

FAIRFAX COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ADVISORY COUNCIL
[EQAC Website](#) | [EQAC Email Address](#)
MEETING NOTES

DATE: Wednesday, January 13, 2021
TIME: 7:15 P.M.
PLACE: Electronic Meeting via 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) | P | Mike Zatz (At-Large) | P |
| Rich Weisman (Sully) | P | Clyde Wilber (Springfield) | P |

* P indicates present; A indicates absent

Annual Hearing on the Environment (Agenda Item #4)

Meeting called to order at 7:16 PM

Electronic Meeting Findings and Determinations

Given that each member of the Environmental Quality Advisory Council was participating in the meeting from a separate location and in order to verify that a quorum of members was participating and that each member's voice was clear, audible, and at an appropriate volume for all of the other members, Chairman Koch performed a roll call of members and asked each Environmental Quality Advisory Council member participating in the meeting to state their name and the location from which they were participating.

Chairman Koch **MOVED** that each member's voice may be adequately heard by each other member of the Environmental Quality Advisory Council.

DECISION: The **motion** was **SECONDED** by Mr. Weisman and the vote to approve was unanimous.

Having established that each member's voice could be heard by every other member, Chairman Koch next established the nature of the emergency that compelled these emergency procedures, the fact that the council was meeting electronically, the type of electronic

communication that was being used, and how public access to this meeting was arranged. Chairman Koch moved that the Emergency Declaration caused by the COVID-19 pandemic makes it unsafe for the Environmental Quality Advisory Council to physically assemble and unsafe for the public to physically attend any such meeting, and that as such, the Freedom of Information Act's (FOIAs) usual procedures, which require the physical assembly of the Environmental Quality Advisory Council and the physical presence of the public, cannot be implemented safely or practically.

Chairman Koch **MOVED** that the Environmental Quality Advisory Council may conduct this meeting electronically through a dedicated audio-conferencing line, and that the public could access the meeting by calling 1-408-418-9388 and entering the code: 129 0970 8046.

DECISION: The motion was **SECONDED** by Mr. Weisman and the vote to approved was unanimous.

Chairman Koch **MOVED** that the matters addressed on today's agenda are statutorily necessary to continue operations of the Environmental Quality Advisory Council and the discharge of its duties and responsibilities.

DECISION: The motion was **SECONDED** by Mr. Weisman and the vote to approve was unanimous.

Elections of EQAC Chair and Vice-Chair

Mr. Lamb noted that he and Mr. Weisman comprised the Nominating Committee and explained that he had inquired with the current Chair and Vice-Chair as to their interest in continuing in their current roles. Chairman Koch and Vice-Chairman Zaragoza accepted their nominations and Mr. Lamb **MOVED** to elect Stella Koch as EQAC Chair and Larry Zaragoza as EQAC Vice-Chair.

DECISION: The vote to approve was unanimous.

Introductions of EQAC Members

Chairman Koch asked that each member of EQAC provide a brief introduction including their name, the District they represent, and their responsibilities in preparation of the Annual Report on the Environment.

EQAC Annual Hearing on the Environment

1. Eliza Cava (oral testimony), Audubon Naturalist Society, Eliza.Cava@anshome.org

Members and supporters are advocating for policy advancements in biodiversity and habitats. Referenced two priorities, the first, to apply an equity lens to each EQAC chapter starting this year. Green spaces contribute to positive mental health. The second priority, to strengthen the

link to the One Fairfax Policy, a joint social and racial equity policy of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors and School Board.

Encourages equitable development for providing access to nature and wildlife, prioritizing natural resources. Encourages decisions be made by considering how local and regional environments can come out better. Identified a change request within the county: review tree ordinance compliance as a first step rather than a last step in building plans; and incentivize the preservation of mature trees; and also, protect streams and creeks.

2. Eric Goplerud (oral testimony), Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions, facsericg@gmail.com, (301) 852 - 8427

Faith Alliance endorses a disposable bags and bottling bill. The Community-wide Energy and Climate Action Plan (CECAP) is a good step forward, in terms of energy efficiency. Positive actions have been made in addressing energy efficiency in affordable housing in the county. Regarding land use, rigorous standards are needed, including green building standards. Faith Alliance recommends a stronger energy efficiency standard. Make renewable energy affordable and accessible. Expand the availability of power purchase agreements; provide incentives for small scale solar and community power; make the Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (CPACE) - a financing program for commercial properties supporting energy efficiency and renewable energy - available at the residential level. Also, include electric vehicle charging infrastructure in newly constructed buildings.

FCPS and Fairfax County are encouraged to change diesel buses to electric power as well as trash hauling vehicles for reducing emissions, as well as providing quieter service, in consideration of early morning routes. Also, expand trash recycling to include organic matter through commercial and residential composting. Further, consider advanced technologies in wastewater treatment at the Noman M. Cole, Jr., Pollution Control Plant.

