

## Baltimore County Commission on Environmental Quality

### Minutes of Meeting Held April 24, 2009

Present: Kathy Martin, Steve Schreiner, Joan Plisko, Russ Donnelly, Linda Davis, Don Outen, Joan Norman, Brian Fath, Nell Strachan, Lois Jacobs, Mike Pierce and John Alexander.

Absent: Ray Davis, Tom Moore, Willie Grier; Jerry Jurick, Rex Wright. Ashlee Harvey is unable to join us as an intern at this time.

**Call to order.** The meeting was called to order by chair, Kathy Martin, at 7:05 PM.

**Minutes.** The minutes of the meeting of 3/25/09 were not available, and consideration of them was deferred.

#### **Administrative business:**

Kathy reported on meetings with Ed Adams and Tim Burgess of DPW. They stated that they knew salt levels were rising but were not aware that they were as high as they are. DPW will send its representative to meetings if the agenda suggest it is appropriate to do so.

Kathy presented the issue of a potential meeting with the county council to present the annual report and review various issues. After discussion, it was decided to invite the county council members and the department heads to a supper of locally grown food at One Straw Farm in August. Joan and Kathy will coordinate.

**Special presentation.** Our guest speaker was Jenn Aiosa, Senior Scientist, Chesapeake Bay foundation. She began by reviewing the “report card” CBF issues each year giving the Bay a grade. Unfortunately, little progress has been made. She discussed various topics relevant to Baltimore County watersheds and the county’s outflows into the Bay, including:

- The need for environmentalists and agriculture to work together.
- Agricultural land is a substantial contributor to bay problems
- Bay quality has not improved very much; trends are only positive in a few places.
- CBF farm outside upper Marlboro/Clagett features grass fed beef, demonstrates good rotational practices, shows how practices work, and is much more sustainable.
- Sustainable farming is ripe for application in Baltimore County—one acre of grass vs. crop saves 12 pounds of nitrogen; makes more money, reduces nitrogen loads,
- Baltimore County Agricultural Farm Park—This would be a good opportunity for us to review their practices. Mike Pierce will ask about what the practices are, and plan for the future and report back. .
- There were 50,000 Acres of cover cropped land in the state in 07-08; perhaps we could increase the rate in Baltimore County. The state provides price supports at rates up to \$85/acre. The upper western shore is not a targeted watershed area, so extra pay may not apply because highest dollar goes to greatest need area. But base rate is \$45/acre. Joan Norman noted that the reimbursement requirements are too onerous. FY 09 will have money for up to 500,000 A of cover crops.

- CREP—the conservation reserve enhancement program-- provides funding for various kinds of improvements that have environmental positives, reducing run offs, providing vegetative buffers and establishing watering troughs. This helps keep cattle out of the stream, and installs buffers. Goal is: 100% of streams should be buffered. Money available for a portion of the costs to install these items.
- In Baltimore County, 53,000 acres are permanently protected. Baltimore County zoning is considered a national model for protecting rural areas and having designated growth areas.
- A website, [www.baystat.maryland.com](http://www.baystat.maryland.com), houses all the data/water quality info; lots of info
- PFA-- priority funding areas--85% of growth is inside PFA; so PFA doesn't mean much. This has slightly declined to 79% but we should focus on infill, not new areas. (John Alexander noted that the county is working on this, focusing on redevelopment).
- Progress from 2000: progress in some areas, but not in urban/suburban nitrogen or phosphorus. Lots of land is developed without storm water management, plus there is a population increase of 7% with a 40% increase in impervious surfaces. There is more paving per capita than there used to be. More driving/pavement/roads/bigger houses/bigger lots—all contribute.
- Suburban opportunities:
  - MS 4 renewal. Lessons from Montgomery county renewal, with implementation plans for TMDL and storm water retrofits provisions. LID/low impact development, ESD/environmental site design. The county can work to remove obstacles to better development practices
  - The Storm Water Management act of 07, with regulations coming out soon, will require revision of local barriers to LID.
  - Construction storm water permit process is in flux, that's an opportunity.
- Greenhouse gas reduction act. 25% reduction required.
- Chesapeake bay nitrogen reduction act of 2009 regulates all septic systems in critical areas replacements of failed systems.

Kathy thanked Jenn for her informative presentation.

### **Committee reports::**

**Deer Over Population** - Kathy reported that only one response was received to letter sent concerning the deer issue.

**Meet with Council** - We discussed having a meeting with members of the county Council, and opted for an off site farm dinner at Joan Norman. The date was set for Aug 26, 5:30. Kathy will invite county department heads and council members.

**Sustainability Network/SN** – Full Network met on 4/22/2009. SN has engaged a consultant to draft a report. Progress within each Committee was noted. The timeline is being revised. Federal money is available for parts of the work. Work group drafts will be circulated. 4 CEQ members (Rex, Brian, Joan P and Kathy) will meet with David Carroll to discuss and provide feedback.

**Planning board task force on agriculture.** Joan Norman and Mike Pierce reported on review of agricultural rules.

**Other reports** - No reports were presented on building codes, storm water, road salt or the watershed agreement, and they were deferred to next meeting.

**District tours:** Report on District 3 tour is complete. It needs to be distributed and posted on the web. Kathy asked members to email her their potential routes for Districts 2, 4, 5, 6, 7 tours with Jonas Jacobson so she can schedule. DEPRM can do a tour for CEQ in fall.

**Office of Community Conservation Ten Year Action Plan.** Relevant pages on lead paint and sustainability were circulated; we should discuss at the next meeting. Kathy will draft a comment on lead paint. On p 19, CEQ paragraph may need tweaking to bring it up to date. Kathy will circulate a proposed re-write of paragraph starting “the purpose....” via email.

**Baltimore County Forest Sustainability Committee** - Don Outen announced meeting next Tuesday at Sherwood House at Cromwell Regional Park on tree canopy issues, 9:30 to noon.

**Reminder of Upcoming meetings:**

6/24, speaker will be Joan Plisko, Healthy Hospitals

No meeting in July

8/26, Host of County Council and Department Chairs at Joan Norman’s One Straw Farm.

9/23—DEPRM presentation on water/development issues

Adjournment at 9:15 PM