. Energy efficiency is extremely important, and is good governance. As for community goals, which the CECAP will address, we need to follow the science and how comfortable the community is with these goals.

Supervisor Palchik asked again about updates on SB 1061.

Supervisor Walkinshaw responded to that question by suggesting that Supervisor Palchik direct that question to the Legislative group for further update at a future Legislative Committee meeting.

Supervisor Walkinshaw asked about Fairfax Green Initiatives and action item 4A, which discusses accelerating goals and targets for the Operational Energy Strategy.

He believes that the clarity that comes from the General Assembly in terms of the state's long-term clean energy trajectory will set the stage for us to have clear goals for the county operations. Are we first doing no harm? Are we are making vehicle purchases and installing systems in new buildings that are decarbonizing our operations?

Dr. Agazi responded in terms of our own operations, we have committed to incentivizing the purchase of electric vehicles in our fleets. As we build our infrastructure, these vehicles will become an easier choice because they will have a place to charge. The national vehicle car standards are extremely important. The sooner we adopt California's car standards, the better off our air quality and greenhouse gas emissions will be.

Supervisor Walkinshaw asked that in terms of buildings, are we installing a natural gas furnace in new buildings? He gave the example of the Lee District Supervisor's Office.

Randy Bartlett, Director, DPWES, responded that they could get the answer for Supervisor Walkinshaw, at a later time.

Chairman McKay clarified that the question is: What are our standards now for new facilities?

Mr. Bartlett replied that Carey Needham will be presenting information to the Board regarding Green Buildings and LEED certification.

Dr. Agazi added that they intend to present that information at the May 12, 2020, Environmental Committee, and that there will be a specific policy recommendation that addresses the target in the Operational Energy Strategy regarding Green Buildings.

Chairman McKay requested that our current policy should be given in advance of that, because what will be presented will be a change from the current policy.

Dr. Agazi agreed that yes, it will be a change. Our current policy, adopted in 2008, is LEED Silver certification or equivalent for buildings greater than 10,000 square feet. LEED has gone from Version 2 in 2008 to Version 4 today, which is quite a bit of improvement in energy efficiency. We looked at going to LEED Gold in

2018 when we adopted the Operational Energy Strategy. We wanted to get familiar with Version 4 before making recommendations to improve the standards in May.

County Executive Bryan Hill responded with how the Strategic Plan process, as well as the energy plan, we will be setting benchmarks or metrics to get the infrastructure in place to achieve the goals we are hearing from the Board. Once the infrastructure is in place, it will be a lot easier to answer these questions, going forward. As the plan is put in place, the infrastructure will beget the metrics, and the metrics will allow you to say that we're doing a great job going forward as we move into 2035, 2045, and 2050.

Supervisor Gross was recognized and spoke about how the Board needs staff to give a fiscal impact for all these proposed changes.

Joe Mondoro, Chief Financial Officer, replied that staff will provide information to the Board on the impact of each initiative.

Supervisor Lusk was recognized and asked about Green Buildings, the LEED standards of the buildings, and how to maintain the LEED status over the life cycle of the buildings. What are we going to be able to do to ensure that the buildings built to LEED Silver and Gold standards uphold their certified status? He also asked about the developments built outside the county facilities, regarding proffers from developers and how we ensure that they uphold their status over time as well.

Supervisor Lusk also wanted to discuss the Energy Masters program. He thinks it's a great opportunity. Where do we plan to initiate the program first and how many homes or buildings will be improved?

Dr. Agazi responded that he will need to return to the Board with that information at a later time. The MOU was just executed, so the pilot program is in its planning stages at this time. The OEEC is working with Housing and Community Development and the Office of Strategy Management to determine where to start the pilot program and will know more in about a month.

Supervisor Foust was recognized and stated that he's pleased that in May staff will come back to the Board with the resiliency and adaptation plan and is interested in what the budgetary impact will be, particularly in the stormwater areas.

Supervisor Foust brought up the C-PACE program and commented that we need to be more aggressive in its implementation. He also feels that way about the solar PPA. He would like it to be expedited.

Supervisor Foust also asked about climate mitigation opportunities and asked what our goals are. Are we talking about our Environmental Vision and how the county government agreed to take on its 3% of GHG emissions?

Chairman Storck answered that our role is to enact leadership broadly. From his perspective, CECAP is about both, and will lead the 97% with the 3%. It should drive that process. The CECAP process will identify the goals for 100% of the community.

Supervisor Alcorn was recognized and wanted to discuss slide 11 and the Green Initiatives Implementation Matrix. He would like to offer his district as a volunteer to pilot language and plan amendments for the Comprehensive Plan of Reston for community discussion in terms of Fairfax Green Initiatives.

Supervisor Alcorn reiterated Supervisor Walkinshaw's point, that county operations should certainly be looking into replacing our fleet with electric or low-emissions vehicles. He would like to put it on the agenda of a future Transportation Committee meeting.

