

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

**MEETING MINUTES
DATE: March 13, 2024
TIME: 7:20 p.m. – 10:23 p.m.
LOCATION: 12000 Government Center Parkway
Fairfax, VA 22035
Conference Room 4/5**

EQAC Member Attendance

Name	Present/ Absent*	Name	Present/ Absent*
Larry Zaragoza (Chair, Mount Vernon)	P	Ken Lanfear (Vice-Chair, Hunter Mill)	P
Johna Gagnon (Franconia)	A	Stella Koch (At-Large)	P
Richard Healy (Mason)	P	Oaklen Kalinichenko (Student Member)	V
Ken Gubin (Dranesville)	P	George Lamb (At-Large)	P
Renee Grebe (At-Large)	P	Bryan Campbell (Braddock)	P
<i>Vacant</i> (Providence)	--	Eric Goplerud (At-Large)	V
Rich Weisman (Sully)	P	Clyde Wilber (Springfield)	P

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

Staff Attendance

Supervisor James Walkinshaw, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors
 Andrea Lewis, Staff Aide to Supervisor Walkinshaw
 John Morrill, Acting Director, Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination (OEEC)
 Matthew Meyers (OEEC)
 Sara Girello (OEEC)
 Kelly Zitzer (OEEC)
 Chris Herrington, Director, Department of Public Works and Environmental Services (DPWES)
 Benjamin Aiken, Deputy Director, Department of Code Compliance
 Ellie Coddling, Deputy Director (DPWES) (Virtual)
 Kelly Atkinson, Department of Planning and Development (DPD) (Virtual)
 Katie Hermann (DPD) (Virtual)
 Vanessa Simpson, Staff Aide to Chairman McKay (Virtual)

Visitor Attendance

Amy Gould (Virtual)
 Siobhan Chase, Vice President, Fairfax County Chapter of the Southern States Police Benevolent Association

Call to Order

Chair Zaragoza called the meeting to order at 7:20p.m. and announced that a few members had requested to participate in the meeting remotely. Chair Zaragoza read the remote participation language requirements and asked members to state their name, location, and reason for remote attendance. Mr. Goplerud shared that he was participating remotely from home due to family reasons, and student member Ms. Kalinichenko was participating remotely from home due to lack of transportation. Vice Chair Lanfear moved, and Mr. Lamb seconded to allow these two members to participate remotely. The motion carried by a vote of 10-0, with Ms. Gagnon being absent from the meeting, and Ms. Kalinichenko and Mr. Goplerud not yet able to vote.

Agenda Items, Discussion, Decisions and Votes

1. Comments from Supervisor Walkinshaw

Supervisor Walkinshaw, as the newly appointed chair of the Board's Environmental Committee, provided his perspective on the state of Fairfax County's environment and to answer questions from EQAC. His perspective is that Fairfax County is in the strongest position they've ever been in, and the Board is committed to improving water quality, tree canopy, addressing climate change. Two concerns noted were that (1) with tree canopy there is work to do, especially legislatively at the state and (2) stream quality has improved over the last 20 years, but it has now plateaued. The County's three key plans in these areas are the Operational Energy Strategy, CECAP, and Resilient Fairfax.

Supervisor Walkinshaw discussed questions and comments by EQAC members. He is concerned that Fairfax County is behind on EV adoption. A concern was raised that there is too big of a focus on global issues instead of focusing on what affects the quality of life for our residents. Another question was raised about how to effectively address the salary structure of the County with so many vacancies. A third concern was raised about lagging progress on environmental goals in the private sector. A final concern was raised about the impact of data centers on the County's environmental goals. Supervisor Walkinshaw noted that, in Loudoun County, he recalled that data center revenue accounted for \$800 million, which was 50% of their entire budget and this revenue stream is why it is hard for Fairfax County salaries to compete with neighboring counties.

2. Discussion on Land Use and Environmental Policy Plan Processes

Chair Zaragoza updated EQAC on the Policy Plan update. Staff has been developing a "crosswalk" of policies to see where the gaps might be, but that document is not ready yet. Staff expects there to be extensive outreach associated with the Policy Plan. Staff is trying to sort out the proper role for various stakeholder groups, such as EQAC. Staff is developing some options and they would like to return to EQAC when that is ready, perhaps in a few months.

In the meantime, Chair Zaragoza encouraged each chapter author to read relevant sections of the current Policy Plan and take notes on the various topics that need attention.

3. Trash in the VDOT Right of Way

Amy Gould gave a presentation and provided information on issues she has experienced first-hand on Americana Drive regarding trash and impacts along the road. There are significant problems with littering and dumping and illegal parking along the road which has resulted in collapsed storm drains and compacted and churned soil in the right-of-way. These problems were further exacerbated when those right-of-ways were widened from 3 feet to 10 feet.

