

Baltimore County Commission on Environmental Quality

Minutes of Meeting Held March 25, 2009

Present: Kathy Martin, Steve Schreiner, Ray Davis, Russ Donnelly, Linda Davis, Don Outen, Joan Norman, Brian Fath; Willie Grier; Jerry Jurick; Nell Strachan; Mike Pierce and John Alexander, Baltimore County Planning Dept. and member of the Sustainability Network, who is joining us as the designated representative of the Planning Dept. Also present was Ashlee Harvey, an intern from TSU.

Absent: Tom Moore, Joan Plisko, Rex Wright, Lois Jacobs

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by chair, Kathy Martin, who also introduced the new CEQ intern, Ashlee Harvey, who attends Towson State University.

Administrative business:

Minutes of the November, 2008 and March 5, 2009 meetings were approved. A draft of annual report was circulated; minor corrections were noted and the draft was approved.

Presentation by Steve Steward, DEPRM, presented on the Stream Monitoring Program.

The County monitors streams to determine water quality, measure efficacy of various projects, and identify sources of impacts on water quality.

The National Pollution Discharge Elimination System/NPDES permit is a major driver; the County must comply with its requirements. The County also must comply with the State storm water regulations. The County monitors illicit connections of outflows; ambient water quality; BMP effectiveness monitoring; and stream restoration efficacy. Steve also discussed the issue of street sweeping, and its impact on streams.

Other pertinent points from his presentation:

- Baseflow is a dry weather condition; storm events are harder to monitor.
- Section 319 funding requires that a watershed management plan be in place.
- Monitoring is both biological (habitats) and chemical: They test for total solids, suspended solids, various nitrates/nitrites, phosphorus, heavy metals, sodium, chlorides, and other items. Stream geomorphology, illicit connections, temps, and discharge are monitored.

The NPDES permit is up for renewal in June 2010. It covers storm water discharge, which is identified as detrimental to stream quality; the application must be done with MDE. It also covers Best Management Practices/BMPs.

They also do D-Net sampling for benthic invertebrates. They take samples in a net, sort them, and identify organisms. To do fish sampling, they shock the fish, collect them, identify them and put them back. The data go into database, and the stream is rated good, fair, poor, or very poor. The Index of Biotic Integrity/IBI is used to measure water quality. Biological communities do better where there is less urban development.

Sodium levels in city water are rising to health hazard level as show in the Ashburton and Montebello charts. Salt usage correlates with number of salting “events” per year, not with total inches of snowfall. Other source for sodium in ground water is from water softeners/septic systems. Salt correlates with road density. State use of salt per lane mile is higher than county usage. Additional non-county owned surfaces include use on State owned land, commercial parking lots and side walks, private land, etc. All the alternatives to salt have their own downsides and impacts; magnesium chloride, calcium chloride, sand, acetone.

Steve was thanked for his informative presentation.

Committee reports:

Letter to county council on Deer Population:

Linda Davis presented a draft letter to the county council on the issue of deer over population. The letter recommends sharp shooters of deer in county parks and on other county lands. Letter was adopted with amendment to refer to parks and “appropriate” county lands. *‘In addition, we recommend that the County implement deer control measures in all County Parks and on all appropriate County lands so that the deer population is maintained at or below the documented sustainable carrying capacity of ten deer per square mile.’* 1 no, 1 abstained, motion carried.

Watershed Agreement, Committee of principals,

A brief report on the recent meeting was presented. Work continues to develop a comprehensive action plan.

Roadway Salt.

A short report was presented of findings to date. The committee continues to seek material to develop a response to letter from councilman to ‘review the environmental impacts of road salt application.’

Baltimore County Council building code review.

What revisions should the county consider for improving the interior environment, energy efficiency, sustainability of buildings. Jerry Jerick stated that although many codes and regulations are on the books, the county doesn’t enforce it all. Montgomery Co. enforces energy efficiency in a very different way. Baltimore County has worked with the school system to pursue green buildings, and a LEED certified building resulted. Jerry will meet with Councilman Gardina to discuss. Adequate staff to review proposed building plans is an issue. Glass is attractive to public but is not energy efficiency.

CEQ tour. Mike is doing a report on the recent tour. A tour of 6 and 7 is planned. Tour of 2 is in the works.

Sustainability update: Drafts are being prepared on initial recommendations of working groups. Next meeting of the Network is 4/22. Drafts will be circulated.

New business Kathy reported on inquiries coming to us from the website.

CSBA, advocating for the bill which supports the farmer having a creamery on his property. Joan supports the bill. Ray is concerned that farms took benefit of preservation as a “farm” and now wants to have a commercial establishment. We discussed whether we should study the issue, and declined to do so. We may in the future study in general the issue of the balance between support of farming and preservation of environment.

Adjourned: 9:20 PM