

**COUNTY OF FAIRFAX
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ADVISORY COUNCIL (EQAC)
MINUTES**

DATE: January 11, 2023

TIME: 7:15 p.m. – 9:21 p.m.

LOCATION: Government Center Conference Room 4/5

EQAC Member Attendance

Name	Present Absent*	Name	Present Absent*
Stella Koch (Chair Emeritus, At-Large)	P	Larry Zaragoza (Chair, Vice-Chair Emeritus, Mount Vernon)	P
Johna Gagnon (Franconia)	P	Renee Grebe (Vice-Chair, At-Large)	P
Richard Healy (Mason)	P	Jacob Hammond (Student Member)	P
Ken Gubin (Dranesville)	V	George Lamb (At-Large)	P
Ken Lanfear (Hunter Mill)	P	Bryan Campbell (Braddock)	P
Elisa Meara (Providence)	V	Mike Zatz (At-Large)	A
Rich Weisman (Sully)	P	Clyde Wilber (Springfield)	A

* P indicates present; A indicates absent; V indicates attended virtually

Staff Attendance

Matthew Meyers (OEEC)
Neely Law (OEEC)
Sara Girello (OEEC)
Kelly Zitzer (OEEC)
Kate Daley (OEEC)
Chris Herrington (DPWES)
Ellie Coddling (DPWES)
Patricia Leslie (Virtual, Providence District BOS)

Visitor Attendance

Eliza Cava
Bill Hafker
Barbara Ryan
Rick Galliher
Debra Butler (Virtual)
Ann Bennett
Peter Mecca
Chris Shogren
Kimberly Horndeski
April Georgelas (Virtual)

Agenda Items, Discussion, Decisions and Votes

1. Adoption of EQAC's Policy for Remote Participation by Members and Allowance of Remote Participation by Elisa Meara and Ken Gubin

Chair Koch introduced the Environmental Quality Advisory Council Policy for the Remote Participation by Members and moved that EQAC adopt the Policy. Mr. Lanfear seconded the motion, and it carried by a vote of 10-0, with Ms. Meara and Mr. Gubin not yet able to vote and Mr. Zatz and Mr. Wilbur being absent from the meeting.

Next, Chair Koch announced that two EQAC members, Ms. Meara and Mr. Gubin, had requested to participate in the meeting remotely. She asked that Ms. Meara and Mr. Gubin each state their name, location, and reason for remote attendance. Ms. Meara said that she was participating remotely from the Dominican Republic due to a family member's medical condition that required her to provide care for said family member. Mr. Gubin said that he was participating remotely from Herndon, VA, due to a medical condition. Mr. Lanfear moved that Ms. Meara and Mr. Gubin could be adequately heard and that their remote participation comported with EQAC's Policy for the Remote Participation by Members. Dr. Zaragoza seconded the motion, and it carried by a vote of 10-0, with Ms. Meara and Mr. Gubin not yet able to vote and Mr. Zatz and Mr. Wilbur being absent from the meeting.

2. Election of EQAC Chair and Vice-Chair

Mr. Lamb (Nomination Committee Chair) presented EQAC the nominations for EQAC Chair and Vice-Chair. Mr. Weisman moved to nominate Dr. Zaragoza as Chair and Ms. Grebe as Vice-Chair. Ms. Gagnon seconded the motion, and it carried by a vote of 12-0, with Mr. Zatz and Mr. Wilbur being absent from the meeting.

3. 2023 Annual Public Comments on the Environment

Chair Zaragoza provided instructions to the public on the format of providing comment and called up each speaker.

Eight individuals provided citizen comment:

1. Eliza Cava, Director of Conservation at Nature Forward, formerly the Audubon Naturalist Society presented. Ms. Cava highlighted the recent gains in Fairfax County environmental initiatives and investments, questioned future decisions and actions, and expressed concern about budgetary threats to the Park Authority's request for equitable access to natural resources. Ms. Cava asked EQAC to question and push their supervisors to continue to address the climate and biodiversity crises. Ms. Cava further requested EQAC to stay involved in the process and continue to speak up in the watershed protection areas.

Following Ms. Cava's comments, Chair Zaragoza requested EQAC members and staff introductions. At the conclusion of the introductions, the public comments continued.