3. Elizabeth "Betsy" Martin, (video and oral testimony), Friends of Little Hunting Creek <https://youtu.be/LIS22-9JxaY>, betsy@folhc.org

Video included photos that illustrated improperly discarded shopping carts and disposable bags. A county ordinance could send a notice of violation when a shopping cart is abandoned offsite of a retailer and charge the owner for removal. Such laws are in place in other parts of VA, for example, Virginia Beach. In terms of shopping bags, customer can be charged five cents per bag and the retailer can retain a portion. It has been documented that social behavior is negatively influenced by improperly disposed of items like trash bags and shopping carts. The tax commission seems to be looking at guidance on the shopping bags tax, EQAC has supported such actions, staff has opposed it in the past.

4. Lydia Lawrence, (video testimony), Individual, <https://youtu.be/8oTZAsAzs2s>, lalaw2065@gmail.com

Suggested drafting a climate equity index map that would include socioeconomics with information on race, age, and income. As an example, Richmond, VA has a climate equity program with mapping of climate risks and burdens. Tree canopy equity is important, tree equity is environmental justice. Grants for climate equity mapping might be possible through the US Fish and Wildlife Service or county carryover funds.

5. Jennifer Falcone, (written testimony), Great Falls Citizen Association, jennifer.falcone@gfca.org

Area of concern includes cases where development has had an adverse effect on the environment. Recommends strengthening current storm water management. The pace of development has overtaken county abilities to enforce storm water management requirements. GFCA calls for stricter stormwater management regulations, including to reduce the grandfathering of site plans. Take fully into account impacts to the county's tree canopy. Also, consider eliminating canopy credits for the Leyland Cypress species, abundantly used in landscaping.

Implement dark sky preservation ordinance to surround the county's observatory in Great Falls, Observatory Park; thereby, reducing light trespass and glare.

6. Margaret Fisher, (video testimony), Individual, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KaSsKkm-dJE>, 703-968-2971 (home) 703-244-9174 (cell)

Video presentation stressed the need to maintain the tree canopy and nature in general; highlighted the work done to remove invasive plants; and the need to keep and maintain lands in an undisturbed state.

7. Helene Shore, (oral testimony), 350 Fairfax, 703-861-6638, teachhss@aol.com

Supports science, reason, and forests. Supports single use plastic bags ban; there is VA state legislation enacted one year ago for this to be possible in large stores and any store that sells food. Encourage supervisors to adopt such a countywide ordinance.

Also, encourages curbside recycling and single bag fees. Purple bin project in the county for glass recycling is commended. Expressed concern over land that is being degraded. Recycling/composting of food waste can reduce carbon footprint. Provide curbside, single use plastic bags and food waste pick up; as an example, Nova Scotia, Canada has a model recycling program.

8. Kay Fowler, (written/presentation testimony), Individual, kathrynfowler@verizon.net

In the Sully District, along Oxon Road there is a straight ditch for water runoff control; rather, low impact development techniques (LIDs) are encouraged for supporting water infiltration. LIDs are needed all along Oxon Road, between West Ox Road and Thompson Road. Also, presentation provided different photographic examples of LIDs.

9. Julie Chang, (video testimony), Friends of Accotink Creek, <https://youtu.be/aGCBoEEalrA>, juliechang94@gmail.com

Offered support for establishing a local shopping cart ordinance for addressing abandoned shopping carts offsite of retailers. Also, stated support of a tax on plastic bags and encourages making resources available for controlling invasive species.

10. Bill Hafker, (written testimony), Individual, hafbrau1@aol.com

From Oakton, VA. Identified area for aggressive action and in providing a leadership example, through the CECAP for achieving carbon neutrality by 2050; with an aggressive interim goal of 50% of final goal.

Also recommended seeking authority and permissions for: supporting gas taxes and increase of electric vehicle purchases. Encouraged support of environment through federal legislation, VA state legislative bills, including those supported by Delegate Nancy Guy. Localities can protect trees. Improve quality of lands in Chesapeake Bays watershed for the sake of the environment, human health, and economic welfare. Reduce waste through reduction and recycling; ban and apply fees to plastic shopping bags. Waste haulers might provide a dedicated glass pick up, and a curbside composting collection might be provided as well.

11. Ann Bennett, (oral testimony), Sierra Club, Great Falls Group

Reduce Green House Gas emissions, CECAP will provide a blueprint for doing so. Fairfax County produces 20% of the emissions in region. Need for a strong plan with follow on measures for a net zero goal by 2050. Need for a dedicated funding source including measures in transportation and land use. Also, a need for planning on a regional basis, currently, each

development plan is a new plan. Electrify the county and school vehicle fleets. Social change is underway, consider how to improve the quality of life. Stressed the importance of parks and open spaces in addressing the growing of number of disadvantaged persons. Provide open spaces, preserve rural areas, place high value on trees that serve as carbon sinks.

EQAC Processes Discussion

Chairman Koch noted that the 2020 ARE is now posted online and thanked Ms. Grebe for her efforts in making that happen.

Chairman Koch mentioned that there is currently no staff representative with the ability to edit letters and resolutions for content (as opposed to simply editorial changes). As a result, she requested that any Councilmember who brings to EQAC a letter or resolution for consideration ensure that the draft document is as complete as possible with regard to content. She suggested the same thing with regard to proposed agendas and speakers and noted that this will streamline the process for everyone.

