

Minutes
Commission on Environmental Quality (CEQ)
December 17, 2014, 7:00 PM
Dept of Environmental Protection & Sustainability, Room 319: County Office Building,
111 W. Chesapeake Ave, Towson, MD 21204

Attendance: Jim Burkman, Bill Breakey, Linda Davis, Glenn Elseroad, Mary Gruver-Byers

Baltimore County Staff: Ayla Haig (EPS), Don Outen (EPS)

Guests: John Alexander (Dept. Planning - retired)

Absent: Brian Fath, Valerie Andoutsopoulos, Lois Jacobs, Russell Donnelly, Andy Miller, Rex Wright, Steve Morsberger

Welcome and Introductions

I. CEQ Administrative Business /10 minutes – Brian

a. Review/Adopt September minutes

II. Fall Theme: Sustainability Research Results/1 hour – Group Discussion

The document was never released publicly – this is an effort to see if we can reopen the discussion. Ayla suggests we take individual sets of recommendations to different Department heads to see how they respond.

a. Presentation of Recommendations

Food Production and Agriculture: Glenn Elseroad

Glenn provided a handout with talking points about the role of farmers and agriculture in Baltimore County, highlighting current facts and challenges. After review of the current agricultural recommendations, Glenn suggested that the County: Develop a brand image; improve direct sales opportunity; focus on agricultural training and development; and focus on the Right to Farm Bill

There has been increased activity at the Agricultural Center and Farm Park. In the Fall there was an open house with more than 3,000 visitors (Family Farm Weekend). It was asked how can farmers get involved in water conservation practices, such as installing rain barrels, rainwater collection systems, etc.

Deer are still a problem, so farmers are planting in concentrated areas.

It was noted that the Department of Agriculture is providing grants to allow for more efficient natural gas towers and solar units.

General Discussion:

Linda brought up the issue of salt on the roads, as it relates to public health. Are there opportunities to publicize the alternatives? The Maryland Environmental Health Network

could be a starting point. Don noted that while the County's job is to focus on public safety, the role of media is also important.

Linda suggested that our end result from the review of recommendations should be in a condensed format to Council. A single topic might be best to focus on, as giving a list without much context could be received in a different way/take away from what's truly important.

Don described the role of the Resource Group is to protect resources. Some of the items that are missing from the report include the role of TMDL's and the County's mandates. Structurally if we are revising and making recommendations, the current 121 recommendations do not cover the full list of issues for the County, but does the CEQ need to make recommendations on top of existing mandates? The TMDL plans have unreasonable tree planting acres. Don mentioned that the County is already developing plans for tree planting, but how can we multiply our efforts, and what can we specifically bring to Council.

Bill Breakey and Don asked about comparable jurisdiction's sustainability efforts, best practices, and how to expand our efforts to be comparable to others (i.e. Baltimore County does not have a sustainability plan).

III. Adjourn 8:55 p.m.