

MINUTES
Advisory Commission on Environmental Quality (CEQ)
March 25, 2015, 7:00 PM
Loch Raven Conference Room, 111 W. Chesapeake, Towson, MD 21204

Attendance: Mary Gruver-Byers, Glenn Elseroad, Linda Davis, Steve Morsberger, James Deriu, Bill Breakey, Lois Jacobs (phone), Andy Miller

Baltimore County Staff: Don Outen (EPS), Kui Zhao (Planning Dept.)

Guests: John Alexander (Dept. Planning - retired)

Absent: Brian Faith, Valerie Andoutsopoulos, Russell Donnelly, Rex Wright, Jim Burkman

- I. Welcome and Introduction
- II. CEQ background and needs for better organization (see agenda by Don)
 - a. Need someone to step up for chair and possibly 2 co-chairs
 - b. Secretary – Andy Miller
 - c. Process observer – refer to CEQ Procedures document
 - d. Don suggested a Vice Chair to step up when Chair term is over
 - e. 2 existing vacancies: District 4, At-large representative
 - i. For District 4, consider reaching out to Councilman Jones for suggestions (Glenn will do this)
 - ii. Nancy Seroski? Ask her for At-large vacancy
 - iii. James Deriu was listed as Homebuilders representative but this position does not fit with his expertise – check with Michael Harrison as a possibility?
 - f. Don, Ayla or someone at EPS can take care of website postings, other related work
 - g. Only 4 months of meeting minutes have been posted online for 2014. A lot of either canceled meetings (October 2014 and February 2015) or minutes not posted – need to handle the scheduling effectively. Meeting minutes for November and December (2014), and January 2015 need to be reviewed, approved and posted to the CEQ website.
- III. Future focus of the ACEQ
 - a. Review of duties and responsibilities:
 - i. Develop a dialogue on environmental issues affecting Baltimore County and the waterways that are adjacent to the County, including the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries.
 - ii. Make recommendations concerning any environmental question or issue referred by the County Council, any Council member, or the County Executive.
 - a. County Executive has not ever asked CEQ to investigate/research a topic

- b. Some issues are referred through the County Council – sometimes referred originally by CEQ members to County Council and then back to CEQ
 - c. Consider reaching out to all new Council members and touch base with re-elected members.
 - d. Reschedule District Tours with Council members as needed (e.g. Tom Quirk)
 - e. Reach out to Vince to see if he is pleased with CEQ
- iii. Assist County government in educating the citizens of Baltimore County on issues concerning the environment.
- b. Alternative approaches
 - i. Ask Executive, Council members, heads of department about what they see as issues that need to be addressed and see which ones are good issues for the Commission to work on. Asking may not always bring back issues for us to work on, but has its value.
 - ii. If the “ask” doesn’t work, maybe as an appointed independent commission we should be identifying the issues that we see as important priorities that deserve our attention and that should be brought back to the agencies and officials who serve the public. This commission has the opportunity by virtue of its independence of meeting and talking with members of the public and with agencies to discuss agendas that are important.
 - iii. Report conditions and trends (fact finding)
 - iv. Develop legislative, policy, or program options
 - v. Evaluate progress (mid-course corrections)
 - vi. Others?
- c. There was an extensive discussion of the salt report as an example where there are arguments made on both sides of an issue and there is frustration that changes are not made. How do we move forward in situations where we don’t necessarily see motion on an issue on a time scale consistent with our expectations?
- d. One suggestion: this group seems to work best when we have a particular issue to work on. Should we be setting agendas that way?
- e. Another: Working on the revision of the sustainability document has been a more complex enterprise than was originally envisioned. There are probably members of the commission who could identify issues within that document that have not been addressed. Understanding where we are, what is still an issue and what can be done is still a need, but there is still an opportunity to put other items on the agenda if we think they are important. Identifying an issue doesn’t necessarily mean that we will automatically take one side or another. We can take opportunities to address an issue without prejudging that there is only one outcome and one set of recommendations that are possible. Our analysis has to be independent of the views of any single interest group. When we have a finished product we also have to be working with our council

members to make sure they are informed about what we have learned and what we are reporting.

- f. The outcomes of reports we have delivered that have been most effective have been those that either were requested or that grew out of a question that was asked, because we know there is an ear waiting at the other end. On the other hand we have brought things forward that have been acted on because we were speaking on behalf of constituents of Council members who were not previously aware of the things we had learned. Reports that have been issued that were well received in the past included the road salt report, the green building report, and the report on deer
- g. The new Council may not be very much aware that we are here. The previous Council had members who knew we were reliable, did good work and did not act out of an agenda (i.e. we did not have a preconceived notion of the outcome of the issue we were studying) and that gave credibility to the reports we produced. There were meetings and introductions and in some cases even field trips to show council members landmarks or issues in their own districts. We had discussed last year the idea that we would engage in another round of these activities and some of us have whereas some have not. Perhaps we should try to set up a group meeting again to introduce ourselves to the members of the Council.

IV. Scheduled Meetings: April 22, May 27, and June 24

V. Adjourn 8:50