

**Baltimore County Commission on
Environmental Quality
Minutes of Meeting February 23, 2011 (draft)**

Attendance

The meeting was convened at 7:10 PM by chair Brian Fath in the Planning Conference Room of the Jefferson Building.

CEQ members present: Brian Fath, Nell Strachan, Linda Davis, Carri Beer, Lois Jacobs, Mike Pierce, Joan Norman, Jerry Jurrick

CEQ members absent: Kathy Reiner-Martin, Russell Donnelly, Rex Wright, Ray Davis, Willie Greer, Tom Moore

County Staff: Don Outen, Vince Gardina

Others: Janet Schollenberger

Administrative

The minutes from the November meeting was approved. The annual report was approved and will be forwarded to the County Council, County Executive, and to the County staff for posting on the web site.

It was noted that some of the CEQ members' terms are expiring (and some are vacant) and the County Executive and Council members should be reminded of the need to reappoint or appoint members. Vince Gardina offered to forward the list he has of the current terms for the CEQ members to verify.

Sierra Club - Wetlands of Special State Concern

Janet Schollenberger of the Sierra Club provided a description of an evaluation of Wetlands of Special State Concern (WSSC) conducted by a team of graduate students from the Sustainable Development and Conservation Biology Program of University of Maryland in partnership with the Greater Baltimore Sierra Club between September - November 2009. This involved a GIS examination of all 17 WSSC located in Baltimore County and their surrounding watershed for physical characteristics (size, location, roads, housing density etc) as well as a rapid field assessment of a subset in which observations were made regarding disturbances, roads, invasive plants, trash, water quality, etc. The examination did not involve intensive scientific quantitative ecological measures.

Details for three specific wetlands were presented: Phoenix East, a Baltimore City-owned parcel on Paper Mill Rd adjacent to the Hunt Valley Golf Club; the Gunpowder Forge site, a part of the Gunpowder Falls State Park; and one in White Marsh along Belair Rd by Dunfield Rd which is a part of a BGE easement.

The work effort included an assessment of the threat vs. ease of restoration to determine a factor indicating the effectiveness of any corrective action.

The observations indicate that a 100 ft buffer as applied to streams is insufficient to protect these wetlands, and should be as much as 800 ft according to documented research.

It is planned to carry on this work in the other designated areas identified by the state and to work on some restoration activities of selected WSSC conditions. In many cases, permission from the land owner is required. In fact, permission could not be obtained from the state to evaluate a wetland in Soldier's Delight during the first phase.

Department of Environmental Protection and Sustainability

The new Director, Vince Gardina, gave an overview of some of the initiatives being undertaken by the department during this period of budget difficulties which has mandated a hiring freeze.

The county is under a mandate from the state to deal with pollutants in the Bay and must implement a TMDL program to limit specific pollutants such as phosphorous, nitrogen, and trash. This will entail costly programs including storm-water management system retrofits. Credits can be obtained for tree planting, reduction in impervious surfaces, and anything else which can be shown to reduce runoff.

A \$7.4M grant from the Department of Energy (stimulus funds) will be used mostly for retrofits to four county buildings in Towson, including \$500,000 for shade trees.

Deer

It was agreed that the letter which the CEQ sent to the previous Council members should be resent to the new Council in order to apprise them of this important issue and to prepare the way for legislative action to modify the current prohibitions on hunting in County parks. In addition, the CEQ members should try to arrange meetings with their respective Council members to discuss this and other issues.

Salt

Further action on this issue should wait until better weather.

Plastic Bag Study

Efforts continue to assemble the information into a report which can be distributed..

District Tours

The previous round of tours, which were designed for the Director of DEPRM, should continue, but should focus on the County Council members who may be interested.

Action items

Brian will send the previous letter to Council members regarding deer population control.

Annual report to be sent to County to put online.

All members should review web site for additional changes

Future Meetings

The next meeting will be March 23.