

Baltimore County Commission on Environmental Quality

Minutes of Meeting Held May 27, 2009

Present: Kathy Martin, Joan Plisko, Ray Davis, Tom Moore, Russ Donnelly, Linda Davis, Joan Norman, Nell Strachan, Rex Wright, Jerry Jurick, Lois Jacobs, and Mike Pierce.

Absent: Steve Schreiner, Willie Grier; Brian Fath.

Call to order.

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

I. Minutes.

The minutes of the March 25 meeting were approved as corrected.

The minutes of the April 24 meeting were approved as circulated.

II. Speaker.

Joan Plisko, former chair of CEQ, spoke about the Healthy Hospitals initiative, Md. Hospitals for a Healthy Environment (H2E).

The following briefly summarizes some of the major points of her presentation:

- Hospitals have a large environmental footprint; for example, energy costs are 2% of gross revenues, much higher than commercial buildings.
- Water consumption is high: Hospitals use 44-50 million gallons/year
- Waste: a large amount is generated, 4 billion pounds of waste/year. Some of the waste is hazardous, which costs more to dispose of. The waste stream includes regular waste, used needles, pathology byproducts, chemotherapy waste, toxic substances (mercury, chemicals, pesticides).
- Protecting patient health, worker health and the community are key components of the plan.
- Hospitals recognize the need to manage their waste without exposures to workers. They recognize that, for example, newborns are especially vulnerable to pollutants.
- RCRA—Resource Conservation Recovery Act—regulates hazard waste issues.

- As of now, 3 out of every 4 hospitals in Md have a ‘green team’ to work on programs for green improvements.
- Food components: gardens, vending machine policy, composting, using local food.
- Her program provides advice to hospitals on how to manage waste reduction.
- The Md Pesticide Network provides info on pest management for hospitals.

Joan’s presentation provoked a thoughtful discussion of the many important aspects of this program.

III. Membership.

Joan Plisko presented a structural concern, that the chair needs an assistant, and that these positions should rotate. Linda Davis offered to repeat an assessment survey she had done at the outset, identifying the goals for work product and what it is important to achieve.

IV. CEQ Committee report updates.

Item b ‘Planning Board Task Force on Agriculture’ was discussed briefly, there being no substantive report.

Item a: Sustainability network. Rex, Kathy and Joan P are to report on sustainability work at the next meeting. The SN next meets on 6/9. Rex reported on the built environment committee, which is looking at green house gases and miles travelled to reduce the energy used in buildings. Joan reported that the county operations committee has reviewed the fleet energy purchases and made recommendations to the county, limited to the parts of the county government under the county executive (i.e., not the schools, libraries). Kathy reported that the education group and the natural resources sub committee, of which she is a member, are looking at how to link programs and view natural resources and the environmental consequences of decisions.

Item c. Building code review. Jerry distributed materials and reported that Baltimore County has adopted an energy code, which sets forth energy standards beyond the building code, but noted that the enforcement is lacking. Jerry met with Vince Gardina, recommended requiring energy statement on the cover of a development plan, and stronger enforcement.

Item d. Salt tasks force. Work continues.

Item e. District tours. Work continues. District 7 may be scheduled for June.

Continued thanks are due to DEPRM staff that hosts our evening meetings

Next meeting: June 24. As DEPRM is moving in June, Kathy will request meeting room at Planning Department.

No meeting in July.

Social meeting at Joan N's farm on August 26, with county council and dept heads.

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Meeting adjourned at 9:05 PM