

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

MEETING MINUTES

DATE: March 8, 2023

TIME: 7:15 p.m. – 10:14 p.m.

LOCATION:

**12000 Government Center Parkway
Fairfax, VA 22035
Conference Room 4/5.**

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)	P
Richard Healy (Mason)	P	Jacob Hammond (Student Member)	P
Ken Gubin (Dranesville)	V	George Lamb (At-Large)	P
Ken Lanfear (Hunter Mill)	P	Bryan Campbell (Braddock)	P
Vacant (Providence)		Vacant (At-Large)	
Rich Weisman (Sully)	P	Clyde Wilber (Springfield)	P

* P indicates present; A indicates absent; V indicates attended virtually

Staff Attendance

Sara Girello, Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination (OEEC)

Neely Law (OEEC)

Matt Meyers (OEEC)

Kelly Zitzer (OEEC)

Phil Hagen, Department of Management and Budget (DMB)

Martha Reed (DMB)

Willie Woode, Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District (NVSWCD)

John Morrill (OEEC)

Visitor Attendance

Donna Jacobson

Agenda Items, Discussion, Decisions and Votes

1. Allowance of Remote Participation by Mr. Gubin

Chair Zaragoza announced that Mr. Gubin, had requested to participate in the meeting remotely. He read the remote participation language and asked Mr. Gubin to state his name, location, and reason for remote attendance. Mr. Gubin said that he was participating remotely from Herndon, VA, due to a medical condition that prevented him from driving. Ms. Koch moved that Mr. Gubin could be adequately heard and that his remote participation comported with EQAC's Policy for the Remote

Participation by Members. Mr. Healy seconded the motion, and it carried by a vote of 10-0, with Mr. Gubin not yet able to vote and Ms. Gagnon being absent from the meeting.

2. Presentation on the Fairfax County FY 2024 Advertised Budget

Phil Hagen, Director, DMB and Martha Reed, DMB, provided a presentation on the Fairfax County FY 2024 Advertised Budget.

Discussion then ensued around the following topics:

- Funding for the Fairfax County Park Authority:
 - Mr. Lamb asked if the \$5 million provided in the FY 2022 Carryover package for park funding was included in the budget.
 - A long discussion occurred about funds for park funding. It was unclear if the specific request last year had been fully addressed, although DMB indicated that it was their intention to find funding for the request.
 - Mr. Lamb requested clarification on the number of staff positions funded for natural resource management. He shared with DMB that the number of staff positions funded does not meet the national standards for staff versus acreage of natural lands.
- Formulation of the budget:
 - County agencies, including the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services and other environmental departments, were asked to provide budgets based on current needs and capacity considering current budget environment. However, even some of the minimized requests had to be cut.
 - EQAC members expressed concerns about what environmental programs and initiatives had not been funded or had not been presented by the Department of Management and Budget with the fully desired budgeted amounts. Ms. Koch suggested that EQAC should have a longer conversation about program needs with each department.
 - EQAC members discussed that it appeared that the budget did not include the full initiatives requested by EQAC. DMB stated that it is possible these things could be funded with carryover funds.
- Specific budget items:
 - DMB noted that an increase of \$50,000 for the Invasive Management Area program to address contract rate increases is in this year's budget proposal via the EIP but is not a continuing item. The request for the Community-wide Energy and Climate Action Plan (CECAP) was fully funded. Funding of these programs is not recurring and not stable in the long term.
 - The Budget proposes a base pay increase of 2% even though the Consumer Price Index (CPI) has increased by 6.5%. EQAC noted that there is a concern about the loss of Wastewater Management,

Stormwater Management, and Public Works and Environmental Services staff due in part to non-competitive pay.

- DMB noted that the BOS would be open to comments about the incentives to retain and obtain staff.

3. Climate Action Dashboard Overview

The Climate Action Dashboard was presented by Mr. Meyers, Division Director, OEEC. Prior to his presentation, Mr. Meyers shared that there is a change in leadership of the OEEC. Following his presentation, he asked that EQAC members submit their feedback on the dashboard online. Discussion then ensued on including a tracking of cost effectiveness of each expenditure. One suggestion was to track cost per pound of carbon.

