

Minutes
Advisory Commission on Environmental Quality (CEQ)
May 24, 2017, 7 PM

Jefferson Building, Chesapeake Room, **105** W. Chesapeake Avenue, Towson, MD 21204

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

Present: Lois Jacobs, Andy Miller, Qui Zhao, Carol Newill, Linda Davis, Valerie Androutsopoulos, Brian Lindley, Karen Wynn, Rex Wright, Larry Fogelson, Dan Doerfer, Councilman David Marks

Open Meeting

- I. Welcome and Introductions – Lois Jacobs, Chair

- II. Correct and approve minutes of April 26, 2017 meeting.
Lois made one small correction to mention that the county is contracting out parts of the Forestry program that are no longer managed directly by EPS. Karen mentioned we need to correct one statement about contact with the student who had asked for help. With these corrections, minutes were approved.

- III. County Trees and Urban Tree Canopy - Carol, Lois
Total amount of canopy will increase but will be mostly concentrated in the Rural areas; this still leaves the problem of what happens to urban trees?
What would be the most appropriate street trees that won't get too large or too broad and that won't undermine sidewalks? We might consult with other jurisdictions to see what choices they make.
 - Councilman David Marks – Speaker
Offer three quick observations: 1. A lot of good professionals in BC government who sympathize with what we are trying to do here. 2. Sometimes decisions are made for efficiency's sake that may not be consistent with environmental sustainability. Property management tends to be a major obstacle mostly because of issues of maintenance and liability. 3. Frustration that county government doesn't seem to follow the rules that everyone else has to live under. Ex: removal of 30 trees at York and Bosley where the Fire Dept is.

We should look at how do other local governments deal with this issue and what process do they have to go through to remove trees? How do you diagnose if a tree needs to be removed because of disease and what do we do in terms of replacement? We know the Green Towson Alliance has some problems with the landscape manual and whether adequate provision is made for maintenance.

Rex: why is the Urban Canopy important?

Lois: it's fair to say that countywide we are continuing to lose tree canopy in urban areas. We have to revisit the whole issue and not just individual incidents such as the one described above. Rex: Mitigation plan for replanting typically requires planting trees where there can be a larger concentration of trees

together. On the other hand urban canopy is important for a variety of reasons having to do with local environmental effects (shade, microclimate, water use, aesthetics). Larry: there is a forest conservation fund for inside the URDL to pay for trees that come down. Where does that money get used and where do those trees go? Can we replace them with new trees inside the URDL? Lois: There is also an issue with Baltimore Gas and Electric which has a policy called "right tree in the right place" but doesn't always do what we might hope for.

The delegation of the power to issue permits is very fuzzy. We can't tell whether there is an actual document that delegates to the county the right to implement the state road tree statute but that appears to be what has been happening in practice. There is no enforcement or real reporting back to the state. There is a state form that is used as a permit but apparently it is not always used. If you do use it for a tree within the county right of way you can get a tree removed by the county for \$25.

County parks are another category that falls underneath property management (not recreation and parks) – Brian Lindley.

There is also the issue of trees infected by pests like the emerald ash borer and it's not clear exactly what the rules are.

- Guest from Green Towson Alliance – Larry Fogelson

There are many different ways that trees are abused inside the URDL. Recommend that there needs to be a sea change in the way the county handles urban trees. Propose a blue-ribbon committee of people with appropriate credentials, perhaps convened by CEQ, to bring out something that will carry some weight with a new administration.

One thing the council has asked us to do in the past is to prepare a report that summarizes what goes on in Baltimore County and in other jurisdictions with regard to authority and procedures and reasons for removing urban trees on public property. Carol prepared a report like this for Steve Lafferty. The second step would be to look for ways to implement a new procedure across departments and agencies.

Brian provided a list of categories of urban trees and which agency has jurisdiction currently. Public works controls rights of way; Property Management for parks and recreation land; Department of Education for school properties; EPS for forest conservation easements, forest buffers and critical areas (three separate regulations). There is no longer one person taking on Don Outen's role overseeing trees for the whole county but Brian Lindley does oversee this last set of three items. Watershed monitoring group oversees tree planting associated with restoration projects. Unfortunately there is no longer someone at the county level who speaks for urban forestry or tree cover in a coordinated way.

Larry read a statement from testimony that he was planning to deliver to the County Council before the Marks bill was withdrawn, arguing that there is a need

to change how we handle this entire issue to come into compliance with best practices.

Who will work on this? Brian for current practice at the county, Carol, Lois, Rex, Andy and Linda and possibly Brian Fath.

IV. Update on Litter issue – Karen, Dan, Lois

- Continue with discussion from April Meeting
 - prevention, cameras for dumpers, enforcement issues, neighborhood awareness, etc.
- Input from Councilwoman Almond esp. re: code enforcement.
- Comments from Councilwoman Bevins

Lois ran into her at an event and mentioned what Karen and Dan were working on. She personally feels that in order to make headway on this there has to be a program where you can reach the schools.

Karen and Dan: what would you recommend going forward?

The curriculum in the lower grades does not have time during the day to bring someone in to talk about this. A new community organization in Essex is trying to find a way to do this and are starting with Sussex Elementary. This is different from the Green Schools effort and could eventually be turned into a major initiative. Karen and Dan passed out a sheet of paper that describes the BCPS Clean 15 Litter Challenge which was won by thirteen schools in Baltimore County with awards for achievement. There is concern at some schools about potential risk to students from the kind of litter they might encounter. But we can support a variety of initiatives rather than one strategy. Some private schools have their own initiatives as well.

- Plastic Bags Report: re-read, how to tie-in to Litter Issue.

Karen testified on plastic bags in the Senate. This and plastic bottle initiative are part of trash reduction. Plastic bottles picked up by the boom are too contaminated to be recycled.

- Sub-Committee to meet in June and/or in Summer?

Would like Karen, Dan and Valerie to bring us some recommendations in the fall for how to proceed.

V. Solar Bill – not yet introduced.

Will report on this when there are more developments.

VI. Adjourn 8:45 p.m.

Next Meeting: 7:00 PM, regular meeting

- September 27, 2017