

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

**DATE: October 12, 2022
TIME: 7:15pm – 9:45pm
LOCATION: Online / Microsoft Teams**

EQAC Member Attendance

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

* P indicates present; A indicates absent

Staff Attendance

1. Neely Law (OEEC)
2. Matthew Meyers (OEEC)
3. Kambiz Agazi (OEEC)
4. Sara Morgan (DPD)
5. Carmen Bishop (DPD)

Visitor Attendance

1. Donna Jacobson
2. Allison Homer
3. Elizabeth Lonoff

Agenda Items, Discussion, Decisions and Votes

1. Electronic meeting findings and determinations
Vice-Chairman Zaragoza read the electronic meeting findings and determinations to state that the Environmental Quality Advisory Council was meeting electronically due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.
2. DPD Landscaping and Screening Zoning Ordinance Amendment
Sara Morgan from Zoning Administration Division of the Department of Planning and Development presented an overview of a proposed zoning ordinance amendment related to landscaping and screening. The amendment is the result of a directive from the Board through the Zoning Ordinance Work Program. Ms. Morgan began by summarizing the general landscaping standards, including size and spacing and existing vegetation requirements, and various requirements for differing types of parking lots. She then continued to summarize types of transitional screening and barriers, as well as the process for reviewing waivers and modifications. Ms. Morgan described the tentative timeline for the amendment development, which is beginning in October 2022 and would be presented at a Board public hearing in July 2023. Ms. Morgan concluded her presentation

by providing an overview of possible changes to the ordinance which might be considered, most of which are aimed at increasing the amount of landscaping and screening associated with parking lots.

Discussion covered a number of areas, including: the possibility of requiring the use of only native species for landscaping or at least prioritizing them; whether the ordinance can require larger planting areas; how the increased use of solar canopies might impact planting options; potential use of saplings instead of larger trees to increase success rate and reduce costs; and maintenance responsibilities.

Mr. Wilbur suggested future presentations on the landscaping ordinance focusing on: how it impacts individual residents in existing properties; size threshold for which landscaping rules apply; exclusion of invasives as an alternative to requiring only native plants (which could be too limiting); ensuring that impervious area is not increased; and consideration of allowing trees smaller than 5-feet, which have a demonstrated better survival rate.

3. Letter to DPD-UFMD Concerning Alternative Tree Planting Standards

Ms. Grebe provided an overview of the letter which has been drafted on behalf of Council providing comments on proposed changes for street trees in the Urban Design Guidelines. Members suggested a few relatively minor editorial changes.

Ms. Grebe moved that the letter be accepted as written. Mr Lanfear seconded and Council passed the motion unanimously.

4. Future Agenda Topics

Mr. Zaragoza suggested that Council should maintain a list of agenda topics of interest which can be used in cases when scheduled topics are cancelled. Council agreed with this idea and a number of topics were proposed by members, including but not limited to: county actions related to PFOA/PFOS in drinking water; proposal to establish sanitary districts in the county; update on Active Fairfax (including its impacts of trails on sensitive areas); update on the impacts of the plastic bag tax implemented in early 2022; update on data collected for the county's trap and release program; update on environmental initiatives in Fairfax County Public Schools; CECAP Workplan; living shorelines; tidal wetlands regulations; impacts of data centers on water quality; solid waste (data, increasing recycling, establishing sanitary districts), and reflection on the Annual Report on the Environment and potential improvements.

5. Approval of Meeting Minutes

Mr. Lanfear moved to accept the September 14, 2022. EQAC meeting minutes as written. Ms. Gagnon seconded and Council passed the motion unanimously.

6. Chairman's items

The Chairman had no items for discussion.

7. Council members items

Ms. Grebe suggested that the meeting schedule designating each meeting as virtual or in-person be decided as soon as possible to facilitate Council member planning (Ms. Gagnon later agreed with this, noting in particular the January meeting which is traditionally the Public Meeting). She reported that Prince William County is going to be rezoning a large portion of land from rural to allow data center construction, which could have environmental impacts in Fairfax County.

Mr. Lanfear noted that the transmittal letter for the 2022 Annual Report on the Environment has been finalized.

Mr. Lamb shared that “Parking Reimagined” is opposed by many environmentalists because while there will be less parking, that land is not necessarily being earmarked for environmental improvement. He suggested that Council should ask for the team to provide an update at a future meeting.

Mr. Zatz shared that the County has developed a proposal for a new project called Charge Up Fairfax, which would partner with Reston Association to provide tools, resources, and incentives for HOAs to install electric vehicle charging at multifamily properties.

Mr. Wilbur mentioned that arrangements have been made for 2 EQAC members to tour Covanta if interested. Mr. Healy and Mr. Zaragoza expressed an interest.

8. Staff items

Ms. Law shared that the Annual Report on the Environment is scheduled to be presented at the Board meeting on December 6. She informed everyone that they should have received an invitation to the Elly Doyle Awards ceremony.

Mr. Agazi shared that he is working with various departments to put together a tree planting program for launch in 2023 called the Fairfax County Tree Canopy Program. The program will plant trees on a variety of properties including residential, public, and others, with a goal of 300-500 trees in the first year. He also shared that the Charge Up Fairfax is moving ahead regardless of grant availability, but that the County will still apply for various grants. Mr. Agazi indicated that he will work to set up a 2023 meeting for EQAC with the Board, and he also suggested a different approach to staff consideration of recommendations included in the Annual Report on the Environment.

Mr. Meyers shared that the County is partnering with George Mason University for a “Pitch and Pilot” event on October 19 where companies will make proposals on how to improve energy efficiency focusing on CECAP areas of emphasis.

9. Adjournment

9:45 pm (Moved by Mr. Lanfear and unanimously approved).