

Joint Environmental Task Force
MEETING SUMMARY
1/19/2022

Committee Members in Attendance: Supervisor Dan Storck, Supervisor Penny Gross, School Board Member Karl Frisch, School Board Member Elaine Tholen, Richard Aiken, Karen Campblin, Richard Clayton, Eric Goplerud, Susan Stillman, Greg Ulses

WELCOME/UPDATES

- The Joint Environmental Task Force (JET) produced a Final Report in October 2020, with numerous recommendations across the Energy, Waste/Recycling, Workforce Development and Transportation focus areas.
- Since that time, staff from both Fairfax County Government (FCG) and Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) have been working to integrate the goals, adopted by both the Board of Supervisors and School Board, into their respective operational plans.
- The purpose of the January 19 meeting was to reconvene the JET to hear a one-year update on how these goals have been incorporated and are being acted on.
- Members were advised that this was to be the final formal JET meeting.
- FCG and FCPS staff were asked to provide a five-minute update for each of the JET Focus Areas, which are included below.

ENERGY

- FCG staff reported an amendment to purchase agreements with the county's solar power purchase agreement (PPA) providers. The providers will be reviewing a roster of county buildings to evaluate where solar installations may be feasible.
- In addition to the PPA, the county is pursuing other mechanisms to deploy solar. One is the use of the county's energy services contractor (ESCO). The other is to directly fund projects through capital construction. This latter mechanism is being pursued at a community center.
- On energy efficiency, work has begun at two county Rec Centers with an ESCO. The two projects, totaling \$3.6 million, will provide needed capital improvements and provide 25 percent energy savings at those sites. The ESCO will also be providing a retrofit at the Fairfax City Library, providing energy and water savings. The Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination (OEEC) is currently coordinating with county agencies on another round of projects.
- Capital Facilities is proceeding with net zero energy evaluations for new construction and major renovations. It is looking into all-electric building systems and equipment. It is also incorporating additional strategies in building designs to meet net zero energy goals.
- FCPS staff reported that it has been keeping track of and publishing an inventory of its carbon emissions since 2008. When staff compared 2019 data to 2020, they found that they achieved a 26.5 percent reduction in emissions and a 22.7 percent reduction in energy use but noted that last year's energy use is not representative of a normal year due to an executive stay at home order. However, FCPS has had a downward trend every year since 2008.
- With the solar PPA amendments noted by FCG staff, FCPS believes it will be pursuing solar at Annandale High School. FCPS will also be evaluating other methods to pursue solar.

- FCPS is also evaluating the creation of an Office of Carbon Neutral Implementation, and an additional funding source to ensure buildings meet net zero energy standards, on-site renewable energy goals and energy reduction goals. FCPS staff is identifying potential sites where such standards and goals can be implemented on a phased approach. This would require a significant investment in dollars and staff.

WASTE/RECYCLING

- FCG and FCPS staff reported on the development of a Zero Waste Plan for County and School Operations, adopted by the Board of Supervisors in the fall of 2021. The Zero Waste planning team is now moving into implementation.
- The immediate plan for implementation includes a marketing system to reach out to all stakeholders, develop outreach and educational materials, and toolkits for Zero Waste Champions.
- The implementation team is also looking at existing procurement policies and identifying contract language to include zero waste objectives as part of custodial contracts.
- Immediate-term zero waste strategies will be launched at the Government Center as a pilot, potentially with a Parks and Schools site as well.
- Staff is developing a tracking system for its zero waste and waste management goals.
- FCPS team members in particular are working toward zero waste strategies to educate and engage students and are beginning to make connections between zero waste and existing educational initiatives. Connections will be made with the FCPS workforce development team on this initiative wherever possible.
- FCPS will also continue to work with the National Wildlife Federation (NWF) on ways to engage students and teachers in reducing waste.
- Many of the zero waste strategies will require substantial financial investment and staff time. The county is in the process of hiring a Zero Waste lead; FCPS will also be looking into a similar position.
- Staff updates to the Board of Supervisors on the Zero Waste Plan are anticipated in July.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

