

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

DATE: November 9, 2022

TIME: 7:15pm – 9:30pm

LOCATION: Online / Microsoft Teams

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 | Jacob Hammond (Student Member) | P |
| Ken Gubin (Dranesville) | P | George Lamb (At-Large) | P |
| Ken Lanfear (Hunter Mill) | A | 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. Charles Smith (DPWES, SWPD)

Agenda Items, Discussion, Decisions and Votes

1. Electronic meeting findings and determinations

Chairman Stella 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. Seconded by Clyde. Passed unanimously.

2. Long Branch Central Watershed Management Area Project

Charles Smith (Chief, Implementation Branch, DPWES-SWPD) presented power point slides that gave an overview of the Long Branch Central Watershed Management Area project. He discussed the composition of the project team, noting Bryan as president of a friends' group. Project is first time county is using a whole-of-watershed approach for stream protection. Suggested as one of the most monitored watersheds in the U.S. including 8 monitoring stations. Stella asked about regenerative stormwater conveyance. Charles noted this as an outfall treatment technique that's been used in Maryland. Clyde noted a concern about project cost and asked what was the project budget noting that the 12 miles of stream for this watershed is a very small part of the total number of stream miles in Fairfax County. Clyde also asked how this project relates to the One Fairfax policy and use of wood structures for remediation. Charles reported the project cost as \$40 million for design and construction. They plan to implement the project to the degree

they have funding available, targeting 1.5 years for the county to complete. Charles suggested this is a pilot and contrasted it with previous projects that were not intended to get at the cause of impaired benthic communities. He noted it was intended to look at by residence time and the extent to which we can we slow the water down sufficiently. Extending this approach to everywhere in the county was estimated to cost \$4 billion. Stella reported about also considering community input. Charles said the county's typical cost for stream restoration is \$1,350 per linear foot and they are looking to drive it down and also planning to apply for grant funding to defray costs for the Long Branch project. George asked about potential alternatives to this restoration approach. Larry asked about the anticipated likelihood of this project meeting area-specific TMDL targets. Charles noted they are using a protocol based on a hazard assessment to estimate load, with a much lower efficiency for credit to the Chesapeake Bay TMDL compared with the local TMDL. Larry noted the benefit of community involvement. Stella asked about timing for anticipated improvements in benthics. Charles described an example of the historical recovery of Sugarland Run stream after an oil spill given the restorative contributions of side streams. Clyde asked about the potential to restore a stream given 30% imperviousness like at Long Branch. Charles noted we can restore stability and suggested if we can treat whole watershed (e.g., with increased residence time) we could potentially induce healing of system conditions. Ken G asked if the federal infrastructure funding would be helpful for supporting this project. Charles noted that the county is planning to pursue this funding source.

3. Annual Report on the Environment, Lessons Learned and Moving Forward

Stella noted improvements to the process but referred to it as “bumpy”. She suggested a possibility of having a permanent part online that is a baseline. Neely offered her congratulations on completing the 2022 ARE and that it will be distributed tomorrow. She offered 3 suggestions for future consideration: 1) She would like to have the chapters to be made available to staff to review for completeness and accuracy before the report is compiled together; she noted that by the time the 2022 report was finally compiled it was the first time that staff reviewed it. She also noted that Resilient Fairfax was approved at the same time that the ARE was being completed, thus complicating citation dates in the ARE;. 2) She would like authors to use a template for ensuring consistency of formatting (e.g., word choice and headers). 3) She would like the report to focus on added value rather than just repeating information from prior years; she suggested that lots of information was the same as in the 2021 report.

In discussing her efforts to gather content and prepare the scorecard, Renee noted variability in the extent and implementation of the template. Concerns were expressed about nailing down content before extensive formatting work is performed; how the cover had to be tracked down; also, the cover letter and appendices. She noted how these concerns along with the requirement for accessibility of the document take a lot of time. Renee referred to several changes made to the formatting several times since she joined EQAC and noted our primary mission as providing recommendations to BOS and to make sure we are meeting that objective.

