

**Baltimore County Commission on
Environmental Quality
Minutes of Meeting September 22, 2010**

Attendance

The meeting was convened at 7 PM by acting chair Brian Fath in the Planning Conference Room of the Jefferson Building..

CEQ members: Lois Jacobs, Mike Pierce, Carri Beer, Brian Fath, Joan Norman, Russell Donnelly, Linda Davis, Rex Wright, Kathy Reiner-Martin, Nell Strachan

Absent: Jerry Jurrick, Ray Davis, Tom Moore, Willie Greer

Guest: Bridey Gallagher, intern

County Staff: Don Outen, John Alexander

Minutes

The minutes of the June meeting were approved as distributed. There were no meetings in July and August.

Announcements/Admin

A thank you was extended to Kathy Riener-Martin for hosting our annual picnic at Oliver Beach. The group enjoyed the wonderful view of the Gunpowder River where we talked about the importance of preservation of this great Baltimore County treasure.

There has been a citizen enquiry concerning a facility to turn waste material into useable products and energy. The company is Alchemy Environmental and the location is understood to be an old cement plant at Woodsboro. (Note: Alchemy Environmental Inc, is a national company headquartered in Provo, UT. Woodsboro is in Frederick County and has a Lehigh Cement plant.)

As part of a planned web site update, Brian has provided a new copy of the Conservation Landscape study in order to try to follow a "standard" format. Future studies should follow this format. Members are asked to review the present web site and suggest changes.

The idea of developing a CEQ logo, letterhead, and business cards was discussed. It was noted that another County volunteer group, the Board of Recreation and Parks, regularly sends out correspondence on Baltimore County letterhead that lists its chair and members, plus the County Executive, etc. It contains the County logo. It was suggested that a Towson student or Bryan Dunn of the County Office of Communications might be willing to develop a CEQ logo.

Living Sustainably

Linda discussed the list of 13 environmental ideas which she and Nell had developed. The group agreed that it was a good list and suggested that we add "unplug chargers (e.g. for cell phones) when not in use". The discussion mostly concerned how to publicize or distribute the list. Ideas included:

- putting on the CEQ web site, possibly with a CEQ blog (The county needs to be contacted to okay using a blog.)
- distribution with the next recycling mailer
- schools (The Green Schools coordinator should be contacted.)
- libraries, which might want to set up a display with appropriate books.
- cable TV - The Office of communications (Ellen Kobler) should also be contacted in regards to the County's Channel 25 where the list could be shown. They may also be encouraged to produce a video sketch, such as short clips of each idea - replacing a light bulb, using a low-water shower head, etc.

Any printed matter would direct someone to the web site.

Sustainability Network

There is not much to report.

Telling the Story/Master Plan

Brian gave a short presentation regarding the past and present situation in Baltimore County with regards to development and preservation, and urged that actions be taken to get out the message of the past successes of our county and the need to continue the efforts. This is particularly important with the major upcoming change in elected officials.

Don described some of the parts of the proposed Master Plan which the Planning Board is expected to approve at its next meeting. Of particular interest to the CEQ is the new water resources component now required by state law.

Because of the somewhat unique situation in Baltimore County with the URDL, there is a significant difference in results and expense between concentrating on redevelopment (e.g., old shopping centers) vs. continued infill and sprawl. While it is estimated that the former would cost the county an additional \$2 million per year for water quality improvement, the latter could cost \$20 million per year.

Plastic Bags

Lois gave an overview of the draft report she has assembled. A study done in California in March of this year provided a lot of information. The question of how to distribute the result was discussed. Since it will take some time for the CEQ to finalize the report, it will not be possible or useful to pass it to the current County Council. The group is asked to review the draft and the subject will be rediscussed as the report is finalized.

Deer

It was agreed that the CEQ needs to approach the new Council to seek a minor change in the law to allow hunting in parks when done as a part of an approved deer population control program. It's only a matter of finding one Council member to sponsor such legislation. After that, there can be a push for the County to actually plan such a program.

Elections

The group again discussed the effect of elections on the CEQ member's appointments and terms. In fact, it is not clear when various terms actually reach the end of their 3-year period. It was noted that the County Code states that members serve until replaced and that, with all the various appointments which the new County Executive and Council members need to make, the CEQ appointments could well go unnoticed. However, as discussed before, members should do what they can to discuss the CEQ work with candidates and, after the elections, with those elected.

Chesapeake Bay Watershed Implementation Plan

Don alerted the group to one serious impact if the State draft strategy for implementing the Chesapeake Bay TMDL is adopted. Under the strategy for the Forest Conservation Act, the draft State Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) calls for eliminating the "fees in lieu" option for local governments while raising the bar to a No Net Loss of Forests. While we wholeheartedly endorse the "no net loss" part of the proposed plan, this change would make the program rely completely on mitigation banking, and would undo DEPRM's long-standing, successful reforestation program using fees collected in Baltimore County.

CEQ Chair

Brian, who has been serving as "acting" chair the past year, has agreed to take on the position. The CEQ members elected Brian by acclamation.

Future Meetings

October 27

November 17 (change from normal)