Kambiz Agazi indicated that he is trying to hire several staff, including someone who would be the liaison to EQAC, but it has been very difficult to hire lately. He also noted that COVID-19 in the county is actually worse than it was in Spring 2020, and that while it's important to get some form of the ARE online, it may be necessary to reassess the situation on a month-to-month basis determine what the County staff may be able to handle.

Chairman Koch suggested that we need to begin considering what we would like the 2021 ARE to be given that COVID-19 is continuing and limits our ability to interact with staff and other key organizations. She indicated that the 2021 report can't be a "scorecard on a scorecard," and requested that all Councilmembers start to think about possible ideas and what they would like their chapters to be.

Mr. Zatz suggested it might be valuable to set aside time in an upcoming meeting to discuss what format the report will take. Vice-Chair Zaragoza suggested that instead each chapter lead should take the responsibility to ensure that their chapter is streamlined, in which case a broad discussion wouldn't be required and meeting time can be reserved for other issues. Chairman Koch agreed and proposed that in the next few months councilmembers might share their plans.

Chairman Koch noted that 2021 is the 50th anniversary of EQAC and shared that Chairman McKay expressed an interest in having the ARE recognize that fact. This could include identifying several major impacts EQAC has made over the years in each of the areas covered by the ARE. Mr. Lanfear noted that journals do articles like this frequently and they may serve as a model. Mr. Wilbur volunteered to lead the effort to determine how the 2021 ARE will recognize the 50th anniversary of EQAC.

Mr. Wilbur suggested that councilmembers should begin preparing their information requests for the 2021 ARE. Chairman Koch agreed but reminded that we should be thoughtful about what we're asking for. In response to a question from Mr. Zatz concerning staff availability, Mr. Agazi asked that councilmembers only request data and information from staff which was essential and which would definitely be used. Mr. Wilbur also suggested that councilmembers should think about which speakers they would like to be invited to meetings, and Mr. Agazi reported that he has lined up speakers through the May meeting, but he needs to clarify the interest of EQAC for solid waste. For February he shared that there are two speakers scheduled – one on Net Environmental Benefits and one on the Active Fairfax Transportation Plan.

Regarding the 2020 ARE Scorecard, Mr. Lamb asked if there will be any sort of staff response. Mr. Agazi replied that there isn't currently a process in place given that there is a very substantial response process going on for the JET with a response due to the Board of Supervisors by March 2021. As a result, there isn't any capacity to respond to the ARE Scorecard. Mr. Lamb requested that if it's possible to get simply an acknowledgement that would be helpful.

Chairman Koch reminded councilmembers to try to hold a brief meeting with their Supervisor to ask if they had been able to review the ARE and if they had any comments or questions. She shared that about 15 minutes would be set aside at the February meeting to discuss feedback received.

Discussion of Upcoming Joint Meetings

Chairman Koch reminded councilmembers that the planned joint meeting with the Board of Supervisors for June 2020 was cancelled due to COVID-19 and shared that the Board is interested in having a joint meeting on October 12, 2021 at 1:30 PM. Ms. Naylor clarified that this was the only time available.

Chairman Koch informed councilmembers that there will be joint meeting with the Fairfax County Park Authority on July 14. The start date is TBD but typically these meetings start at 6:00 PM.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Minutes from the December 8, 2020 meeting were reviewed by councilmembers and Ms. Gagnon **MOVED** to approve the minutes as written.

DECISION: The motion was **SECONDED** by Mr. Wilbur and the vote to approve was unanimous.

Chairman Items

Chairman Koch wished everyone a Happy New Year.

Council Member Items

Ms. Gagnon reported that there was a recent meeting of the FJLAPC where there were discussions about vaccines arriving packed in dry ice. As a result the fire department is working on procedures to ensure that melting dry ice doesn't cause health problems for occupants of rooms where the vaccine is being stored since dry ice releases carbon dioxide as it melts.

Vice-Chair Zaragoza reported that on Little Hunting Creek there was recently a sewage spill from a pumping station. It was supposedly a small spill, but there was no notification to surrounding neighbors. He suggested that EQAC might want to learn more about why there was no notification, among other concerns.

Ms. Grebe reminded councilmembers to continue to log their volunteer hours so that there can have an accurate depiction. She also noted that there were problems with Section 508 compliance associated with the scorecard because of the table layout, so that should be addressed in the next report if possible.

Mr. Lamb reported that he checked out one of the FLIR cameras from the library and he suggests everyone should try it.

Staff Items

Ms. Naylor reported that there are notetakers for the February and March meetings, but volunteers are still needed for April and May.

Mr. Agazi reported that there will be a Board of Supervisors Environmental Group meeting on Feb 2, where the agenda will include a CECAP update, a presentation on use of stormwater funds on VDOT right-of-ways, and the County's compost pilot program. He also shared that the Board of Supervisors Environmental Committee meeting on March 16 will focus on the JET report and there are 7 BOS Environmental Committee meetings in 2021.

Chairman Koch asked if anyone is interested in hearing from LDS since she is interested in hearing from them on stormwater but would like more topics.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 PM.