

**BALTIMORE COUNTY ADVISORY
COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
(CEQ)**

**2005 ANNUAL REPORT TO
BALTIMORE COUNTY EXECUTIVE AND BALTIMORE
COUNTY COUNCIL**

December 2005

BACKGROUND

The Baltimore County Advisory Commission on Environmental Quality (CEQ) convened for the first time in November 2004 under the direction of Councilman Vince Gardina. After meeting with Councilman Gardina, the CEQ decided to meet again in December 2004 and at that time elected a Chair and chose to pursue a monthly meeting schedule. The CEQ met monthly from December 2004 – November 2005. This *Baltimore County Advisory Commission on Environmental Quality (CEQ) 2005 Annual Report to the Baltimore County Executive and Baltimore County Council* fulfills the requirement specified in County Bill No. 86-03 and provides a summary of CEQ activities during 2005.

CEQ MEMBERSHIP

As of December 2005, the CEQ membership included the following individuals:

District 1:

Joan Plisko, Ph.D. (Chair), Environmental Systems Engineer
Steve Schreiner, Ph.D., Senior Scientist and Information Technology Manager
Sharon Schuler, Naturalist/Env. Educator

District 2:

Lois Jacobs, Landscape Architect/Designer

District 3:

Linda Davis, Naturalist/Educator
Charlie Conklin, Retired – Bethlehem Steel

District 4:

Clifford Collins, Special Education Instructor

District 5:

Shirley Carl, Community Activist/Administrator
Bill Huppert, Retired, Assistant Principal, Baltimore County Department of Education
Brian Fath, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Biology, Towson University

District 6:

Ray Davis, Retired Educator
Les Richardson, Farm Bureau President and Farm Manager

District 7:

George Malone, Educator

At this time there remain two vacancies on the CEQ – one representing the Home Builders Industry and one representing Industry at Large – both appointees to be made by the County Executive. During the course of the year, there were two resignations of CEQ members. First, John Spencer, the representative of Industry at Large resigned in March 2005. Second, Toni Breining, the District 6 representative resigned in November 2005.

CEQ MISSION STATEMENT

The CEQ developed the following mission statement in accordance with County Council Bill No. 86-03:

The purpose of the CEQ, through its duties and responsibilities as stated in the County Council Bill No. 86-03, is to encourage protection and preservation of the natural environment in Baltimore County and its waterways, including the Chesapeake Bay, by educating the community to make environmentally sustainable decisions and enlightening, advising, and initiating dialogue with County officials. We will facilitate communication between the County government and its residents on environmental needs, programs, and legislation.

CEQ PROCESS ISSUES

The CEQ developed ground rules and meeting procedures to allow for an effective and efficient use of time. Ground rules relate to attendance at meetings and include topics such as arrival time, preparation, participation, and procedural issues. The CEQ meeting procedures relate to the flow of the meeting, including the responsibilities of the Chair and CEQ members.

The CEQ uses a Modified Robert's Rules of Order, and while a majority of voting members of the CEQ constitute a quorum for the transaction of business, an affirmative vote by the majority of those present at any meeting is sufficient for any action. We will work toward consensus among members.

CEQ 2005 GOALS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The CEQ developed four main goals for 2005, each with several objectives. The CEQ activities as they align with each of these four goals are presented below.

✓ ***Goal 1: To develop the infrastructure for the CEQ to operate effectively and efficiently.***

The CEQ chose this goal as members felt it necessary to have in place measurable outcomes to gauge progress. This goal included the objectives of establishing ground rules, developing a mission statement, developing annual goals for 2005, and developing (an internal) network/loop for CEQ communications.

The CEQ accomplished each of these objectives and at the same time developed cohesiveness as a working organization. Additionally, during the summer of 2005, the CEQ Chair conducted a survey of members to assess progress and satisfaction of members. Results indicated that members were generally satisfied with the progress of the CEQ and the contribution they were making to its workings.

✓ ***Goal 2: To establish a communication network and develop a dialogue between the CEQ, Baltimore County government officials, educators, and citizens regarding environmental preservation and protection.***

The objectives of this goal included engaging in dialogue with Baltimore County agency officials and/or employees, developing a communication plan for disseminating information, maintaining dialogue with Baltimore County Councilmen and County Executive, and reporting to the County Council at year end. The CEQ accomplished each of these goals and continues to work in this very important area.

