

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

**MEETING MINUTES
DATE: August 9, 2023
TIME: START 7:15 p.m. – 10:12 p.m.
LOCATION: Virtual Meeting via Zoom**

EQAC Member Attendance

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

* P indicates present; A indicates absent

Staff Attendance

Matthew Meyers, Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination (OEEC)
Neely Law (OEEC)
Sara Girello (OEEC)
Kelly Zitzer (OEEC)
Stephanie Cornejo, Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA)
Brendon Hanafin (FCPA)
Chris Herrington, Department of Public Works and Environmental Services (DPWES)
Willie Woode, Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District (NWSWCD)
Leslie Johnson, Department of Planning and Development (DPD)

Visitor Attendance

Barbara Bacon

Call to Order/All Virtual Meeting

Chair Zaragoza called the meeting to order at 7:15pm

Chair Zaragoza introduced the requirements to allow EQAC to meet virtually. He asked that all members introduce themselves and following, he moved that EQAC certify that the virtual meeting comported with EQAC's adopted policy for all-virtual meetings. He further moved that EQAC conduct the meeting electronically through a dedicated video- and audio-conferencing line, and that the public could access this meeting through the Zoom link provided on the agenda or by calling 404-443-6397 or 877-336-1831 (US Toll Free) and entering conference code

3476406. The motion was seconded by Ms. Gagnon, and carried with a vote of 12-0-0, with Mr. Healy being absent from the meeting.

Agenda Items, Discussion, Decisions and Votes

1. Park Authority Presentation; Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Access Strategy (PROSA)

- a. Ms. Cornejo with FCPA provided a briefing about the Park Authority’s ongoing strategy regarding recreation, open space, and access. Ms. Cornejo reviewed the Parks and Recreation System’s Master Plan Goals. The goals were to improve access and opportunities for healthy and active lifestyles, ensure protection, conservation, preservation, and interpretation of cultural resources, and improve and promote natural protection and management. She then explained the PROSA objectives of improving a 10-minute walk access to FCPA parks, enhancing access to complete park experiences, enriching habitat connectivity between environmental corridors, and analyzing and prioritizing needs and projects with an equity lens.
 - i. Chair Zaragoza asked what Ms. Cornejo was seeking from EQAC; Ms. Cornejo noted it was an informational briefing. She hasn’t scoped out the full need for project implementation. Mr. Hanafin (FCPA) said the PROSA will help to inform a 2026 bond referendum to get the “most bang for your buck”.
 - ii. Mr. Campbell asked how the PROSA relates to the county’s active transportation and comprehensive plans. Ms. Cornejo met with FCDOT several times in coordination for this plan and highlighted that all trails would be considered.
 - iii. Mr. Goplerud gave a link to a GIS map (available from OEEC) for tree canopy and social vulnerability showing 24 tracts with low canopy and high vulnerability.
 - iv. Ms. Koch suggested that areas like Great Falls, which are highly treed may not need the 10-minute walk as much as more built-up areas.
 - v. Mr. Lanfear noted a missing maintenance element. Mr. Hanafin said they will consider maintenance in efforts going forward.
 - vi. Ms. Koch noted that EQAC has raised the question about other potential sources of revenue at county parks such as a nominal parking fee at parks like Riverbend Park.
- b. Additional information may be found at the project website <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/node/8930?auHash=ki-foQ5vHdKffuzXBCzU1-i-dhtjoiIppIKLPILHgLY>.
- c. The draft PROSA Strategy summary report is available at <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/sites/parks/files/assets/documents/plandev/prosa/prosa-strategy-document-070523.pdf>.

2. Annual Report on the Environment (ARE) Chapter Presentations

a. EQAC members gave briefings about their chapters and EQAC voted on approval for each chapter.

