

AGENDA

Advisory Commission on Environmental Quality (CEQ)

December 16, 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: Mary Gruver-Byers, Glenn Elseroad, James Deriu, Bill Breakey, Lois Jacobs, Andy Miller, Valerie Andoutsopoulos, Linda Davis, Carol Newill, Steve Morsberger

Baltimore County Staff: Don Outen, Kui Zhao

Absent: German Mora, Russell Donnelly, Brian Fath, Rex Wright

I. Updates – Group Discussion

The following updates were presented:

- As the stormwater fee is phased out, the County Executive has committed to finding alternative sources of funding for staff subsidized by the fee. Other sources of funding to meet the TMDL reduction goals will likely come from other general fund/capital sources. The Administration will be working on the new budget for the fiscal year, which will then go to the Council in spring for review and approval. The County will still be required to submit a financial assurance plan (due in July 2016) to MDE for addressing implementation of TMDL reduction goals.
- The Council passed a resolution (89-15) that requested that the Planning Board to review the Master Plan 2020 and Baltimore County Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan to recommend to the Council the manner in which open space waiver fees, or fees in lieu, may be utilized to meet the County's local open space needs. The resolution also included the formation of an advisory committee to add transparency to the fee process and granting of waivers in connection with the collection of open space fees.
- The Council passed a resolution (90-15) associated with open space waiver fees.
- The County is considering options for the Radebaugh nursery property (2.3 acres) with the possibility of creating a park adjacent to the Herring Run watershed.

II. Presentation/discussion on Prettyboy Resource Collaborative Project – Don Outen

Forest characterization of the Prettyboy Reservoir Watershed (presented to the Potomac Watershed Project Winter 2015 Information Exchange last week). This is a new approach to landscape-scale stewardship being promoted by USFS and MD-DNR with funding by DNR Forest Service. DEPS has been doing forest assessments in various parts of the county since 2006 and has found interesting trends about quality, size class and species composition in forests. Looking at 9 different county parks (9 on 2962 acres), now extended to private multi-owner forest patches (4 for 760 acres), and also looking at smaller HEX plots.

Prettyboy is part of the largest public water supply system in the state of Maryland, which serves 1/3 of the state's residents. It is also an important habitat resource with significant tier

II waters that exceed water quality criteria and have regulations requiring higher water quality standards. We have more such waters than any other county in Maryland – partly due to topography, partly due to our management of development (3-4% impervious seems to be tipping point for trout). However, Prettyboy is significantly impaired according to the 1998 MD Clean Water Action plan. The sources have been fairly well identified as dominantly agricultural; forest cover generates a small fraction of the load of N and P and sediment. Although there have been some improvements in sediment movement on the land surface there is still channel erosion. We do have reproducing trout populations in some areas; upper Prettyboy watershed has some of the best trout populations in central Maryland.

Don started reading through plans submitted by the county to the state and concluded that we cannot meet goals with existing plans, funding and time available. What can we do to change the whole approach from one that relies on government to one that relies on private landowners to take action for reasons that are important to them? That is the strategy that will be more widely considered as we approach a situation where TMDL requirements might start to lead to onerous burdens such as a consent decree.

Forest assessment indicates moderately overstocked stands and poor quality trees, 61% undesirable growing stock; inadequate oak regeneration – 4% oak, only 8 species total. Oak is the keystone species of eastern deciduous forest and it is not coming back. Overcrowding and insufficient light at the forest floor is one of the reasons. Deer are part of the problem but not the primary cause in this area. DNR decided to give property owners help to respond to the problem through forest stewardship plans that qualify landowners for federal and state cost-share practices.

A new concept has been developed: Prettyboy Resource Collaborative, a new watershed-wide effort by watershed organizations, agencies, and businesses to promote cooperative stewardship for forests, agriculture, and more. Partners include: Prettyboy Watershed Alliance, Baltimore County, Carroll County, Baltimore City, York County, Alliance for Chesapeake Bay, MD Dept. of Agriculture, MDE, MD DNR, Mar-Len Environmental, Inc., Glatfelter Pulp Wood Co., Find Your Niche, LLC, Hogan Lovells, US LLC, JHU Carey Business School, Harry Hughes Center for Agro-Ecology, Inc., Trout Unlimited – Upper Gunpowder River, Brook Trout Conservation Initiative. A lot of citizen involvement brought many of these different groups into the partnership.

III. New Business – Group Discussion

- Possible future Topics and/or actions for CEQ
 - a. Glenn suggested a tour of his farm, perhaps around March.
 - b. Efforts to provide more assistance to council members with issues that are coming up (either CZMP or even other issues that are not yet on the radar or have bills associated with them).
 - c. Review of zoning variance requests to identify cases that would be of interest to individual Council members and offering to help evaluate them.

IV. Adjourn

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

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