

**COMMISSION ON THE ENVIRONMENT MINUTES**  
**Potomac Building**  
**Minutes of May 5, 2010**

COE Members present were Barne Wheeler, Chairman; Larry Hartwick, Bill Shreve, Daryl Calvano, Xavier Prines, Michael Guy, Susan Torres, and Caroline King. Members absent were Mike Thompson, Sandy Neville, Marta Kelsey & Troy Hanser. Others present were Jenn Ballard and Paul Waxman.

I) **Call to Order:** Mr. Wheeler called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

Mr. Wheeler introduced the newest member, Mr. Mike Guy.

II) **Discussion & Approval of April Meeting Minutes:** A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of April 7, 2010 as amended.

III) **Continuing Business:**

a. **Completion of Phragmites Issue**

Mr. Wheeler stated he was able to contact the inquirer and gave her Ms. Veith's contact information.

b. **Green Building Update**

Mr. Wheeler stated the Green Building Subcommittee is meeting the first Wednesday of each month at the Higher Education Center beginning at 7:30 a.m. Mr. Wheeler stated Sandy Neville is handling this sub-committee, and that attendance and interest is still high.

c. **SWAC Update**

Mr. Prines stated he confirmed with Best Buy that they do accept everything listed on their website at the California location except for fluorescent bulbs. Ms. King stated she believes Lowe's will take the fluorescent bulbs as well as Home Depot. Ms. Torres stated SMECO will take working refrigerators for free and give you a \$50.00 credit on your next SMECO bill. Ms. Torres stated Staples will take toner and printer cartridges for recycling and you can get rewards for doing so. Mr. Wheeler said that when all the link information was available, he would post to the COE's web page.

d. **WPTF Update**

Mr. Wheeler stated this Task Force is chartered by the County Commissioners to come up with a set of water resource and conservation initiatives. Mr. Wheeler stated this Task Force meets the fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) Tuesday of every month however has not been meeting lately due to the lack of a quorum. Mr. Wheeler stated currently the Task Force is working on these initiatives, and has obtained information on all the monitored wells in St. Mary's County.

An initial look at the data indicates that the Aquia aquifer has started to level out and recover somewhat or at least stabilize. Mr. Guy asked that the positive rebound of the Aquia Aquifer be publicized to give people positive information rather than negative information regarding water issues. Mr. Wheeler stated once all the proper information is gathered a presentation will be given to the County Commissioners regarding this issue, and we could at that time look into further educating & informing the public.

e. **Environmental Concern Survey Initiatives Prioritization**

1. **Discussion of Letter to Commissioners & Enclosures**

Mr. Wheeler presented the draft letter and asked for additions or amendments. After discussion of the letter a motion was made and seconded to table the letter to the next meeting for amendments. The motion passed. Ms. King and Ms. Torres will work on amending the letter for the next meeting.

2. **The Menhaden Initiative**

Mr. Wheeler stated he would like to see what the Marine Fisheries Commission decided prior to moving forward. Mr. Wheeler stated they met today so their decision should be forthcoming.

3. **Commissioner Briefing**

No discussion

f. **Annual COE/Plumbing & Gas Board Expo Update**

1. **List of Invitees**

Mr. Wheeler stated he sent the master list to Ms. Neville and Ms. Blake for any additions they may have. Mr. Wheeler stated the final list will be sent to Ms. Stuckert. Mr. Calvano asked how the tables would be prioritized asking if tables would be given on a first come first serve basis. Mr. Wheeler stated Ms. Stuckert has indicated there will be plenty of space to accommodate vendors.

**2. Joint Meeting with Plumbing Board**

Mr. Wheeler stated Ms. Stuckert along with a member of the Plumbing & Fuel Gas Board would be attending the July meeting to begin the intensive planning stage.

**g. Board of Appeals Recent Rulings and Court Actions**

Mr. Wheeler stated he received a letter from a citizen who is angry that the COE did not take a stronger stance on the recent court rulings. Mr. Shreve stated the Critical Area Commission as well as the court has already handled this matter therefore he sees no need for further action at this time. The Commission agreed. Mr. Wheeler stated he would forward this response to the concerned citizen. Ms. Ballard stated items such as these will be discussed at the Board of Appeals (BoA) Annual Retreat. Ms. Torres asked if we could have another organization attend this retreat as well. COE members expressed concern about whether the BoA was still making rulings at variance with staff and Critical Area recommendations. Mr. Wheeler stated he would like to have records/orders of all the Board of Appeals or Administrative Variances, since the Nicol / Errington rulings, where staff or Critical Area Commission did not recommend what the Board of Appeals approved. Ms. Ballard stated this is public information therefore all the information is on file at the Department of Land Use and Growth Management and should be readily available. After further discussion it was decided to hold off on responding to the concerned citizen.

**IV) New Business:**

- a. **Election of Officers** – A motion was made and seconded to retain the current Chairman for the next year and postpone electing a Vice-Chair to the next meeting. The motion passed.
- b. **Contest – Low Impact & Energy Consumption Footprint** – Postponed to next meeting.
- c. **Possible Study Areas** – Postponed to next meeting.

**V) Announcements** - None

**VI) Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 9:07 p.m.