

Environmental Policy Commission Minutes
September 19, 2011 Meeting

EPC Members in Attendance

✓	Peter Pennington (Chair)	✓	Danielle Fidler	X	Kurt Moser
✓	Jennifer Hovis	✓	Patrick Hagan	X	Phil Voorhees
✓	Heather Schaefer	✓	Scott Barstow	✓	Geoffrey Goode
✓	Bobby Croghan			X	Rebecca Jablon

[✓ = In attendance X= Absent]

City Staff

Bill Skrabak, Khoa Tran, Bill Eger

Guests

Carrie Sanders (T&ES), Jim Maslanka (T&ES), Tracy Viselli (ACTion Alexandria), Stephanie Brown (ACVA)

Begin 7:30 PM

Welcome and Introductions

- Peter welcomed guests to the EPC

Public Comment

- None

Proposal for City Bikeshare – Carrie Sanders

It was explained that the City Council would be considering on Tuesday 27th September a proposal for Alexandria to join the Capital Bikeshare program currently running in the District and Arlington.

The initial cost would be \$400,000 (which has already been obtained through CMAQ grants) and this would provide 6 stations and 54 bikes. A further \$400,000 would be sought in the next round of CMAQ grants. A number of city employers and developers have indicated their interest in having a Bikeshare station on their property.

The current pricing structure was explained; it showed that Bikeshare was for the short haul traveler, such as a commuter going to a transit hub, and not for the long haul tourist. Therefore the scheme would be complementary to the existing bike hirers in the city and, as such, would provide good value for money in converting people to the use of public transport.

The EPC approved unanimously that the Chair forward a letter to the City Council fully supporting the Bikeshare proposal.

Transitway re Corridor C – Jim Maslanka

The City Council has already approved the concept of rapid transit along Corridor C, a route from the north of Beauregard with possible links to the Columbia Pike route and the Pentagon, and south to Van Dorn metro station via a new transport hub in the revamped Landmark development.

A working party has pondered on the issue for many months and so the EPC's specific interest was in the attractiveness to citizens to move from private to public transport and the environmental impact of the installation.

The EPC was shown projected passenger figures indicating a figure of 17,500 passengers by 2035 with 7.5 minute headway times at peak hours and 15 minute headway times for off peak hours..

The need to widen Beauregard was explained to incorporate a dedicated lane each way for the rapid bus system and this would mean the removal of many existing trees. It was reported that many of these trees are approaching their life's end and that the construction of more medians separating pedestrians, cyclists and traffic would mean the planting of more trees than already exist. There was some unease within the EPC at the destruction of so many existing trees and T & ES were made aware that the EPC would follow development very closely.

Questions were asked about the use of pervious surfaces in the project: such surfaces are currently unsuitable for heavy traffic but it may be possible to install them for the bike and pedestrian ways. However, such surfaces do raise maintenance issues.

Funding for the first phase is almost secure. An implementation plan with deeper fiscal studies needs to be drawn up and with a little more money from Federal sources, construction could start in 2016.

Regional Surface Transportation Program/Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (RSTP/CMAQ) Grant Application

Jim Maslanka ran through the current list of projects very briefly. This list will be presented to City Council on September 27th.

It was noted that it included a further \$400,000 for the Bikeshare scheme. A sum of \$250,000 was included in FY2015 for technical aids for parking (intelligent parking). It was asked if this might be brought forward as there was pressure to reestablish the Parking Stakeholders group and start trying new ideas for parking in Old Town now.

ACTtion Alexandria New Initiative

Tracy Viselli, the Community Manager (and sole employee) for ACTION Alexandria explained the role of the organization and in particular an idea, used elsewhere, in which people go online and propose ideas and others vote for them. If appropriate, the winning idea is supported by ACTION Alexandria with an attempt to bring it to fruition.

The EPC was asked if such an idea would be useful in involving citizens in making the city a greener and more sustainable place.

The EPC agreed to look at the concept when discussing its program for the year and especially when looking at methods of outreach.

Green Business Initiative

Bobby presented a proposal for a scheme to be known as Alexandria Green Business. The project team would be the AEDP (the main contact point for businesses seeking recognition), the ACVA (provider of IT support and other resources and with 350 member businesses to contact) and the Chamber of Commerce (with over 850 member businesses).

The EPC would provide environmental advice.

A business would submit to AEDP an application which would include a certificate from an external body attesting to the business' greenness. This would then be sent to the Green Business sub group of the EPC who would report on the application. This would be an examination of the certifying body, a paper exercise. The group would send its verdict back to AEDP who would then award the recognition. The entry bar for green recognition would be very low but the scheme will be reconsidered after two years.

The sub group would provide a written report to the EPC on businesses considered and the results will be entered into EPC records.

Although the City will not play an active role it will support it with reference on City web pages, and EPC members will be protected legally as they will be working within the legal ambit of the EPC.

Stephanie Brown of ACVA joined the discussion and expressed her delight that the scheme would be going ahead and at the EPC's involvement. The intention is to launch the scheme at the ACVA AGM on September 30th.

A vote was taken on the motion that the EPC fully supports the Green Business Initiative and it passed unanimously.

Re-cap of EPC Retreat

As time was running short, the Chair outlined the way that the items could be sorted into 5 groups.

The intention would be for the EPC to take on no more than four activities well within its scope: the fifth group consisted of continuing background activity strengthening ties with politicians, other commissions and ACPS.

The Chair agreed to share this revised list of retreat outcomes.

There was a good discussion about resurrecting the George Washington School Tree Project (GW Grove) and a number of members said they would like to be involved.

It was also agreed that, having voted on it, the Green Business Initiative would form one of the groups.

Another group activity might be based around IT.

It was agreed to continue the discussion at a later date.

Administrative items

The budget process was discussed. It was noted that various items had come from the retreat exercise (especially the need for a permanent outreach member of staff) together with a request for funds for a mulching facility. Staff would advise the EPC when best to make a written submission for these items.

Approval was given for the Chair to send two letters to the Council. One to congratulate staff on achieving a 41% rate for recycling and the second to congratulate the Council about the announcement that the Gen-On plant (Mirant as was) would be closing by October 1st 2012.

The vice Chair advised the EPC that it should be looking at future uses of the Gen-On site sooner rather than later with a view to using it to make a real environmental impact.

Staff advised the EPC about various projects under way, such as the greening of part of the roof to City Hall and a Green Building Workshop to be held on September 24th. There should be sufficient funds to carry this program over to 2012.

It was agreed that the next morning for cleaning the EPC adopted stretch of road adjacent to the Bradlee Shopping Centre in King Street would October 23rd at 0900.

Meeting adjourned - 1035