

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

**MEETING MINUTES
JOINT MEETING WITH FAIRFAX COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

DATE: September 28, 2023

TIME: 8:15 p.m. – 9:32 p.m.

**LOCATION: 12000 Government Center Parkway
Fairfax, VA 22035
Conference Room 11**

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)	A	Stella Koch (At-Large)	A
Richard Healy (Mason)	P	Oaklen Kalinichenko (Student Member)	A
Ken Gubin (Dranesville)	P	George Lamb (At-Large)	P
Ken Lanfear (Hunter Mill)	A	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; V indicates attended virtually

Planning Commission Environment Committee (PC-EC) Attendance

Mary D. Cortina, Braddock District, Vice Chairwoman

John C. Ulfelder, Dranesville District

John A. Carter, Hunter Mill District

Daren Shumate, Mason District

Walter C. Clarke, Mount Vernon District

Phillip A. Niedzielski-Eichner, Providence District

Timothy J. Sargeant, Commissioner At-Large

Staff Attendance

Matthew Meyers, Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination (OEEC)

Neely Law (OEEC)

Katherine Hermann, Department of Planning and Development (DPD)

Joseph Gorney (DPD)

Corinne Bebek (DPD)

Kevin Jackson, Planning Commission (PC)

Satabdi Samaddar (PC)

Disclosure of Three or More EQAC Members Attendance at Meeting Prior to Call to Order for Joint EQAC-PC-EC Meeting

The PC-EC met with the Chesapeake Bay Exception Review Committee (ERC) prior to its meeting with EQAC. Several EQAC members were present during portions of the ERC meeting;

the discussion with EQAC started at 8:15 p.m. EQAC members did not participate in the PC-EC meeting with the ERC. A summary of the PC-EC meeting with the ERC is included below.

Summary of PC-EC Meeting with ERC

Vice Chairwoman Cortina called the PC-EC to order at 7:30 p.m.

Elizabeth Martin, Chair and Mount Vernon District Representative, ERC and David Schnare, Springfield District Representative, gave an overview of the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Ordinance (CBPO), ERC's role, current options to obtain a Resource Protection Area (RPA) exception, and how the Planning Commission (PC) and ERC could collaborate.

Matthew Hansen, Land Development Services (LDS), gave a PowerPoint Presentation on the CBPO. He described the types of development in Resource Protection Areas (RPA) including authorizing rules/statutes and across permitted uses, allowed uses, exempt uses, and the various exceptions. He also commented on the ERC's suggested collaboration proposal with the PC.

After his presentation, there was a discussion on the following matters:

- RPA exception applications that came before the PC on an annual basis;
- Current county and other similar jurisdictions' regulations for RPA exceptions;
- The tracking and reporting of RPA exceptions; and
- The specific role for the PC in this collaboration with the ERC.

The PC-EC expressed support for moving forward with the proposal and involving the Department of Planning and Development.

Vice Chairwoman Cortina then recessed the meeting.

Call to Order

Vice Chairwoman Cortina resumed the meeting and called it to order at 8:15 p.m.

Agenda Items, Discussion, Decisions and Votes

1. Welcome and Introductions
 - a. Vice Chairwoman Cortina welcomed EQAC and then introduced Chair Zaragoza.
 - b. EQAC members introduced themselves.

2. EQAC Annual Report Discussion and Overview of Top Recommendations and Emerging Issues
 - a. Chair Zaragoza presented an overview on EQAC's draft Annual Report on the Environment (ARE); its priority recommendations, inclusive of recommendations that related to the PC and land use planning; and how EQAC works on and addresses other emerging, sensitive issues, such as data centers. He also noted EQAC's eagerness to collaborate with the PC and PC-EC on the Environmental Element of the Policy Plan and enhance coordination and collaboration efforts between the two bodies.

- b. There was a discussion between EQAC members and PC-EC members on the following issues:
 - Current and emerging data center cooling methods and their impacts on the environment;
 - How EQAC could participate in the ongoing data centers review by the Planning Commission;
 - Guidelines for specific data centers that could be developed in residential communities;
 - The County is having trouble retaining employees in certain areas because the County does not appear to be competitive with other jurisdictions, so we are recommending that the County’s Employee Compensation be reviewed;
 - The Zero Waste Plan and how to meet the county’s goals; and
 - Electric vehicle (EV) charging stations, evolving technologies, their impacts, and how the PC has addressed charging stations through application proffers with developers.

Commissioners requested that EQAC’s recommendation memos on data centers be sent to the PC.

3. Presentation on the Environmental Element Policy Plan Update

- a. Joseph Gorney, Department of Planning and Development (DPD) and Corinne Bebek, DPD gave a PowerPoint Presentation on the Environmental Element Policy Plan Update. In their presentation they shared an overview of the existing Comprehensive Plan, Environmental Element, and other environmental sections and supplements They also noted a summary of the process for updating the Environmental Element of the Comprehensive Plan, including stakeholders engaged in the process. Finally, they shared staff research efforts including documents that would inform and guide the update process, research that staff plans to conduct, and next steps in the process.
- b. There was a discussion on the following matters:
 - The need to augment existing environmental policies/components of the Comprehensive Plan in this update process;
 - The need to provide a description of the determination of “net benefits”;
 - The process, timeline, and scope for the Policy update;
 - How the plan would incorporate integration with and allow for collaboration efforts with other jurisdictions, utilities, and regional bodies on environmental efforts; and
 - How other jurisdictions engaging in similar update processes to their plans and priorities, their efforts/impacts, and whether they could be model examples for the county to follow.

4. EQAC and PC-EC Coordination Roundtable

- a. Vice Chairwoman Cortina opened the floor to EQAC and PC-EC members to discuss how the two bodies could coordinate and collaborate.
- b. Discussion ensued on the following:

- Regular “milestone” check-in meetings between EQAC and the PC-EC about environmental priorities and collaboration on the Environmental Element update effort as it evolved through the process;
- Collaboration between the PC-EC and EQAC during the annual Capital Improvement Program process;
- EQAC priorities the PC-EC may be focused on and/or on which may want to collaborate;
- Green buildings and how to implement them across the county; and
- The County’s assessment of progress toward meeting 2050 carbon neutrality and green building goals and the importance of available data.

The PC-EC also requested the EQAC ARE be shared with it.

5. Adjournment

Vice Chairwoman Cortina adjourned the meeting at 9:32 p.m.