

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

DATE: September 8, 2021

TIME: 7:20 PM – 10:10 PM

LOCATION: Fairfax County Government Center, Conference Room 4/5

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)	A	Renee Grebe (At-Large)	P
Richard Healy (Mason)	P	Mackenzie Nordai (Student Member)	P
Ed Monroe (Dranesville)	P	George Lamb (At-Large)	P
Ken Lanfear (Hunter Mill)	P	Bryan Campbell (Braddock)	A
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

Stephanie Cornejo
Kelly Naylor
Matt Meyers

Visitor Attendance

Agenda Items, Discussion, Decisions and Votes

1. 2021 Environmental Excellence Awards

Mr. Zatz presented a list of the 2021 nominees and a summary of the accomplishments for which they were nominated. There was discussion about one of the nominees, who is a State Elected official, to assess whether elected officials are eligible to receive the award. Mr. Zatz MOVED, and Mr. Lanfear seconded, to give the award to all 6 of the nominees.

DECISION: 8 Voted in favor with 3 opposed and the motion was approved.

Mr. Zatz MOVED, and Mr. Lanfear seconded, that beginning with the 2022 Environmental Excellence Awards the eligibility criteria be modified to exclude all elected officials.

DECISION: 10 Voted in favor with 1 opposed and the motion was approved.

2. Finalization of Chapters for the Annual Report on the Environment (ARE)

Mr. Wilbur MOVED, and Mr. Weisman seconded, that EQAC approve all chapters being presented in the meeting. A discussion was then initiated.

Mr. Weisman presented a summary of the Transportation Chapter and Mr. Wilbur recommended a small edit related to e-bikes in the non-motorized transportation section. Ms. Grebe suggested that the section on “Additional Information” be deleted so that it will be consistent with the other chapters which don’t have a section like this. Mr. Lanfear suggested leaving the section in and allowing readers to see different formats so that EQAC can get feedback to inform future versions of the report.

Mr. Lamb presented a summary of the Land Use Chapter and specifically called attention to the section on development pressures. Mr. Lanfear suggested adding reference to heat island effect in the section on climate change and green buildings or to the comments section. Chairman Koch suggested that in a future report we might want to include a section on resiliency. Mr. Zatz suggested that the section on green buildings should mention that the county needs to do a better job of holding private sector developers to county policy on green buildings. Mr. Lamb agreed to make several changes to address these suggestions.

Mr. Lanfear offered a comment that the climate and energy chapter does a good job of explaining how we’re impacted by climate change. Mr. Weisman suggested adding a new recommendation to support the expedited completion of the Resilient Fairfax plan. Mr. Wilbur suggested a modification to the justification for the 3rd recommendation to strike the first two sentences. Mr. Monroe offered comments related to the siting of solar arrays based on discussions at an earlier meeting but suggested that the issue doesn’t need to be included in this chapter. Mr. Lamb suggested that the chapter should also include support for one of the recommendations from the land use chapter, as it does for the recommendations from the transportation chapter.

Mr. Wilbur provided a summary of the Waste Management chapter and indicated that feedback from county staff indicated there was uncertainty about the numbers in the chapter, so it was made less quantitative as a result. He indicated that the only substantive change to the recommendations which were previously shared is the removal of the recommendation on enforcement of recycling requirements and changing it to focus on reporting/data collection.

Ms. Grebe presented a summary of the Parks and Ecological Resources chapter and highlighted that the focus is primarily on ecological resources, with parks covered in other parts of the report where appropriate. Chairman Koch suggested a small edit to make this more clear to readers. She noted that there are a lot of relevant organizations listed in the chapter and proposed moving this to an “Additional Information” section at the end of the chapter so that the text focuses more on the substantive issues. Mr. Weisman suggested that in several of the recommendations, including numbers 2 and 4,

there should be language in the justification about how the recommendation also supports climate change goals. Chairman Koch suggested adding language on how preservation of ecological resources is critical to helping mitigate climate change.