2. Bill Hafker, a resident of Oakton, VA, and having formerly served as the Sully district representative for CECAP, provided comments. Mr. Hafker thanked the county for instituting the plastic bag tax and the prohibition of plastic bags for yard waste and encouraged similar action on other single-use plastics. Mr. Hafker mentioned a need for an improved and more efficient trash system. Mr. Hafker then mentioned the effects development is having on the county's tree system and subsequent removal of tree benefits. Finally, Mr. Hafker expressed a lack of trust in the county to enact the climate actions and goals. Mr. Hafker requested EQAC ask county staff to provide a plan to act on now.
3. Barbara Ryan, Chair of McLean Citizen Association (MCA) Environmental Parks and Recreation Committee, shared her comments on the state of the environment and current top environmental issues of concern. Ms. Ryan addressed MCA's environmental issues of concern. First, climate change and reducing greenhouse gases (GHG) as addressed by the county's CECAP and Resilient Fairfax plans and expressed hope that, when implemented, the plans will make an impact. Ms. Ryan asked EQAC to support county efforts to promote public awareness on the climate change crisis and mitigation strategies. Second, Ms. Ryan shared MCA's concern for tree conservation and rapid development. Ms. Ryan asked EQAC to request county staff review ordinances and report on why the county has not been more effective in preserving urban tree canopy and suggest ways the ordinance could be strengthened. Third, Ms. Ryan highlighted the importance of stormwater management to MCA and asked that EQAC support adequate funding for stream restoration projects and encourage the use of best practices for the preservation of forested riparian buffer ecosystems and stream restoration. Fourth, Ms. Ryan shared that MCA strongly supports adequate funding for maintaining greenspaces and park maintenance to preserve and repair greenspaces, and further asked EQAC to review the health and environmental effects of artificial turf. Finally, Ms. Ryan expressed support for community outreach programs.

EQAC had four questions for Ms. Ryan. Mr. Weisman inquired about synthetic turf and recent advances in products. Ms. Ryan responded that recent studies are inconclusive of impacts. Mr. Lanfear asked if the stream restoration reference material could be shared. Ms. Ryan highlighted that links are contained within the written testimony. Mr. Lamb asked about the conservation of mature trees and asked that Ms. Ryan recommend a focus for EQAC. Ms. Ryan suggested staff investigate how the tree canopy ordinance is working and look at waivers that eliminate protections imposed by the ordinance.

4. Rick Galliher with the Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions (FACS) provided comments related to the county's solid waste management program. Mr. Galliher shared FACS's agreement in the lack of action and accountability in waste management. Mr. Galliher requested increased signage on waste receptacles and revisions to Chapter 109, better recycling, increased drop-off sites. Mr. Galliher noted these are not addressed in the CECAP and JET.

There were no questions, however Ms. Grebe stated her home is on county waste pickup and observed that county stickers were placed on all county recycling bins.

5. Debra Butler, from the Northern Virginia Citizens Association, virtually presented on the 495 NEXT construction. Ms. Butler shared details regarding the VDOT 495 expansion project, and potential unstudied sectional environmental impacts associated with the project, including animal habitats and tree canopy. Ms. Butler requested EQAC advocate to elected officials to change laws that allow for privatization of these types of projects. Ms. Koch asked with which elected officials have they spoken. Ms. Butler stated they have spoken with Supervisor Foust, Senator Favola and Delegate Murphy. They have not yet spoken to Congressman Connolly's staff. Stella further stated that VDOT is outside of County and there is not a role for EQAC but will review the recording for completeness of response. Ms. Butler will provide all information referenced within the presentation to EQAC.
6. Michele Richoux submitted written comments via email regarding pollution levels, safe transit options and multi-use trails, and they were entered into the record.
7. Eric Goplerud, Ph.D., from Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions submitted written comments via email regarding concerns and recommendations for staff on the CECAP Implementation Plan, and they were entered into the record.
8. Ann Bennett, a resident of Mason District, and the Land Use Chair for the Great Falls Group of Sierra Club presented on general topics of concern regarding the environment, natural resources, and emission reductions. Ms. Bennett expressed that the environment, emissions reductions, and climate are not the top of priorities for the county and explained additional concerns like increased streamlining, drinking water, tree loss and development projects, data centers, open space, and renewable energy. Ms. Bennett asked EQAC to recommend and support the hiring of a climate administrator to develop a response and bring in the business community to look at the land use.

