

Meeting Minutes
Advisory Commission on Environmental Quality (CEQ)
September 21, 2016, 7:00 PM
Dept. of Environmental Protection & Sustainability (EPS), Rm. 319: County Office Building,
111 W. Chesapeake Ave, Towson, MD 21204

CEQ meeting dates, membership information, and reports are always available online here:
www.baltimorecountymd.gov/Agencies/ceq/index.html

Attendance: Mary Gruver-Byers, Valerie Andoutsopoulos, Linda Davis, Lois Jacobs, Rex Wright, Brian Bernstein, and Steve Morsberger

Baltimore County Staff: Brian Lindley (EPS), Kui Zhao (Planning)

Guests: John Alexander (Planning - retired), Autrese Thornton (District 4 citizen)

Absent: James Deriu, Glenn Elseroad, Bill Breakey, Andy Miller, Brian Fath, and Carol Newill

Welcome and Introductions

CEQ Member Updates:

- County Executive member appointments renewed July 1, 2016 included Linda Davis, Brian Fath, Rex Wright, and James Deriu. These appointments expire on June 30, 2019.
- Brian Bernstein is a new At Large Representative appointed by the County Executive on July 1, 2016. This appointment expires on June 30, 2019.
- District Representative member appointments renewed in 2016 include Valerie Andoutsopoulos (District 1) and Lois Jacobs (District 2). These appointments expire on June 30, 2019.
- Karen Wynn is the new District 7 Representative appointed by Councilman Todd Crandell on September 16, 2016. This appointment expires on June 30, 2019.
- The CEQ is still waiting to hear if Bill Breakey (District 3) and Mary Gruver-Byers (District 6) have been reappointed by their respective Councilman and Councilwoman.
- There is also still a vacancy for the District 4 Representative.

Steve Morsberger announced he is stepping down as Chair. Bill is co-chair so perhaps he will accept the Chair or continue to co-chair with someone.

Meeting Schedule:

Meetings are held on Wednesday, once per month, adjusted for holidays or as otherwise agreed. The October meeting will be a week early on 10/19. Rex suggested, and members agreed, to have the November meeting on November 30th, then skip the December meeting because it's hard to schedule or have a quorum due to the holidays in December. Future meeting dates include:

- November 30, 2016
- January 25, 2017
- February 22, 2017

- March 22, 2017
- April 26, 2017
- May 24, 2017

County Council Coordination:

Lois met her District 2 representative, Vicki Almond, who is still interested in setting up tours for each of the districts. She suggested that the council members set up the tour, rather than the CEQ representatives as was done in previous years. It would be beneficial to get the “environmental footprint” for each of the districts.

New Business / Future Topics

We should ask Vince Gardina (Director, EPS) and Brian Shepherd (County Exec representative) for suggestions on what to cover and make them aware of our frustration at not being provided with any direction.

Perhaps the Road Salt report could be revised and updated. Now might also be a good time to discuss Stormwater Management (SWM) in light of July’s devastating flood, with more emphasis as a “Flash Flood Prevention Plan.” Modification to the URDL has allowed too much building with insufficient open space, which serves to absorb heavy rain. Each of the development projects (in Ellicott City) met required SWM criteria individually but little or no consideration was given to the total impact for multiple projects or holistic development. What role can the CEQ play as plans are made to rebuilding Ellicott City to ensure this doesn’t happen again and/or in Baltimore County areas?

Lois mentioned if four trees were planted for each individual, it would offset their lifetime carbon footprint. To this end, many organizations plant trees to honor and memorialize individuals and events. However, they never know which is “their” tree; donors would like to see an actual tree resulting from their donation. Lois discussed this topic with Glenn who mentioned that perhaps there are landowners like him, who would be willing to plant canopy trees on their property that individuals could actually visit, perhaps on a designated day. CEQ members could reach out to their councilperson to get something going in each district. Like-minded land preservation and environment groups could join together. This could coincide with the County’s “Big Tree Sale” and perhaps private nurseries would like to be involved.

Wildlife in urban areas, such as coyotes in the city are becoming a problem. An example of what can be done for managed wildlife in urban areas is a project called “A Campsite Grows in Brooklyn” where a portion of Jamaica Bay, NYC has been reclaimed and turned into an egret habitat. Perhaps something similar could be done in Baltimore County areas of the Chesapeake.

Rex asked whatever became of greenhouse gas reductions that a grad student of Brian Fath’s (former CEQ chair) had worked on. The funding was stopped when a new administration came in. There has been a new development that allows solar power to be added to the grid, which can be used to offset usage anywhere through a meter. In the past, the energy needed to be used at the source of generation. For example, schools are often a good place for solar panels, but the majority of energy would be collected during the summer months, when school is not in session and doesn’t need the generated energy as much. Now it can be used anywhere. This development makes it financially attractive, as well as environmentally sound. Rex is to prepare talking points on this topic for the October meeting.

It's important to move quickly on this because the window of opportunity may close due to regulations. This is not compatible with energy companies' current business model and they could move to have it banned. Vince Gardina should be able to suggest appropriate next steps and he has expressed interest in coming to the October meeting.

Washington DC did a solar challenge with the Federal Government and there is now solar energy generated on 30 buildings including the Smithsonian. Known as "The Capital Challenge", this was a win-win with positive PR and financial savings.

Since Russell Donnelly had done a lot of research on the Road Salt problem, perhaps he could be invited to a future meeting to present on the topic.

Is it possible to return to the Jefferson Building, which is larger, for future meetings? Whatever caused our need to relocate may no longer be an issue.

Brian shared that the CEQ is up to date with respect to the "Open Meetings Act." Agendas and meeting minutes have been posted to the website. Steve indicated that drafts of the 2014 and 2015 CEQ Annual Reports have been provided to EPS for review and approval before providing to the County Executive and County Council.

Members thanked Steve for his time as Chair and wished him the best of luck.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:30.