Chairman Koch provided an overview of the 4 sections which will make up the Water chapter. Mr. Lamb pointed out that the recommendations need to be numbered to match the format being used in the other chapters. Mr. Lanfear suggested a few small edits related to some of the quantitative data presented. Mr. Zatz suggested that there was still information in the Chapter that is general and could possibly be deleted to make it parallel with other chapters, but after some discussion it was decided to leave the information in the chapter.

DECISION: The vote to approve the chapters with minor changes agreed to during the discussion was unanimous.

3. Discussion of Introduction to the ARE

Chairman Koch suggested there should be a new section added to highlight initiatives that are already underway and which should be continued/maintained. Mr. Wilbur suggested this should also include encouragement to not sacrifice environmental protection due to COVID-related impacts on county operations.

Mr. Weisman suggested that climate change should be the overall theme of the Chairman's letter to transmit the report to the Board to show the increased emphasis that should be placed on it. Mr. Wilbur expressed that climate change is a global issue and that it would be better to focus on local issues which are directly impacting the county. There was further discussion about incorporating both concepts by highlighting the need to counter the effects of climate change while also maintaining and enhancing existing policies and laws which contribute to resiliency. There is also a feeling that One Fairfax could be discussed.

4. Final Approval of the ARE Cover

Ms. Nordai explained the contents of the multiple photos on the cover and confirmed that she had taken all of the photos. Members commented that they felt it was excellent.

5. Approval of Meeting Minutes

The minutes from the August 11, 2021 EQAC meeting were reviewed and Mr. Wilbur MOVED, and Mr. Weisman seconded, that the minutes be approved as written.

DECISION: The vote to approve was unanimous.

6. Agenda for October 12 Joint Board of Supervisors/EQAC Meeting

Chairman Koch suggested that the meeting could focus on the topics of climate change and resiliency. Mr. Grebe asked what the more specific topics would be for EQAC to raise. Chairman Koch suggested discussion of impervious area and relation to flooding, and tree canopy/land use would be another topic. Vice Chair Zaragoza mentioned that he

is afraid much of what is in CECAP won't get done because of lack of resources, and the county may choose to do only the easy things. Mr. Zatz suggested we could discuss a few of the specific recommendations from the ARE which focus on climate change and resiliency. Mr. Monroe shared that he feels the impervious area issue is likely to be one of the most important facing the county.

Chairman Koch suggested scheduling an interim discussion before the meeting and was reminded by staff that video meetings are no longer approved, and that the agenda would be needed by September 9. Chairman Koch then suggested that councilmembers attending the meeting arrive at 12 PM to discuss and prepare for the meeting.

7. Chairman's items

Chairman Koch reminded everyone that 2021 is the 50th Anniversary of EQAC and that she would like to assemble a list of "accomplishments" such as positions, policies, programs, technologies, etc. which have been supported or recommended by EQAC over the years.

Chairman Koch shared that an observatory in a county park is being nominated for a national dark skies award and that the Park Authority is asking for EQAC endorsement.

Chairman Koch reminded councilmembers that EQAC's Charter includes an attendance requirement that members must attend at least 75% of meetings.

8. Council members items

Mr. Lamb asked where the final chapters of the ARE should be sent and was informed that they should be sent to staff once finalized and ideally by Friday, Sept. 10.

Mr. Wilbur noted that the Wetlands Board has 2 vacancies and asked if any EQAC members had interest. Ms. Grebe asked if they were district-specific and Mr. Wilbur said they were for Lee and Mt. Vernon districts but appointees don't need to live in those districts.

Vice-Chair Zaragoza asked that councilmembers share with him any CECAP-related recommendations from the ARE.

Ms. Grebe shared that she will be meeting with Governor Northam on September 9 to discuss urban forestry issues.

9. Staff items

Staff asked for clarification of whether EQAC would be sending a cleaned-up version of the ARE to staff. It was decided that Ms. Grebe would re-send the template and each author would do their best to put their chapter into that format before sending it to staff.

10. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:10 PM.