Supervisor Herrity was recognized and reiterated Supervisor Gross's comment that understanding the fiscal impacts of these initiatives is essential. We need to strike a balance. We need to keep an eye out for the fiscal impacts.

Chairman McKay responded that they would continue to look at the fiscal impacts. Some of the low-hanging fruit is already gone. We have to weigh that against our goals. As far as affordable housing, the driver of every rehabilitation project has been energy efficiency. If we're going to help people with affordable housing, we have to lower their utility bills. It's a good business decision and is a driver for that rehabilitation.

Chairman McKay also commented on the Energy Masters pilot program, and stated that there is huge opportunity there. We have non-profits and individually owned affordable housing units without homeowners' associations that do not have access to funding. He anticipates it will go way beyond the pilot, so he wants us to pay a lot of attention to that.

Chairman McKay echoed that there is a sense of urgency, especially with solar panels, because we are the leader in the Commonwealth. If the law changes in Richmond, it is because of us. We will be the most watched because of this. If we have permitting or engineering problems, we need to hear about these things. We don't want to stumble on our own process.

Chairman McKay commented that we need to make sure we are communicating with the public. When the OEEC was established, the Board agreed that the group should be excellent communicators to convey information to the community. Please let us know where we are with that. Chairman McKay went on to say that the major job of this committee is to monitor these initiatives and provide assistance to staff to maintain the sense of urgency.

Dr. Agazi responded by pointing out that the OEEC has hired a Communications Specialist that maintains its webpages. There is now a Twitter account for these initiatives. He has participated in interviews with the media. He would like to come back to the committee in May with an overview of the office's communications strategy.

Chairman McKay agreed and said it would be helpful. Chairman Storck concurred.

Chairman Stock went on to add that the role of a Communications Specialist who has daily contact with the public is very important.

Mr. Mondoro added that much is being implemented and these initiatives are communicated to the Board, and as we provide information to the Board, it will also be communicated to clarify that we are "doing no harm" with these actions.

Chairman Storck asked if the committee identified all its issues or if there were topics that hadn't already been brought up. He recognized Supervisor Walkinshaw.

Supervisor Walkinshaw asked if someone could explain the constraints on electrifying the County fleet.

County Executive Hill interjected that we need to focus the conversation on what we're doing and how we're getting it done. He will work with the team to work out the details on electrifying the fleet and other topics.

Supervisor Palchik asked about the implementation timeline for climate and energy initiatives, and requested that, moving forward, the Board is provided information on which projects should be prioritized.

Supervisor Foust asked about the electric vehicle goal and if 5% of vehicle purchases by 2030 would be electric. Didn't we already decide that it would be higher?

Chairman Storck reiterated that the County Executive would define these details with staff.

Dr. Agazi addressed the question from Supervisor Foust that the percentage was relative to the turnover of the fleet, which is about 30 vehicles a year. It was based on being realistic about future purchases.

Supervisor Foust asked whether the CECAP meetings will be held virtually or in person for the Focus Groups.

Chairman Storck responded that it would be flexible as to whether the groups meet virtually or in person.

Dr. Agazi responded that guidance has been provided and posted online for the Focus Groups to meet virtually or in person, as they see fit.

Item III Tree Action Plan Update

The third item on the agenda was a recommendation given by Brian Keightley, Director, Urban Forest Management Division, DPWES.

Mr. Keightley presented information on the Tree Action Plan update. All comments from the 2018 Environmental Committee have been addressed in the revision of the plan. The current plan is from 2006 and does not reflect the current state of county programs and initiatives. The timeline of the Tree Action Plan was presented.

The two new initiatives highlighted were the tree canopy goal and the community of practice. Mr. Keightley recommended the Board approve the update to the Tree Action Plan.

Board Discussion:

Supervisor Gross recommended that the Tree Action Plan update should be included at the next Board of Supervisors meeting as an action item. How soon can it be included in a Board agenda?

County Executive Hill acknowledged the urgency of her request.

Supervisor Walkinshaw acknowledged the efforts with this plan and that it is important to update it, going forward.

Supervisor Alcorn supported the recommendation. He commented on the loss of tree canopy on by-right development and how we should do what we can to protect it.

Chairman McKay commented that partnerships are needed to meet goals in the plan. For instance, to help meet the net zero loss of tree canopy goal, there's a lot of vacant, privately owned land where the county can financially support reforestation. He acknowledged that the Board supports the update, but we need to identify resources to take action.

Mr. Bartlett responded that it was the community of practice identified in the update that would support these actions.

Supervisor Herrity suggested that we need a balance. Sports, tourism and active recreation would need fields and that would be the county's responsibility, not private or by-right development.

Chairman Storck affirmed that the Board supports the actions in the Tree Action Plan update.

The meeting adjourned at 3:00 P.M.