- i. Vice-Chair Grebe gave an overview and moved adoption of the Parks and Ecological Resources chapter with the caveat that there may be factual or minor edits made before finalization. Mr. Lanfear seconded the motion, and it carried by a vote of 12-0-0, with Mr. Healy being absent from the meeting.
- ii. Mr. Wilber presented the ARE Waste chapter, provided explanatory slides and thanked Mr. Goplerud for chapter review. Mr. Wilber then moved adoption of the Waste chapter with the caveat that there may be factual or minor edits made before finalization. Mr. Goplerud seconded the motion.
 1. Mr. Lamb shared his experience with county leaf collection and noted he does not use the county services. Mr. Lamb also asked how leaf collection relates to recycling uses.
 2. Director Herrington of DWPES voiced concerns with the information presented by Mr. Wilber. More specifically, he stated that he did not accurately represent the county's approach to sanitary districts nor the options available to the county in terms of regulating sanitary districts. Director Herrington also raised concerns about Mr. Wilber's characterization of the staff involved in leaf collection because these staff are in no way involved in emergency response activities as stated by Councilmember Wilber. Director Herrington also provided a link to the leaf collection webpage for additional information (<https://engage.fairfaxcounty.gov/leaf-collection>). Director Herrington also noted that there are other issues and he offered to attend a meeting to review these concerns. Chair Zaragoza then asked Councilmember Wilber to put together questions for Director Herrington in advance of EQAC's next meeting and asked that other EQAC members take this opportunity to pose any questions that they might have as well.
 3. Mr. Goplerud noted his concerns about front-line staffing and if EQAC should make recommendations that might help the county to fill important vacant positions.
 4. Ms. Koch suggested there should be discussion about additional funding sources like she requests for wastewater (e.g., enterprise fund). Chair Zaragoza suggested a future discussion with county staff about sustainability.

Following discussion, Mr. Wilber amended his motion and withdrew the final recommendation about leaf collection and stated that he would capture it under concerns. The motion was then called and

carried by a vote of 12-0-0, with Mr. Healy being absent from the meeting.

- iii. Ms. Koch gave an overview of the ARE's Water chapter and thanked Mr. Lanfear and Mr. Wilber for their chapter review. Ms. Koch moved adoption of the Water chapter with the caveat that there may be factual or minor edits made before finalization and Vice-Chair Grebe seconded the motion.
 - 1. Chair Zaragoza suggested that Ms. Koch add a paragraph about data centers. Ms. Koch stated that she would do so.
 - 2. Mr. Goplerud discussed per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) contamination in the Occoquan reservoir. Ms. Koch suggested writing a letter after EQAC receives a briefing from the Upper Occoquan Service Authority (UOSA).
 - 3. Mr. Lanfear noted that restoring streams is very expensive and referred to a U. S. Geological Survey (USGS) study arguing that it would be difficult to assess the benefits of stream restoration.

The motion carried by a vote of 12-0-0, with Mr. Healy being absent from the meeting.

- iv. Chair Zaragoza presented the ARE Climate and Energy chapter and shared that he received comments from Mr. Goplerud and Mr. Gubin along with recent comments from Dr. Weisman suggesting the chapter could be more positive on the Dashboard. Chair Zaragoza moved adoption of the Climate and Energy chapter with the caveat that there may be factual or minor edits made before finalization. Mr. Gubin seconded the motion.
 - 1. Mr. Lanfear was concerned about the chapter's third recommendation since it is duplicative with other chapters. Vice-Chair Grebe suggested limiting to more important recommendations and Chair Zaragoza agreed to remove the recommendation.

The motion carried by a vote of 12-0-0, with Mr. Healy being absent from the meeting.

3. Preparation for Planning Commission Meeting

- a. Chair Zaragoza and Vice-Chair Grebe met with Commissioner Cortina to plan for future environmental policy discussions with the Planning Commission. There is an anticipated September meeting with the Planning Commission's Environment Committee
 - i. For preparation for the meeting, Mr. Meyers referred to the priorities that EQAC had adopted in January from last year's ARE priorities including: (1) improve processes to minimize ecological degradation from development pressure; (2) support and enhance policies and ordinances protecting streams, floodplains, and designated Environmental Quality

Corridors (EQCs); and (3) improve the land development process by prioritizing trees.

