

MINUTES

Commission on Environmental Quality (CEQ)

September 24, 2014, 7:00 PM

Room 319: County Office Building, 111 W. Chesapeake Ave, Towson, MD 21204

Attendance: Valerie Andoutsopoulos, Bill Breakey, Linda Davis, Glenn Elseroad, Brian Fath, Mary Gruver-Byers, Lois Jacob, Steve Morsberger, Jeff Supik, Rex Wright

Absent: Jim Burkman (notified chair), Russell Donnelly (notified chair), Andy Miller (notified chair)

Baltimore County Staff: Ayla Haig (EPS), Don Outen (EPS), Katie Coolahan (EPS), John Alexander (Dept. Planning - retired)

Guest: Mike Ruby

Welcome and Introductions

I. CEQ Administrative Business

- The CEQ extends a big thank you to Glenn Elseroad and his wife Ruth for hosting the CEQ social dinner at their house on September 3, 2014. The setting, hospitality, and food were wonderful.
- The terms of Nell Strachan and Eric Hadaway have expired and both have requested not to be re-appointed. The CEQ wants to thank both of them for their contributions and dedicated service to the CEQ over the years. Nell had served since 2005 and was active in every CEQ report the past ten years. Her keen analytical insight and passion for the environment will be missed. Eric joined the CEQ in 2011 and jumped right in to road salt study and proposed pilot project. His technical skills and common sense voice will be hard to replace. Both positions are at large. Brian has been in contact with Vince Gardina about possible new appointments. **If you have recommendations for new CEQ members, then please send them to Brian.**
- Brian announced that he will be on sabbatical and working at a research institute abroad between January and August 2015. Therefore, at the end of 2014 he will step down as chair, a position held since 2010. The Commission will elect a new chair before the end of the year.
- The November 2014 election will see at least three new Councilmembers elected, as two members (Ken Oliver–D4 & John Olszewski–D7) have retired and one (Todd Huff–D3) was defeated in the primary. The CEQ will make efforts to engage the new Council members in January.
- The May minutes were unanimously approved.

- Baltimore County is a member to MDE's Green Registry. This free voluntary program offers tips and resources to help organizations set and meet their own goals on the path to sustainability. Baltimore County is now part of a list of businesses, organization, and communities that are "working toward a sustainable Maryland".

II. Fall Theme: Sustainability

Ayla outlined the next main CEQ project to assess the County-wide sustainability plan first drafted in 2011. Members signed up to review the following sections:

Source Reduction, Recycling & Solid Waste

- Valerie Androutsopoulos
- Jeff Supik
- Mary Gruver-Byers

Buildings, Sites, Water & Energy

- Jim Burkman
- Rex Wright

Community Form & Placemaking

- Lois Jacobs
- Brian Fath

Transportation & Mobility

- Bill Breakey
- Steve Morsberger

Community Engagement & Capacity

- Linda Davis
- Brian Fath

Forestry & Natural Resource Systems

- Linda Davis
- Glenn Elseroad
- Lois Jacobs

Food Production & Agriculture

- Glenn Elseroad
- Steve Morsberger

Economic Vitality & Jobs

- Valerie Androutsopoulos

Teams of 2 or 3 are to work together to review, revise, and recommend. The timeline is as follows:

- October meeting-present findings from review
- November meeting-begin to draft response and recommendations
- December meeting-final report

Page 41-42 of the report has grades from the community focus groups. It would be useful to assess these grades in your own reviews. The audience for this report is County Council and County Department Heads. The expected outcome is to use this to revitalize and rejuvenate the Sustainability Network.

Ayla will look into setting up a site to share documents.

Related points:

- Rex suggested that we investigate the latest news at the ICLEI website. Resources from ICLEI were used in the CEQ Cool Cities report, which led to the first Baltimore County greenhouse gas inventory. ICLEI resources may be helpful in our review of the County Sustainability Plan. Their website is available here: www.icleiusa.org/. Sustainability resources through ICLEI are available here: www.icleiusa.org/sustainability/more-sustainability-resources.
- The county will be planting forest trees on 70 acres this fall funded by the stormwater management fee. This is the first year for this new program; the goal is to reach 120 acres planted per year. The program has a 1-acre minimum for planting.
- Transition Towns is a European movement to bring community resilience. Linda recommended that we look at their website and see how this might be useful locally. A brief discussion ensued regarding the definition of the concepts of resilience and sustainability. The bottom-line is that whatever word is being used, the intent for CEQ (and groups like us) is to try to improve the environmental conditions and local living conditions in Baltimore County. Their website is available here: www.transitionus.org/home.
- There was a brief discussion on resiliency. Rex discussed the idea of energy efficiency and renewable energy would allow a community to recover quicker from a disaster compared to a community based on non-renewable fuel sources. Also, that resilience has a more inclusive sound than sustainability which already pits ideological factions. Don offered various definitions of resiliency in relation to forest management and stewardship. Brian made the point that both resilience and sustainability are vague, yet important, buzzwords, although he remains skeptical as to their adaptation by society. Sustainability, as a true systems concept—what features make a system persist and function indefinitely over time—has not been resolved in a scientific sense, but that should not hesitate us to continue to promote improvements in local environments.

III. New Business

Brian raised the issue of County Bill 56-14. The bill was originally intended to allow additional income in rural areas in the form of agricultural tourism. The discussion discovered that the original narrow intent of the bill was broadened such that the limitations on activities are not clear (e.g., are rock concerts, rodeos, large corporate parties, etc. permissible?). Given the potential long lasting consequences for the rural character of the county which to now has been largely and admirably protected under the zoning classifications and URDL, **the CEQ will write to Council requesting additional time to review the Bill and its implications.** Currently, the timeline is work session on October 14th followed by a vote on October 20th.

Lorraine & Peter Doo – Doo Consulting/USGBC Members have agreed to speak to CEQ at the October meeting.

The CEQ appreciates the new space offered in the County Office Building, but it may be a tight space if all member plus visitors are present. We will remain here in the short term and consider other options such as the Public Library and the EPS Cockeysville office as needed.

IV. Adjourn – meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM.

Next Meetings: 7 p.m., regular meetings

October 22, 2014

November 19, 2014

December 17, 2014