

Meeting Minutes
Advisory Commission on Environmental Quality (CEQ)
November 18, 2015, 7:00 PM
Dept. of Environmental Protection & Sustainability, Room 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: German Mora, Glenn Elseroad, James Deriu, Lois Jacobs, Brian Fath, Valerie Andoutsopoulos, Linda Davis, Russell Donnelly, Rex Wright, Andy Miller, Carol Newill, Steve Morsberger

Baltimore County Staff: Don Outen, Kui Zhao

Absent: Bill Breakey, Mary Gruver-Byers

Welcome, Introductions and Announcements

- Welcome to Carol Newill appointed by Councilman Marks as the new District 5 Representative

I. Old Business – Group Discussion

Stormwater Management Fee Bill (85-15)

James Deriu presented testimony on behalf of the Commission at the County Council work session on November 12, 2015. Blue Water Baltimore, CBF, Green Alliance Towson also gave testimony against removing the stormwater remediation fee; property owners, a state delegate from the Dundalk area, and small business owners also spoke.

The reduction in revenue for the County will amount to \$16 million. It was argued that what the council did was illegal according to state law because they eliminated the fee without having a funding alternative. The county is putting all of their urban tree projects on hold.

The Council voted unanimously to phase out the stormwater fee.

II. Presentation from Larissa Johnson (Coordinator for MDE Climate Change Outreach and Communication, and the MD Climate Coalition)

She has been in this position for three years and her focus is on communicating climate change science to non-scientists and policymakers; she produces posters, gives talks, provides information using social media, works through libraries, with community colleges, K-5 educators, PTA groups, community associations, anyone who asks for her help, but most often with families – the presentation is targeted at children but the message also resonates with adults.

The Maryland Commission on Climate Change: They have decided the state can meet a 40% Green House Gas emissions reduction by 2030 if the listed strategies are implemented. There is a discussion scheduled for Monday November 30, 2015, at Parks & People Foundation.

Empower Maryland involves collaborations among many state agencies that have some potential to help in reducing emissions. The goal of Empower Maryland is to reduce energy use by 15% by 2015 compared with 2006 levels (8% thus far; extended for 3 years with the hope of reaching the goal). Current law mandates reduction of 20% by 2022 but the current law will sunset by 2016 and many groups are now focused on expanding the target to 40% by 2030 and to have that passed into state law. This is the goal of the Maryland Commission on Climate Change. The top ten programs to accomplish this – four are related to energy usage and renewables; two are run by DNR and have to do with planting trees; two are Department of Transportation and two are Human Resources.

Money from a utility surcharge has been going into funds for this program. The funds have been collected but are not being used to their potential because people are not participating in the Empower programs. Each utility decides how to do outreach and marketing so this winds up not being a true statewide initiative but instead a series of individual initiatives. BGE has their own program, which is the one that affects residents of Baltimore County. The top two ways to reduce emissions are to use less energy and to transition to alternative energy. BGE will assist and advise people in a number of ways. Weatherization kits can be used to seal homes to reduce energy loss. The Empower program pays Home Depot, IKEA and Lowes to create rebates on LED bulbs. Empower also covers \$400 of the \$500 cost of a home energy checkup, performed by a third-party vendor.

Renew Maryland is a communications tool rather than a program. The concept involves three pillars: clean energy, strong economy, and healthy people. The program has support from the Ravens and there are projects in other jurisdictions, but currently none connected with this initiative in Baltimore County.

Larissa Johnson is also looking to create a program called Climate Champions, which would recruit one or two volunteers in each jurisdiction.

III. Adjourn

Next Meetings: 7:00 p.m., regular meetings

- December 16, 2015
- January 27, 2016
- February 24, 2016
- March 23, 2016
- April 27, 2016
- May 25, 2016