

Draft of CEQ Meeting minutes 2-22-2017

In attendance: Dan Doerfer, Lynda Davis, Valerie Androutsopoulos, Brian Lindley, Lois Jacobs, Qui Zhao, James Deriu, Glenn Elseroad, Suzanne Galletti

Open meeting:

I. Welcome and introductions-Lois Jacobs, chairperson

Suzanne Galletti - visited as a guest. She is considering an appointment to the commission from District 3 (Wade Kach).

II. Discuss, correct and approve the minutes of the January 25, 2017 meeting. Minutes were approved as submitted.

Lois Jacobs reviewed CEQ's approach for taking and recording minutes. At present the minutes are generally lengthy and detailed. Brian Lindley advised that County personnel refer to the minutes posted on the website and appreciated the detail. It was agreed no change would be made at this time.

II. Solar Bill

Solar Bill comments were reviewed and discussed. It was acknowledged that Commission member, Rex Wright had provided nearly all the information at our last meeting because of his knowledge regarding solar energy.

The County Council amended and agreed to a revised version of the bill. A copy of the bill (Bill 9-17 Solar Facilities) is available on the Baltimore County website under pending legislation online at The council has the solar report from CEQ and our comments. The Bill will be discussed at the work session on February 28, 2017 at 2 PM. Final reading and vote will occur at the legislative session on Monday, March 6, 2017 at 6 PM.

Lois Jacobs mentioned solar panels in connection with the County's 10-year solid waste plan. Solar panels have an approximate 15 year lifespan. DPW solid waste personnel say that all solar panel materials will likely be recycled/recyclable. Lois Jacobs has passed this information through channels to the county council members.

IV. CEQ The current Baltimore County code language regarding the CEQ was reviewed with commission members. Members were asked if they'd ever received copies of the CEQ handbook. Only a few members responded that they had received any materials, but it was not a full copy of the handbook. The map and other portions of the handbook are to be updated and provided to CEQ members.

Brian Lindley and Lois Jacobs have visited with Vince Guardina's assistant Debra Beatty at EPS to discuss updating all CEQ materials including the handbook. An updated handbook is needed to effectively guide CEQ activities. A current list of CEQ members and their contact information is to be included in the updated handbook as well as contact information for CEQ alumni.

Lois Jacobs distributed a copy of the CEQ Operating Policies and Procedures dated January 2008 to all present. The question was asked if commission members would like copies of past CEQ projects. It was clarified that information regarding past projects is available on the CEQ website.

V. 10-year Solid Waste Plan

The department of public works is developing a new ten-year solid waste management plan that will cover the 2019 through 2028 period.

Lois Jacobs led a discussion about the recent community meetings on the County's 10-year solid waste plan. Three of the commission members present had attended one of the meetings. Lois presented and discussed the county's Reuse Directory. It is available in county library branches as well as on in PDF form on the county website. DPW will also mail copies as requested.

Lois reviewed her notes from the 10-year solid waste plan meeting she had recently attended. She mentioned that the meeting included discussion of current recycling levels, future recycling goals and toxic wastes reduction. Per solid waste management Bureau chief Mike Beichler, per capita trash volume is declining.

Valerie Androutsopoulos commented that there were composting restrictions in Baltimore County and that a program that previously made yard waste composting containers available through the county had come to an end.

Lois and Valerie reviewed some of the items discussed at recent meetings. There are 39 vendors that pick up trash and recyclables in Baltimore County. Vendors bid for county disposal contracts. Small firms seem to be excluded from the bid process because of cash flow challenges presented by a six-month bid study period.

The county continues with a single stream recycling program. Valerie Androutsopoulos mentioned that the move toward single stream recycling had been in part driven by the desire for route efficiency. She went on to describe how glass that is collected during recycling gets crushed during compaction and cannot be recycled and that some European countries have a separate collection for glass recycling. Optical sorters at mixed recycling facilities (MRF's) cannot recognize small pieces of glass. At the recent meetings, Michael Beichler had indicated a 5% value for recycling facility residue, but Valerie believes that it is more like 25%. Valerie discussed the recycling processes of paper plastic bottles and aluminum. Aluminum is picked up at first review, but is lost to recycling if it is cross-contaminated with food and other trash. China has been taking much of the US's recycled cardboard, but began refusing cross-contaminated materials when they instituted the "green fence" policy some years ago. As a result the US had to improve its recycling processes with longer sorting lines and improved sorting of metal, plastics and other materials. In the past, recycling provided low-skilled jobs that have been lost as optical sorting and automation have taken over. She further discussed how commercial waste haulers/recyclers (such as Republic, Allied, Waste Management, etc.) are not required to report their recycled material figures and had resisted past moves to compel them to do so.

James Deriu asked what if any structural changes were planned in solid waste management. Valerie Androutsopoulos replied there were no significant changes planned, but that DPW was investigating HD-MRF facilities. She further described how the county was offering recycling

pick up to privately-owned multifamily residential buildings.

There was a brief discussion of high diversion mixed recycling facilities (HD-MRF's) as the issue had been raised at the recent 10-year plan meetings.

Valerie mentioned that these type of facilities were primarily operating in Europe. Dan Doerfer advised that at the meetings Mike Beichler said his department had submitted request for proposals (RFP's) for two of these types of facilities, but he did not expect to see proposals until sometime in 2018. Even if such projects were to move forward, legislative approval, financing and permitting would likely take several years.

Linda Davis discussed the "old style" of recycling which was voluntary and where citizens delivered recyclables to a designated collection site. She described how residents in New South Wales, Australia would drop off their recyclables and create a "TIP aisle" for reusables that other residents could pick up and take away, thus reducing the landfill load. She wondered what it would take to create a similar "TIP aisle" reuse function at county recycling centers. Linda felt it was important for people to think more about reuse and recycling to prevent usable items from ending up in a landfill. She suggested that exchange events and local neighborhood could be advertised in conjunction with neighborhood "dumpster days". Someone raised the idea that there could be liability issues with "TIP aisles" or similar exchange events on county property. Linda also suggested that perhaps Goodwill, Purple Heart and other charities might send trucks for collection of reusable goods to a landfill TIP aisle as described above.

The commission members were left with the question – what input do we want to give on the 10-year solid waste plan? The 10-year solid waste plan is currently being formed for submission. Comments on the 10-year plan must be submitted by no later than March 2, 2017. Once formulated, the plan will go to a citizen's review committee after which the County Council will vote on the proposed plan. No dates were available for when the citizen review and county council vote will occur.

There was some additional discussion about plastic bags in the waste stream. Dan Doerfer discussed information he had found on the National Association of Counties website regarding bag recycling. Bags were being collected and bundled by one rural Wisconsin county and recycled into Trex decking materials. Other Commission members mentioned that local retailers who accepted the plastic bags were recycling them in much same way. Dan suggested that the county could include plastic bag recycling facilities at the two county recycling collection centers. Linda Davis suggested we resurrect the CEQ's Plastic Bags report to facilitate further discussion of the matter.

VI. Farm walking tour

Glenn Elseroad discussed hosting the CEQ for a farm walking tour in mid to late summer. The matter and scheduling will be discussed again at our next meeting.

VII. Lois acknowledged that meeting had run late and asked for a member to move that we adjourn. We adjourned at approximately 8:55 PM.