- FCG staff reported that COVID drove a pivot to more virtual formats for many of their education and outreach efforts. The Department of Public Works and Environmental Services (DPWES) is developing a number of career outreach videos in coordination with FCPS staff.
- DPWES highlighted some of its ongoing educational efforts, including the Science of Wastewater, which was able to shift to a virtual format for students throughout the pandemic. Other educational programs, including the Grasses for the Masses program, Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) boat trips, and tours of the Noman Cole Wastewater Treatment Plant may be expanded going forward. DPWES is also planning to work with AP high school students in the spring to help run an educational field day with elementary school students.
- On internships and other direct contact programs, DPWES piloted a program with Centreville High School in 2021 to discuss career opportunities with students who speak English as a second language. DPWES maintains an employment program at Noman Cole where recent high school graduates are entered into a paid internship and trained with career operators; five employees have been hired through the program. It also continues a laboratory technologist internship

program in partnership with George Mason University, through which DPWES has successfully recruited two students. Finally, DPWES continues a professional engineer development program.

- A Department of Vehicle Services (DVS) internship program had to pause during COVID, but DVS is scheduled to meet with FCPS in the spring to bring back an abbreviated program, potentially returning to the full-time program next year.
- Environmental educators from FCG, FCPS, Parks and the Northern Virginia Soil and Watershed Conservation District (NVSWCD) meet monthly through the Fairfax Environmental Educators Team (FEET) to discuss various topics.
- FCPS Instructional Services staff closely collaborates with FCG staff. It continues to develop Green Careers Work-based Learning Toolkits for college and career specialists at all FCPS high schools.
- FCPS is exploring green career opportunities with Fairfax Water and will be exploring how it can best partner with the county's solar PPA providers to expand educational and (potentially) apprenticeship offerings to students.
- On the curriculum side, FCPS is looking to expand course offerings on trade, industry, and renewable energy. It is also reaching out to Falls Church City to learn more about its Academy for Sustainable Thinking.
- Finally, FCPS reported on an upcoming career expo event, taking place in the evenings of February 14-17, where regional high school students will be able to learn about green careers.

TRANSPORTATION

- FCG staff reported that a contract has been awarded to National Car Charging for the purchase of electric vehicle (EV) charging stations. Installations at five county buildings should be complete by the end of February. It is coordinating with agency partners to include infrastructure in capital improvement projects and to expand infrastructure at other county facilities.
- In FY 2021 and 2022, FCG replaced 100 percent of eligible fleet vehicles with EVs and is planning to do the same in FY 2023.
- Fairfax County Department of Transportation (FCDOT) has purchased eight electric buses for the Fairfax Connector fleet. All eight buses should be delivered by September and in service by the end of the calendar year. A consultant should be on board before the first bus arrives to help FCDOT through this pilot project. FCDOT is also working on the infrastructure to support electric buses. Dominion Energy has upgraded the transformer at the West Ox garage. The chargers for the buses are expected to be installed in May.
- FCDOT is completing an analysis of the vehicle requirements for the Richmond Highway Bus Rapid Transit project and the use of electric buses. That analysis is expected in the spring.
- On the JET recommendations related to bike and pedestrian improvements, FCDOT has been undertaking an Active Fairfax Transportation Plan. Phase I is nearly complete; Phase II is about to kick off. Funding from the Board of Supervisors has been provided. The Board has also engaged in an initiative to provide \$100 million in bike and pedestrian improvements over a number of years.

- FCPS staff reported that it has received eight electric school buses, which have been in operation since May 2021. Charging infrastructure has been installed by Dominion Energy at the Stonecroft facility in Chantilly.
- An additional 10 electric buses are scheduled to arrive this spring, through a Virginia Department of Environmental Quality program. Dominion Energy is installing additional charging stations at the Lorton facility.
- FCPS is applying for grant funding for an additional four electric buses. Decision on the award is due to be presented sometime this month. Additional opportunities are being discussed by staff.
- Finally, FCPS is seeking approval for a position to handle the conversion in planning and transition to electric buses.