4. Approval of Meeting Minutes of February 8, 2023

Ms. Koch moved approval of the February 8, 2023, meeting minutes. Mr. Lanfear seconded the motion, and it carried with a vote of 11-0, with Ms. Gagnon being absent from the meeting.

5. Response to Parking Reimagined Revisions

The proposed draft memorandum was discussed at length. A consensus was expressed that the memorandum needed to be more assertive. In particular, the statement should be clear that a holistic approach is required. It was also agreed that several areas need to be strengthened. The letter will be revised by Chair Zaragoza and Mr. Lamb and brought forward at a future meeting.

6. Memo to Board of Supervisors Reaffirming EQAC's Views on Streams

This memo was discussed at length to include the history and background of Lake Accotink dredging by Mr. Campbell. Small edits were made. The memorandum was moved by Ms. Koch and seconded by Mr. Wilber, and it carried with a vote of 11-0, with Ms. Gagnon being absent from the meeting.

7. Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) Request for Variance for Data Centers

This memorandum was discussed at length. It was moved by Mr. Healy and seconded by Mr. Wilber, and it carried with a vote of 11-0, with Ms. Gagnon being absent from the meeting.

8. 2023 Annual Report on the Environment (ARE) Content and EQAC Member Assignments

The assignments provided were agreed to. EQAC agreed to remove Appendices C and D from the ARE. EQAC members were asked to ask another member to review their chapter. Some members expressed that no printed version of the ARE is needed. Mr. Gubin expressed concern that a printed version may be required for individual Board of Supervisors (BOS) members and to communicate to others that the report is available. A final decision was deferred.

9. EQAC Response to FY 2024 Advertised Budget

All EQAC members will send comments to the Chair for a memo to the BOS. Mr. Zaragoza requested members to send their input before EQAC's April meeting.

10. Discussion of FY 2024 Student Member Process

Application will be due May 3rd and advertised in March. The application was discussed and agreed upon. Mr. Weisman and Mr. Hammond were appointed by acclimation as the nominating committee.

11. Discussion of 2023 Environmental Excellence Award Process

The 2023 Environmental Excellence Awards process was discussed. Ms. Koch and Mr. Lanfear were appointed by acclimation as the Awards Committee.

12. Chair's Items

Dr. Zaragoza shared that:

- A joint meeting with Park Authority is planned for November.
- A legislative initiative is being considered for installation of solar panels on parking lots and buildings rather than forested land.

13. Council Member Items

- Mr. Wilber shared that Mr. Campbell joined him on the wetlands board
- Mr. Lanfear noted that Fairfax Water is concerned with complying with the EPA lead sampling requirements. Ms. Koch and Mr. Lanfear are meeting with the Fairfax Water general manager to discuss EQAC/Fairfax Water issues.
- Vice-Chair Grebe noted that a portion of the county's forestry staff has been moved back to Land Development Services (LDS). This is the portion that does development review. Concerns were raised that this move would potentially reduce the protection of county trees.
- Ms. Koch commented that there is no documented rationale for the Potomac low flow agreement minimum. She also mentioned that EQAC should return to the salt drinking water/stormwater issue at some point.

14. Staff Items

Dr. Law shared that:

- She was setting up a meeting with Mr. Gorney from the Department of Planning and Development, Ms. Koch, and Mr. Campbell to discuss ARE priority recommendations on net ecological benefit.
- EQAC members should start setting up meetings for their ARE Chapters, and that OEEC staff can assist as needed;
- Mr. Healy volunteered to lead an update on the EQAC charter.
- The Environmental Excellence Award ceremony is scheduled for March 28, 2023, at 5:30 p.m.; and
- She will send out the meetings topics for EQAC to recommend a presentation for April's meeting.

Ms. Girello shared that OEEC staff provided a meeting notes template and is working on a style guide for EQAC to use in its memos and other written correspondence.

Mr. Meyers shared that Mr. Morrill is the new Acting Director of the OEEC.

15. Adjournment

Ms. Koch moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Weisman seconded the motion, and it carried by a vote of 11-0, with Ms. Gagnon being absent from the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 10:14 p.m.

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