

Environmental Policy Commission Minutes  
December 7, 2009 Work Session

**EPC Members in Attendance**

✓	Danielle Fidler	✓	Keith Freihofer	X	Laura Medhurst
✓	Scott Barstow (Chair)	✓	Patrick Hagan	X	Kurt Moser
✓	David Boxer	✓	Patricia Hilgard	✓	Peter Pennington
✓	Jessica Bayliss Brown	✓	Jennifer Hovis	✓	Phil Voorhees

[✓ = In attendance X= Absent E=Excused Absence]

**City Staff**

Bill Skrabak

**Begin 7:45 PM**

**Public Comment**

None

**Committee and Staff Updates**

- Patricia attended an orientation presentation by staff from the Health Department put on for the Alexandria Citizens Academy. She also attended two meetings on community garden efforts (Krupika's group and the ARHA/ACHIEVE project). The ACHIEVE group is drafting a proposal to be presented for approval at the ARHA January meeting.
- Patricia also covered the Environmental Health WG meeting which is preparing a Stop-Smoking Campaign targeting two schools. The idea is to get the families to sign/act on a stop-smoking pledge.
- Peter attended a Waterfront Committee meeting, where the focus was on flood prevention measures. The focus was on addressing current threats, with not much consideration of climate change impacts.
- Peter also reported that the Green Building Working Group is reconnecting and has been consistently and aggressively applying the policy developed earlier this year. Only one exception has been approved for new development, which pertains to a restaurant depot.
- Peter also reported good progress working with the schools. As of January 1, each school will be required to appoint an Environmental Steward among existing staff, and a new energy manager is on staff. The third-party energy consultant has already identified a potential 20% in annual savings based on easy fixes.
- Keith reported on the Transportation Commission and recent developments with the BRAC traffic/Winkler Preserve. There was a good turnout for the hearing last week, with overwhelming opposition to any option that takes land from the preserve. The City is recommending only those options that will keep the preserve in tact, and also plans to explore a new option utilizing the Sanger Avenue underpass. The commission/staff recommendations will be presented to Council at the 12/12 hearing.
- Danielle attended the Land Use meeting as part of the Strategic Planning initiative, and reported there was little attention given to sustainability (though the group was supportive of transit oriented development); rather the focus was on land use decisions that will attract and retain businesses.
- Danielle also reported that the North Potomac Yard Small Area Plan is out for comment, and it is very focused on sustainability (including a goal of carbon neutrality for the development). Danielle will contact Valerie in P&Z to request a presentation at one of our meetings in January or February.

- Scott reported that at tomorrow's legislative session, Council will make a decision on whether to purchase 5 low emission diesel vehicles or 4 hybrid vehicles in order to replace those currently leased for the King Street trolley. Danielle and Scott will modify the letter sent to DASH on a similar issue earlier this year in order to show support for the hybrid vehicles, consistent with goals and actions in the EAP.
- Bill reported that there will be a hearing on 12/10 regarding Virginia Paving's move to natural gas and the permit for low-NOx burners.
- Bill also reported that the State Air Board has decided not to pursue more stringent opacity rules, as previously thought. The current standard is 20% (visible smoke).

### **EAP Implementation**

- Scott and Patricia attended the 12/1 Open House for the Health & Environment section of the Strategic Plan. Similar to the previous meeting, the focus was on health issues. Tree canopy was mentioned as the primary environmental concern, particularly with respect to ensuring equity when selecting which neighborhoods receive new trees. The group agreed there are areas where Health and Environmental issues overlap, such as environmental causes of adverse health effects. The panel will meet again in mid-December to discuss the public input and develop a final draft. The priorities currently included with respect to environmental issues are consistent with the EAP.
- David has been evaluating the options with respect to improving the blog design and reported some limitations with Wordpress. He will continue his efforts, and EPC may need to consider whether to shift to another blog platform that allows more flexibility. David reported that he has been contacted by a businesswoman who would like to be showcased on the blog. EPC agreed that we should not be endorsing businesses on the blog.
- Scott shared a preliminary draft list of indicators developed by the subgroup. Bill will share the draft with staff to determine how we can harvest data that is already collected in order to minimize costs and new data collection efforts. Some of the items cannot be tracked on an annual basis, such as VMT. Everyone should review the draft and provide feedback to Scott.
- Peter reported that the green business subgroup is working with the Chamber of Commerce and Arlington E2C2 to hold an event early in the next year to showcase how green businesses can be profitable. The feature speaker will be someone from Montgomery County who Laura has been in touch with while researching successful programs.

### **Other Business**

- The group had a short debrief on the recent Adopt-a-Block cleanup. Solid Waste Department asked to start tracking the number of plastic bags picked up; a significant portion of the trash was election-related signage.
- Members expressed interest in scheduling a tour of the new DASH facility early in the new year.

### **Adjourn 9:25 PM**