

**COUNTY OF FAIRFAX  
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ADVISORY COUNCIL (EQAC)  
MEETING SUMMARY  
DATE: May 12, 2021  
TIME: START 7:15 PM – 10:00 PM  
LOCATION: WebEx**

**EQAC Member Attendance**

Name	Present Absent *	Name	Present Absent*
Stella Koch (Chairman, At-Large)	P	Larry Zaragoza (Vice Chairman, Mount Vernon)	P
Johna Gagnon (Lee)	P	Renee Grebe (At-Large)	P
Richard Healy (Mason)	P	Prasi Thapa (Student Member)	P
Ed Monroe (Dranesville)	P	George Lamb (At-Large)	P
Ken Lanfear (Hunter Mill)	P	Bryan Campbell (Braddock)	P
Alex Robbins (Providence)	A	Mike Zatz (At-Large)	P
Rich Weisman (Sully)	P	Clyde Wilber (Springfield)	P

\* P indicates present; A indicates absent

**Staff Attendance**

Kambiz Agazi, Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination  
Craig Carinci, Stormwater Planning Division, DPWES  
Eric Forbes, Engineering & Environmental Compliance, SWMP  
Joe Gorney, Department of Planning and Development, DPZ  
Kelly Naylor, Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination

**Visitor Attendance (presenters)**

Chris Campbell, CDM Smith  
Chris Godel, CDM Smith  
Wei Liu, CDM Smith

**Agenda Items, Discussion, Decisions and Votes**

**1. Electronic Meeting Findings and Determinations**

Chairman Koch passed the gavel to vice-chair Larry Zaragoza and asked all members to confirm that they could hear by using the chat box. She then moved that the committee agree to the requirements for electronic meetings and her motion, which was seconded by Ed Monroe and was unanimously adopted.

## **2. Solid Waste Alternatives-Impact on Climate Change, Eric Forbes, Director, Engineering and Environmental Compliance, SWMP**

Mr. Forbes provided an overview of 2021 recycling efforts.

The annual recycling rate for 2020 was 48% up from 47% in 2019. Regarding cost per ton, for fiscal year 2020, the cost of recycling was over 50\$/ton, and thus far in fiscal year 2021, the cost of recycling is approximately \$30/ton. Waste to energy conversion at the Covanta plant can be compared at just over \$40/ton.

Improvements in recycling rate and cost/ton were attributed to an uptick in domestic markets for recycling materials; processing facilities are becoming more efficient; and the recycling stream is receiving a better-quality recycling product, as a function of outreach efforts. For example, less plastic bagging of recyclables has occurred. Additionally, recycling tagging has been effective for encouraging residential customers to properly set out recycling materials for pick-up. A study group for this effort in the county has consisted of 400 homes, 200 received inspection notices, and 200 were in a control group.

In terms of glass recycling, there are currently 42 purple bins in northern Virginia, 16 in Fairfax County and 18 in area towns. Restaurants and commercial enterprises are next to be considered.

Regarding organic drop offs, at the I 66 and I 95 transfer stations; 30,000 lbs have been collected, and there will be 4 additional pilot locations this summer.

In terms of yard waste, since March 1, 2021, plastic bags have been prohibited for setting out, and the county has been receiving:

- Grass recycling
- Backyard composting
- Reusable containers
- Paper yard waste bags

Mr. Forbes highlighted the recommendation by the county and schools through the Joint Environmental Task Force, JET to have implemented a zero waste plan, by 2030.

Mike Zatz asked about multi-family properties and whether there is outreach; since a common recycling effort could be helpful in these cases. Mr. Forbes responded by noting this could be a matter either responded to from the compliance side, or in terms of outreach, in which case, for example, advising on proper signage might be helpful.

Clyde Wilber expressed interest in greater availability of signage, stickers, etc to inform on organic recyclable protocols for communities.

Rich Weisman expressed interest in learning more to support recycling at the school level.

Also included in the discussion of solid waste was a presentation entitled: **“Response to Fairfax EQAC, Comments on Evaluation of Municipal Solid Waste Management Scenarios Report,”** by CDM Smith, with Wei Liu, Chris Gabel, and Chris Campbell

Three scenarios were studied:

1. Waste to energy
2. Residential curbside recycling
3. Landfilling

The study focused on EPA criteria pollutants and focused on primarily two options for solid waste disposal:

1. Waste to Energy (WTE) at Covanta (since 1995) that includes transport and conversion
2. Landfilling through out-of-county landfills at the King George and Shoosmith Landfills

Generally, WTE and landfilling presented pros and cons in each case. In terms of the EPA criteria pollutants, WTE at Covanta produced more NO<sub>x</sub> and SO<sub>x</sub> (precursors to ozone); however, landfilling produced more VOC and CO.