- ii. Mr. Lamb referred to a website about a Countywide Policy Plan Amendment (<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planning-development/plan-amendments/countywide-policy-plan-update>). Mr. Lamb suggested EQAC look at the comprehensive plan to help orient discussions about Planning Commission activities and to further consider what is meant by net environmental benefits (which came from Resource Protection Areas (RPAs)).
- iii. Dr. Law referred to information provided to EQAC prior to the meeting about the Planning Commission and suggested to plan for a future meeting for a more in-depth presentation on the land use planning process relevant to the 2023 ARE recommendations.
- iv. Ms. Koch suggested, with Chair Zaragoza agreeing, that the list of priority projects identified in January was for the purpose of coordinating with staff and was not intended to encompass the projects that would be appropriate for coordination with the Planning Commission. They agreed to review EQAC recommendations to identify recommendations that should be raised to the Planning Commission and share them with EQAC for agreement.

Chair Zaragoza stated that he and Vice-Chair Grebe will be meeting with Commissioner Cortina prior to the joint September meeting and that more information would be shared with EQAC once available.

4. Approval of July 12, 2023 Meeting Minutes

- a. Mr. Wilber moved adoption of the July 12, 2023 meeting minutes. Ms. Gagnon seconded the motion, and it carried by a vote of 12-0-0, with Mr. Healy being absent from the meeting.

5. Resource Protection Areas (RPAs) and Wetlands Outreach Initiative

- a. Mr. Wilber provided some slides about a recommendation to conduct outreach to RPA and tidal wetlands property owners. He stated that the RPA aspect was no longer a focus for the outreach at this time. Mr. Lanfear was pleased to see the proposed recommendation drop the RPA aspect and to focus on tidal wetlands. No further action was needed as the topic will be addressed in the ARE Land Use chapter.

6. Chair's Items

- a. Chair Zaragoza had no items to share.

7. Council Member Items

- a. Vice-Chair Grebe noted outputs from the recent Tree Commission meeting about legislative initiatives. She added that she will sit in on the upcoming Lake Accotink Task Force meeting.
- b. Mr. Goplerud shared that there will be a lecture at George Mason University about a new book on climate and faith. The Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions

is now the lead plaintiff in a suit against Virginia's governor regarding the Commonwealth's withdrawal from the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI).

- c. The following members had no items to share: Ms. Koch, Mr. Lanfear, Dr. Weisman, Ms. Gagnon, Mr. Gubin, Mr. Lamb, Ms. Kalinichenko, Mr. Campbell, and Mr. Wilber.

8. Staff Items

- a. Ms. Girello discussed a recent legal determination made by the Virginia Supreme Court in *Gloss v. Wheeler*, which relates to the Virginia Freedom of Information Act. She touched on the responsibilities that EQAC members have as members of a public body.
- b. Ms. Girello then showed EQAC a proposed document from the county's Office of Public Affairs staff, which EQAC could fill out to use at events or post online. The document would highlight EQAC members' personal information including individual photos, personal phone numbers, and email addresses. EQAC members were not in favor of developing such a document.
- c. Dr. Law said that the Board of Supervisors are planning to announce the 2023 Environmental Excellence Awards on September 12, 2023. Ms. Zitzer is on the event's planning committee.
- d. Mr. Meyers explained that stormwater funds as well as low-income weatherization efforts come from RGGI.

9. Adjournment

- a. The meeting ended at 10:12 p.m. following a motion for adjournment by Ms. Koch which was seconded by Ms. Gagnon and it carried by a vote of 9-0-0, with Messrs. Lanfear, Wilber, and Campbell not present for the vote and Mr. Healy being absent from the meeting.