Johna asked if we are taking into account Kambiz' request to not overwhelm the Board of Supervisors with lots of recommendations. Stella wants maximum exposure of the ideas and maximum exposure to the public of our ideas. She gave an example of EQAC's letter about data centers. Larry noted a concern about getting information to inform report development in a timely manner; gave example of receiving staff input in September. Neely asked about how to get maximum exposure and whether it occurs with a 70-page report. Stella's concern is about making the report development more streamlined and not as much of an imposition on Renee and Neely. Larry wants to consider further about consistency between chapters.

Mike agreed with Neely's assessment and noted it was reduced in size over the past few years. He wants an average person to read most of it, e.g., not just an environmental activist, and for it to be more accessible to everyone. He suggested targeting the person who has an interest in environmental topics. He also noted the possibility of having a main report just on what's new and moving background information to an appendix. A suggestion to consider use of a google drive in report development to help with consistency of formatting. George pointed out that we implemented a template 2 years ago and asked if it make a difference; for example, whether it saved Renee hours in report compilation. Renee said it did not since some folks gave chapters using a variety of styles. Mike noted a need for further discipline among EQAC members. George responded to the concern of staff not looking at the report until it was nearly done and asked if that was by design since they had access sooner. Neely referred to Noel's manual on "How to EQAC" which described the process as EQAC first votes on each chapter, they are compiled, and then sent to staff for editing. Stella noted that those plans are subject to revision based on staff member needs. Larry wants to consider how best to allocate work so it is more evenly distributed and not fall disproportionately on a few members.

4. 2023 Meeting Dates and Location

Neely presented a chart with suggested meeting dates for 2023 with in-person meetings in room 4/5 at the government center (2nd Wednesday of every month). EQAC agreed to pre-identify virtual meetings in 2023 as being in February, August, and December. Questions were raised about the flexibility associated with scheduling virtual meetings. Neely noted the December 2022 meeting will again be virtual.

5. Approval of Meeting Minutes

Mike moved to accept the October 12, 2022 EQAC meeting minutes as written. Clyde seconded and Council passed the motion unanimously.

6. Chairman's items

The Chairman noted she will be staying on EQAC but will no longer be serving as Chair. The Vice-Chair is willing to stay but there will need to be another person to step up. Stella suggested there be a nominating committee consisting of herself and George. Larry is doing the presentation of the ARE to the BOS at their December meeting.

7. Council members items

George, Mike, Clyde, Elisa, Rich, Jacob, Bryan – none.

Larry – noted a visit with Rick to Covanta. Learned that Covanta is looking to recover metals from ash and offered to draft a note about this to Clyde. Heard briefing on parking reimagined and noted county plans to have consistency with other Fairfax County programs.

Rick – echoed Larry’s comments on Covanta and reported that Covanta is updating their emission control technology and when completed their nitrogen oxides will be cut in half – noted that Covanta is a significant contributor of nitrogen oxides in Fairfax County.

Ken G – notes county office with Zoom license and prefers Zoom to Teams; wants Neely to check into use of Zoom for future EQAC meeting.

Renee – noted article describing how house sparrows are drastically reducing. Noted that the Board of Supervisors sent a letter to Prince William County expressing concerns about their approval of Digital Gateway, however it was subsequently passed.

Johna – asked about verifying phone number in flyer for annual meeting; Neely to work on updating. Described her role as the EQAC representative on FJLEPC and wants EQAC to review each year in January. She wants someone to take her place as the EQAC representative.

8. Staff items

Sara Girello was introduced as OEEC staff who will be a backup to Neely as staff contact for EQAC. Neely is helping to organize a workshop and report about stream restoration intended to help understand science of about stream restoration. Chairman’s office to be recognize Environmental Excellence winners in person at the January 24 BOS meeting. Parking Reimagined to be discussed at December meeting. Susan Hafeli (OEEC) will present to EQAC disbursement of the funds generated through the plastic bag tax once policy is developed. List of possible future meeting topics was sent out this morning. Members to send feedback on list of topics to Neely. Larry referred to other jurisdiction approach to plastic bags and how they give out more durable bags and suggested this could be considered for Fairfax. Matt said Resilient Fairfax was adopted by BOS at their November meeting and county staff are putting their implementation package about it together. OEEC is planning to present their CECAP plan to BOSEC on December 13.

9. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:28 PM.