From its inception, the CEQ Chair and its members have met with and engaged members of the Baltimore County community. Beginning in January 2005, select CEQ members contacted their respective councilman and asked/discussed the expected outcome(s) of the CEQ as well as councilmanic environmental priorities. At the onset of the year, to serve as an introduction and to establish a point of contact within each department/office, the Chair met with: David Carroll, Director of the Baltimore County Department of Environmental Protection and Resource Management; Robert Barrett, Director of Baltimore County Department of Park and Recreation; Edward Adams, Director of Baltimore County Department of Public Works; and Pat Keller, Director of Baltimore County Office of Planning. Throughout the course of the year additional CEQ communications with Baltimore County staff included the following:

- David Carroll attended a CEQ meeting.
- Two members of the CEQ participate in the Builders for the Bay Roundtable.
- Two members of the CEQ attended the book opening of Nature Friendly Communities.
- Two members of CEQ met with County Council Chair, Joseph Bartenfelder.
- The CEQ presented mid year findings to County Council at a work session.
- CEQ Chair met with Councilman Gardina.
- CEQ members met with Don Mohler, Director of Communications for Baltimore County, Ellen Kobler Deputy Director of Communications for Baltimore County, and Fran Flannigan (DEPRM).
- Don Outen of DEPRM attended a CEQ meeting.
- CEQ members conducted telephone interviews with County agents regarding the CEQ landscaping project (see below).

✓ ***Goal 3: To make recommendations concerning any environmental question or issues referred by the County Council, any council member, the County Executive and County Departments.***

To facilitate this goal, the CEQ developed a two-way communication plan to process issues referred to it by the council, councilman, county executive or county departments and presented this plan to the council at a work session in August. The plan was approved as presented. As of December 2005, the CEQ has not received any referrals by County Council, the County Executive or other County Departments.

At the work session, it was agreed upon that all communication on environmental questions and issues from County Council, any Council Member or the County Executive should be directed to the CEQ Chair. These environmental questions and issues should be relevant to and have a positive long term impact on environmental preservation and/or protection and may include proposed environmental legislation, projects, or initiatives. The CEQ Chair will refer correspondence received from County Council, any Council Member, or the County Executive to the appropriate “ go-to-person or sub-committee” of the CEQ assigned the relevant environmental subject area (i.e. land preservation, wastewater management, watershed monitoring) for initial review and comment to CEQ members. The CEQ will deliberate the question or issue and prepare and submit its response to the appropriate County Council, any Council Member, or County Executive in a timely fashion. As directed by the legislation, relevant recommendations made by the CEQ to the County Council, any Council Member, or County Executive must be submitted to the Director of DEPRM for technical and fiscal review prior to their submission.

✓ ***Goal 4: To identify and select appropriate projects pertaining to the preservation and protection of the environment in Baltimore County.***

Prior to selecting a project for consideration, the CEQ developed a set of requirements and criteria to assist the group in selecting the most appropriate project. The CEQ required that any project (1) be relevant to and have a long-term positive impact on environmental preservation and/or protection, (2) be relevant to Baltimore County legislation and/or regulatory action, (3) assist County Council, County Executive, County Agency, or residents, and (4) include an outreach and education component.

In establishing project criteria, the CEQ decided to choose a project that would: (1) minimize the time required to implement and to see results; (2) maximize its uniqueness; (3) maximize probability for success/practicality/doability/measurability; (4) maximize applicability and impact on county and county residents; and (5) maximize networking potential.

After identifying close to fifty projects, the CEQ narrowed the list to the following eleven projects, using the requirements and criteria above:

- Education Survey/Assessment
- Web-based Environmental Help Desk Assessment
- Environmental Liaison Feasibility Study
- Green Schools Assessment
- Storm Water Utility Fee Feasibility Study
- County Landscaping Practices Assessment
- County Building/Infrastructure Assessment (“Green Buildings”)
- Residential Landscaping Program Assessment
- Recycling Program Study
- Program Open Space Assessment
- Investigate Controlling Invasive Species Policy

The CEQ voted on the top projects and determined that its first project will be to assess Baltimore County Landscaping Practices. From September 2005 – December 2005 the CEQ gathered information about landscaping practices from Baltimore County employees. CEQ members have communicated with:

- Avery Harden of Permits and Development
- Bob Markley of Parks and Recreation
- Jean Tansey of Parks and Recreation
- Jean Armacost of DEPRM
- Bill Korpman, Deputy Director of DPW
- Dennis Elkins of Department of Education Office of Physical Facilities
- Thomas L. Vidmar, Deputy Director DEPRM
- John Shanks of Parks and Recreation

The CEQ has scheduled Avery Harden, primary author of the *Baltimore County Landscaping Manual*, to attend the CEQ January 2006 meeting. Additionally, the CEQ is planning to hold a landscaping roundtable in the spring of 2006.