After all speakers were heard, Chair Zaragoza closed public comment.

4. 2022 ARE Priorities (All)

Members discussed ARE 2022 recommendations prioritization as drafted by Mr. Lamb and Chair Zaragoza. Four recommendations were selected as the priorities for 2022 to include the 2022 ARE recommendations IDs as: 1LU-2019.3, 3C-W-2021.1, 5PER-2021.2 and 6CE-2022.2. Ms. Gagnon made a motion to adopt the four selected recommendations. Mr. Lamb seconded the motion, and it carried by a vote of 12-0, with Mr. Zatz and Mr. Wilbur being absent from the meeting.

5. Parking Reimagined Memorandum to the Board

Mr. Lamb provided a high level overview of themes conveyed in the draft memorandum. Members discussed the memorandum. Mr. Lamb moved to accept the memorandum

with revisions and edits as just discussed. Ms. Gagnon seconded the motion, and it carried by a vote of 12-0 with Mr. Zatz and Mr. Wilbur being absent from the meeting.

6. Adoption of EQAC's Policy for All-Virtual Public Meetings

Chair Zaragoza introduced The Environmental Quality Advisory Council Policy for All-Virtual Public Meetings. Discussion ensued on the policy and clarification was requested on the number of times members could participate remotely as per EQAC's Policy on Remote Participation, which was adopted earlier in the meeting. Following discussion, Ms. Koch moved that EQAC adopt the Policy for All-Virtual Public Meetings. Mr. Lamb seconded the motion, and it carried by a vote of 12-0, with Mr. Zatz and Mr. Wilbur being absent from the meeting.

7. Approval of December 2022 Meeting Minutes

Ms. Gagnon moved to accept the December 2022 minutes with revisions made by Chair Zaragoza which were printed and sent to EQAC. Ms. Koch seconded the motion, and it carried by a vote of 11-0-1, with Mr. Lamb abstaining from the vote and Mr. Zatz and Mr. Wilbur being absent from the meeting.

8. Chair's Items

Chair Zaragoza expressed gratitude to Ms. Koch for years of leadership. He also stated that Supervisor Storck had requested a follow up meeting to the meeting that was held with Ms. Koch and himself.

9. Council Members' Items

Ms. Grebe expressed interest to hear from staff working on updating the Environment Policy Plan of the Comprehensive Plan. Ms. Gagnon inquired where EQAC's meeting gavel was and Ms. Koch stated that it was given to county staff, but that its current location is unknown. Mr. Lanfear shared that Supervisor Alcorn removed two proposed site-specific plan amendment nominations from consideration in the Hunter Mill District that proposed to redevelop golf courses. Mr. Gubin inquired about if and when the 2023 ARE printed copies would be made available.

10. Staff Items

Ms. Law stated that Chairman McKay's office announced that there had been a change in the date for the Environmental Excellence Awards. The Awards are now proposed to be held on either March 14th or March 18th between 7:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. Ms. Law briefed the Council on the status of Charge Up Fairfax and Plastic Bag Tax disbursement presentations. Ms. Law also stated that staff had tentatively scheduled a budget presentation from the Department of Management and Budget for EQAC's March meeting, and has asked for staff to focus on the environmental aspects of the budget. Ms. Law made a request that materials for members provide materials to include on the agenda be received by staff a minimum of two days in advance of meetings to distribute to members. Lastly, Ms. Law inquired which Council members would like a printed copy of meeting materials. Based on discussion, staff will print six copies for future in-person meetings. Ms. Girello stated that staff is open to suggestions for format and layout of future in-person meetings. Ms. Girello announced that all future in-person

meetings will utilize Zoom and that future all-virtual meetings may also utilize Zoom, but that staff is evaluating its usage.

11. Adjournment

Chair Zaragoza moved that the meeting adjourn. Mr. Lamb seconded the motion, and it carried by a vote of 12-0, with Mr. Zatz and Mr. Wilbur being absent from the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 9:21 p.m.

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