

WATER POLICY TASK FORCE MINUTES (WPTF)
Metropolitan Commission Conference Room
Minutes of January 26, 2010

WPTF Members present were Barne Wheeler, Chairman; Jacki Meiser, MetCom; Dennis Roth; David Kelsey; Sheryl Skrabacz, SMHD; Cannon Morse, PNAS; Bill Shreve and Charles Downs

1. **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m.
2. **Discussion & Approval of Meeting Minutes:** The November 2009 Meeting Minutes were approved as written.
3. **Continuing Business:**
 - 3.1. **Habitat for Humanity Rainwater Initiative.** Mr. Kelsey indicated that he had been unsuccessful in obtaining plans for the rainwater cistern system, but was pursuing other avenues. He also indicated that he had not yet identified other MD localities which were using rainwater catchments inside the home.
 - 3.2. **County Comprehensive Plan Water Conservation Requirement:** Mr. Wheeler said the new Comprehensive Plan requires that a study be made of measures that could help conserve water throughout the County. Mr. Wheeler suggested that the WPTF should undertake to satisfy this requirement. The group agreed. Mr. Wheeler said he had contacted other localities in northwestern MD who had undertaken such studies and was in the process of obtaining information from them. He mentioned that one of the individuals had indicated that interest from elected officials in initiating conservation measures rose and fell in direct proportion to the severity drought conditions at the time. Consequently, he found that getting approval to initiate significant conservation efforts was difficult.

As a result it was suggested that a good approach might be to demonstrate to the Commissioners how much water implementing various conservation efforts could save. In this manner, we could demonstrate what failure to implement a particular initiative would cost in water not saved. For example, if watering lawns could be show to save large amounts of water, then incentivizing a household rainwater collection system might obtain significant BOCC interest. As a result, the WPTF decided to undertake such a study effort, the concept and responsibilities for which are outlined below:

Objective of the WPTF Water Conservation Study:

To identify water conservation initiatives not now mandated that individual households and commercial enterprises could take and how much water each initiative would save. Later to attempt to extrapolate how much potable water the county would save annually if each initiative were implemented. Finally, present the results to the Commissioners with recommendations as appropriate.

Action Items to be completed by the next WPTF meeting:

1. Obtain a sample design plan for a household rainwater collection system and will pass this information to Charles Downs.
2. Find out which municipalities/counties in MD are allowing use of rainwater collection inside the household.
3. Take the design plan and run it by the plumbing board and have them identify any issues/problems with it.
4. Identify any water savings initiatives inside the home that are not now mandated and how much water each might save.
5. Identify water savings initiatives outside the home and how much water each might save.
6. Contact MD municipalities to obtain specific initiatives they have identified and/or implemented.
7. Obtain historical well draw-down data from MGS on all wells they monitor starting from 1998 thru the present.
8. Attempt to obtain private well usage figures from Charles County.

- 3.3. **Update on Task Force Studying the Metropolitan Commission.** Ms. Meiser briefed the group on the Task Force's efforts to date and indicated that they were still struggling with the direction their study should take.
4. **New Business:**
- 4.1. **Aquifer Draw Down Information.** Mr. Wheeler indicated that he had been in touch with the Maryland Geological Survey and that they were being very helpful in providing information on aquifer drawdowns. He indicated that both the updated Comprehensive Water & Sewer Plan and the current Comprehensive Plan specifically described the County's new aquifer management policy. Specifically, that major water users would keep withdrawals from the Aquia & Piney Point/Nanjemoy aquifers to 2002 pumping rates and get additional supplies from the deeper Patapsco Aquifer. This policy was designed to relieve stress on the shallower aquifers and allow them to stabilize or recover. This policy has been in place for about 6 years now and now is appropriate time to see if it is having the desired effects. The group agreed that this analysis should be incorporated into the water conservation study.
- 4.2. **Combination of the Commission on the Environment (COE) & Solid Waste Advisory Committee.** Mr. Wheeler briefed the group on the proposal to combine the two committees. As part of this effort, the COE is updating its own charter, including the establishment of the WPTF as a permanent standing sub-committee of the COE.
- 4.3. **Waterways Pollution & Low Impact/Sustainable Development Environmental Concerns.** Mr. Wheeler provided the latest status of this COE effort, indicating that a separate set of initiatives had been developed for each of these two initiatives and sent out to interested individuals & groups for review and prioritization. The COE plans to present the results of this to the BOCC.
5. **Announcements:** The group agreed that it would meet as soon as sufficient water conservation materials had been compiled to make the next meeting worthwhile.
6. **Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.