EQAC members engaged in discussion about related issues. One suggestion was to ask Fairfax County's Code Enforcement to implement what they said they would do back in 2019. The issue of tree loss in VDOT right-of-ways was also raised, particularly in terms of what has taken place at the Popes Head Road interchange. There was also a mention of the transportation linkage of the loss of both trees and high quality / rare habitat for the Cinder Bed Road project which EQAC heard about at the January 2024 public hearing.

4. Draft FY25 Budget Recommendation Memo

EQAC members discussed the current draft of the budget memo. A significant part of the discussion focused on the possibility of changing the current *ad valorem* stormwater tax to instead be an impervious surface fees as other locales in Virginia currently have, such as Arlington has recently done. Department of Public Works and Environmental Services Director Chris Herrington discussed the complexities of this possible change. For context, Director Herrington led this kind of change in his prior job in the city of Austin, TX. Forthcoming will be a study of the pros and cons of this proposed tax and work with Tax Administration, GIS, and other relevant departments – there would be many steps in this process. He also described the high carbon footprint of the County's leaf street pile collection program, which currently does not collect sufficient fees to cover the cost of the program.

The budget letter is near-final and a final vote will be taken at April's meeting.

5. Draft Wildlife Management Consolidation Memo

An overview of the consolidation of the animal services issue was provided to EQAC by Mr. Campbell. Siobhan Chase, Vice President of the Fairfax County Chapter of the Southern States Police Benevolent Association, and also a current Animal Protection Police Officer (APPO), was present to discuss this issue with EQAC. Ms. Chase provided details regarding the APPO role, discussion of the challenges and complexities regarding wildlife, and provided transparency of the differences and similarities between APPOs and the newly proposed civilian Animal Control Officers (ACOs). EQAC members engaged in discussion of how to move forward regarding the current draft memo and in scheduling the requested meeting between EQAC and Department of Animal Sheltering Director Reasa Currier.

Mr. Wilber moved, and Vice-Chair Lanfear seconded to add a line to the beginning of the memo stating that this proposal will harm wildlife and that EQAC opposes this proposal, and to authorize Chair Zaragoza to issue the memo at a date of his choosing should a meeting with Director Currier not occur. The motion carried by a vote of 10-0, with Mr.

Goplerud and Mr. Lamb no longer being in attendance of the meeting and Ms. Gagnon absent from the meeting.

6. Approval of February 7, 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes

Mr. Healy moved, and Mr. Campbell seconded to accept the meeting minutes as provided. The motion carried by a vote of 9-0-1, with Mr. Wilber abstaining from the vote, Mr. Lamb and Mr. Goplerud no longer in attendance at the meeting, and Ms. Gagnon being absent from the meeting.

7. ARE Discussion

Vice-Chair Lanfear reported on the status of staff and council member responsibilities regarding the Annual Report on the Environment (ARE). Vice-Chair Lanfear is working with staff to best document how EQAC members can provide their chapter back to staff this year to ensure consistent formatting. Vice-Chair Lanfear will provide a robust training during EQAC's April meeting to show how to use the chapter templates staff is creating.

Chair Zaragoza provided a brief summary on his talk with Deputy County Executive Rachel Flynn regarding the ARE. An idea that was discussed was having an online version which could be more of a living document, with the benefit being that it would be less onerous at one time of the year and the work spread out throughout the year as there are necessary updates. However, that approach could lessen the impact of a once-a-year release. Chair Zaragoza also raised the point that Supervisor Walkinshaw would like an executive summary in the ARE.

8. Chair's Items

Chair Zaragoza was provided a memo regarding the roles and responsibilities for EQAC members and staff. Chair Zaragoza provided detailed comments on the memo which were shared with EQAC members. He stated it may be more productive to develop a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP).

9. Council Member Items

- a. Mr. Gubin thanked staff for his hard copy of the ARE.
- b. Ms. Grebe reminded members of the NVSWCD seedling sale opening tomorrow and also reminded members of the aggressive timeline for the Data Center Zoning Ordinance and the approach that the Board will not be proactively coming to provide updates, but rather EQAC must stay proactively engaged.

10. Staff Items

- a. Mr. Meyers appreciated the comments regarding an SOP. The preparation of tonight's meeting is why an SOP is needed – it is a lot of work to pull together a meeting of this complexity and help to define roles and responsibilities. An SOP should help make EQAC more effective.
- b. Ms. Girello highlighted that EQAC's joint meeting with the Fairfax County Park Authority Board will be held in Conference Room 4/5 on May 8th starting at 6pm

and running though 7:30pm.

11. Adjournment

Meeting ended at 10:23 p.m. following a motion for adjournment by Mr. Wilber, which was seconded by Vice-Chair Lanfear and carried by a vote of 10-0.

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