Clyde Wilber noted that it appeared Covanta was a better method of disposal from a GHG reduction perspective, but did increase NO<sub>x</sub> and ozone, so in consideration of the health of Fairfax County citizens, landfilling might be preferable.

Chris Campbell noted in response, that in landfilling, transportation of waste outside of the county contributed to an increase in GHGs, and further considerations were needed regarding issues of traffic, safety and emissions of higher VOCs associated with landfilling, also a precursor of ozone.

Larry Zaragoza noted that the county must do everything it can to reduce the waste stream in all cases.

The Washington, DC, MD, and VA area have marginal nonattainment according to the 2015 standard for ozone.

Further information presented by CDM Smith included technical specifics related to emission controls at the Covanta plant, that is expected to reduce NO<sub>x</sub> through LN technology controls by 2022.

**3. Net Environmental Benefit, Joe Gorney, Senior Environmental Planner, Zoning Evaluation Division, Department of Planning and Development**

Mr. Gorney discussed the use of Environmental Quality Corridors (EQCs) for describing an integrated network of ecologically valuable land and surface waters. EQCs are identified based on habitat quality, connectivity, hydrology/stream buffering, stream protections, pollution reduction capabilities and so forth. Components of an EQC can include among other features: 100-year flood plains, steep slopes, wetlands, buffers, and can extend past Resource Protection Areas.

EQCs should be disturbed only in extraordinary circumstances for serving a public interest such as stormwater facilities. Encouraged in the EQC are trees, water, green buildings, natural landscaping, and more recently, a design process described as institutional design – stressing that each project fits into the larger community. Stormwater flow rates are also part of a larger issue, as well as water quality benefits

There was some discussion among members about considering EQCs in context of the One Fairfax Policy, and whether a focus on equity could take precedence over environmental goals.

Mr. Gorney noted that EQAC can support net environmental benefit by taking a large picture approach, that sometimes is less obvious from a zoning ordinance, regulation, and policy plan perspective.

#### **4. Consideration of EQAC letter on Protection of Occoquan Downzoning**

Renee Grebe and George Lamb discussed the county's current discussion on agrotourism and had drafted a letter addressing proposed agrotourism practices in the Occoquan Watershed Protection Overlay. This zoning district was established in 1982 by Fairfax County, to protect the Occoquan Reservoir, a major source of drinking water and restricts development.

After discussion, it was determined that the focus of the letter should be to maintain the zoning protections of the Occoquan Reservoir Overlay. The letter would be addressed either to the Planning Commission or the BOS, depending on the stage of discussion regarding agrotourism.

The council's recommendation, as expressed by Clyde Wilber, was that there should be no changes in zoning that would lead to any increase of impervious area, in order to protect the watershed. Stella Koch moved to generally accept additions and edits in the letter, seconded by George Lamb with the specific focus as mentioned, for maintaining existing protections of the Occoquan Watershed Protection Overlay. It passed unanimously.

#### **5. Consideration of RPA Planting densities joint letter with the Tree Commission**

The Tree Commission drafted a joint letter with EQAC in support of new planting requirements in RPAs.

Stella moved to accept the letter, Clyde Wilber seconded, it passed unanimously.

## **6. Agreement for guidelines for chapters in the Annual Report on the Environment (ARE)**

In general discussion, it was agreed that entries will be kept as simple as possible

## **7. Minutes from April 14, 2021**

Larry Zaragoza moved the minutes and Johnna Gagnon seconded the minutes of April 14, 2021. The motion passed unanimously. However, since that motion passed, obvious errors have come to light and are recommended for update.

## **8. Chairman's items**

A CECAP briefing was requested for July as strategies are being finalized during the months of May and June.

Also, under consideration is whether meetings will continue to be taking place virtually.

## **9. Council members items**

George Lamb noted there is some discussion about the expansion of Justice HS parking into Justice Park, residents have expressed concern, discussion on this topic will be reserved for the next meeting.

Ken Lanfear will comment on the tech chapter of the EQAC report, Technology to Understand the County, at the next meeting.

Larry Zaragoza met with Supervisor Storck and expressed concern that there had been so many criticisms of stream restorations.

Rich Healy mentioned that a tree action plan is being discussed with the Tree Commission.

## **10. Staff items**

Kambiz Agazi is making arrangements for the July EQAC meeting to include a CECAP update.

Kelly Naylor mentioned that Supervisor Storck is having an environmental expo on June 26th, and there is a One Fairfax acknowledgement form due by all EQAC members by June 30th. Also, student applications are due this Friday and the selection committee will meet next week.

## **11. Public Input**

None

## **12. Adjournment**

Larry Zaragoza made a motion to adjourn at 10:00 pm, Ed Monroe seconded it and all agreed.