

**Environmental Policy Commission Minutes  
 October 7, 2013 EPC Work Session  
 City Hall, Room 1101**

**EPC Members in Attendance**

✓	Scott Barstow	✓	Jim Kapsis	X	Steve Walz
✓	Christopher Gamache	✓	Kurt Moser	X	Ryan Wojtanowski
✓	Sam Gaugush	X	Josh Sawislak		
✓	Geoffrey Goode	X	Ryan Sloan		
✓	Patrick Holman	X	Monica Starnes		

[✓ = In attendance X = Absent]

**City Staff**

Bill Skrabak, Khoa Tran, Yon Lambert

**Begin 7:35 PM**

**Welcome and Introductions**

**Public Comments**

- None

**Extension of Waste Disposal and Service Agreement with Covanta Energy – Yon Lambert, Deputy Director, T&ES**

- Provided a historical overview of the energy-from-waste facility, currently operated by Covanta Energy, as well as the existing waste disposal and service agreement developed in 2012. This document incorporated operating and site leases through October 1, 2025, with an option to extend the term through 2038
- Discussed the city’s analysis of whether jurisdictions under the agreement should extend to 2038 and, if so, in what time frame. Three options exist:
  - Base Case: Elect to extend the site lease with Covanta to 2038
  - Case A: Elect to make no decision until June 30, 2018 (when Covanta can opt out) or as late as Sept. 30, 2025
  - Case B: Elect to make no decision, intending to take ownership of the facility in 2025
- City’s economic analysis (conducted in conjunction with an independent third party) shows that a decision to extend the site lease with Covanta in the near term (Base Case) contains the least pricing risk and is more cost effective in the short term.
  - The assumptions that feed Case A and Case B contain uncertainties that increase risk of significantly higher costs, depending on market conditions.
- The city will continue to focus on reduce, reuse and recycle, with collection costs remaining; potential savings from extending will allow for added emphasis on Eco-City goals. City staff agreed that an EPC letter in support of the Base Case would be appreciated at the proper time in the process.
- EPC member questioned whether there was a minimum level that the city must deliver to Covanta. City staff responded that there was a level defined in the agreement (50-70k per day), but that it decreases over time and there is no penalty for dropping below the level.
- EPC member questioned whether there would be public outreach. City staff responded affirmatively, but at the appropriate time.

- EPC member questioned whether conditions were expected to change if no decision was made. City staff responded that it would require another economic study, but no significant changes in assumptions were anticipated.
- EPC requested a copy of the study. City staff responded that it would be provided before being made public, once it had cleared legal review.

### **Update on Implementation of the Open Space Master Plan – Laura Durham, Open Space Coordinator, RPCA**

- Provided background on the genesis of the Open Space Master Plan, developed as part of the City's Master Plan in 2003.
- The goal established was to add 100 acres of public open space in ten years (by 2013). As of January 2013, the City achieved the addition of 103 acres of open space, exceeding the goal and maintaining a ration of 7.3 acres per 1,000 residents.
- Other objectives have been met, including: creation of public open space networks through the City's Small Area Plans; adoption of the Urban Forestry and Eco-City plans, as well as the Four Mile Run Remediation Master Plan; on-going partnership with the Northern Virginia Conservation Trust; and development of a robust staff of landscape architects, architects and planners within the city's Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities
- Moving ahead, to maintain the current ratio of public open space to 1,000 residents, the city will need to add another 183 acres of open space by 2023 (based on growth estimates); the challenges and expense of acquiring open space were discussed (e.g., can take 1-2 years to complete acquisition, at an average cost of \$4M/acre)
- Moving forward, the city will look to update the implementation plan to consider innovative ways of adding open spaces (e.g., rooftop public spaces), utilizing best practices developed in other communities including novel funding arrangements (e.g., public private partnerships). This will be done with an eye on how public space impacts other important initiatives, including storm water permitting.

### **EPC Annual Retreat Follow-up (Eco-City Budget)**

- J. Kapsis reported on his research into Eco-City Transportation, focusing on DASH hybrid busses, Back Lick Run Multiuse Paths and general transportation guidance. Further, he outlined two options for the budget letter: identify budget items that would not have happened without Eco-City, and identify budget items that are consistent with Eco-City.
- P. Holman reported on his research into the Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities budget, highlighting the Department's embrace of sustainable planning principles and examples of how this thinking has translated into investments. Further, he recommended that the budget letter emphasize the importance of identifying Eco-City related investments within the budget document to increase transparency.
  - City staff cautioned EPC against placing too high an expectation on the city budget staff with regard to crosscuts or additional text.
- G. Goode reported on his research into the Environmental Quality budget, noting that while there is not a great deal of discretionary funding, most of the operational activities are consistent with Eco-City principles and that these are institutionalized within the Department.
- S. Gaugush reported on his research into the recycling and solid waste budget, noting that Eco-City principles are similarly institutionalized in the activities of this Department. Previous initiatives that have been briefed to EPC (public recycling bins, composting and

frequent household hazardous waste collection) are good examples of the city's on-going commitment to Eco-City principles.

- S. Barstow noted that the EPC letter sent to City Council in support of Eco-City in the budget be no more than 2-3 pages long and cover a limited number of items. The items discussed for potential mention include:
  - CSO permitting
  - Stretch goals for 2015
  - Transportation (e.g., hybrid busses)
  - Open space/tree canopy
  - Budget transparency vis a vis Eco-City

**Adjourn 9:30 PM**