

Environmental Policy Commission Minutes
September 8, 2012 EPC Annual Retreat

EPC Members in Attendance

✓	Peter Pennington (Chair)	✓	Danielle Fidler	✓	Kurt Moser
✓	Kristen Nelson	✓	Josh Sawislak	✓	Geoffrey Goode
✓	Chinling Chen	✓	Scott Barstow	✓	Rebecca Jablon
X	Stephen Walz				

[✓ = In attendance X= Absent]

City Staff

Bill Skrabak, Khoa Tran, Bill Eger

Begin 10:10 AM

Welcome and Introductions

Business Meeting

- The minutes from the July 2, 2012 meeting were approved.
- The EPC Annual Report, pending revisions from edits provided by Josh, was approved.
- The letters penned by Peter to the Mayor and City Council and to the Department of Health and Human Services were approved.
- A revised EPC calendar was provided by Khoa.

Staff Updates

- Bill S. explained the closure of the GenOn Plant is on target for October 1, 2012.
 - o There will be a media press event that day at 9:30 AM.
 - o There will also be a reception at City Hall on October 9 from 6:30 – 7:00 PM.
 - o The EPC is invited to attend both events – Josh plans to attend the morning press event.
- Solar panel installation at Beatley Library has begun.
- The City will update its own Chesapeake Bay Ordinance in response to the Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL), so that is in effect by July 1, 2014.
- Peter announced that another round of bicycle/pedestrian counts is for this Thursday and Saturday (September 13, 2012 and September 15, 2012). Please let him know if you are available to volunteer and he'll pass your information along to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC).

Mandate and Leadership of the EPC

- Peter announced that he is stepping down from the EPC as of October 31, 2012. The EPC will hold elections at the next meeting, on September 24, 2012, for a new chair, a new Earth Day chair, and a new representative on the Waterfront Commission.
 - o Peter is also a member of the Old Town Parking Committee and the Mirant Community Monitoring Group; however, both groups are winding down.
 - o Khoa and Bill S. will let the EPC know of any meetings that may pop up after Peter has stepped down.
- A discussion was held on what the EPC is about. The EPC is to:
 - o Provide advice to City Council;
 - o Check on local government action throughout the year;
 - o Attend Planning Commission meetings, as possible;
 - o Keep an eye on flood mitigation progress; and
 - o Reach out to the community.

Review of EPC Progress since 2011 Retreat

- The EPC reviewed its accomplishments this past year, as highlighted in the Annual Report, including:
 - o The EPC is working with Alexandria City Library on a film festival.
 - o The EPC worked with the Alexandria's Convention and Visitors Association (ACVA) to establish the ACVA's Green Business Recognition Program.
 - The program recognizes establishments within the city that are certified as a green business through a third-party. Establishments located within the city who are certified through a third-party program can apply to the ACVA. The ACVA, with EPC help, verifies the legitimacy of the third-party program. If legitimate, the business is advertised on the ACVA website as "green."
 - Rebecca stated that thus far, nine have applied – three of which have been approved.
 - The other six applicants seemed to think that they were applying for a certification. A better description of the program is needed in outreach efforts.

EPC Priorities for FY 2013 and Beyond

- Suggestions for EPC priorities include:
 - o Keep an eye on AlexRenew new endeavors.
 - o Work proactively with the Planning Department on initiatives that will impact environmental concerns.
 - o Step up Green Building Standards to next level.
 - o Aid the City in getting the word out on programs such as the Local Energy Alliance Program to help homeowners wanting to make energy efficiency improvements to their homes.
 - o Work with Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS), and possibly Virginia Tech, to create a small-scale nature center and community garden at George Washington Middle School
 - o Explore the possibility of an Opower-like program in Alexandria, working with Dominion Power to help reduce energy use by their customers.
 - o Further market Alexandria as Eco-City, by increasing the program's visibility.
- Josh and Kristen suggested that more research is needed in order to determine set priorities for the coming year. Scott suggested looking through the eCAP, and figure out which actions and policies to prioritize.
- Suggestions for measurable priorities include:
 - o Encourage Council to establish and fund a coordinator/outreach position within the Department of Transportation & Environmental Services
 - o Work with City staff to develop a homeowner's guide on how to deal with climate change.
 - o Increase visibility and improve outreach on the Green Business Recognition Program to get more participants.
- Approved priorities for FY2013 include:
 - o **Earth Day**
 - o **Promote aggressive business support of the Eco-City concept with the business community as a way to increase leisure and business visitors to the city.**
 - Promote and advance the Green Business Recognition Program
 - o **Explore and support actions and concepts that drive individual citizens to reduce energy usage and greenhouse gas generation.**

- Investigate Opower and similar initiatives that can lead to citizen-based reductions in greenhouse gases.

Action Items

- Rebecca will send out the spreadsheet of all applicants thus far to the Green Business Recognition Program
- Danielle will be the point person to set up an appointment with Opower.

Adjourn 1:40 PM