

COMMISSION ON THE ENVIRONMENT (COE) MINUTES
Potomac Building
Minutes of August 3, 2011

COE Members present were Barne Wheeler, Chairman; Mike Thompson, Paul DiBenedetto, Larry Hartwick, Marta Kelsey, Lawrence Langley and Steve Tripp. Members absent were Mindy Johnson and Daryl Calvano. Others present were Laura Friess, Paul Waxman and Jenn Ballard.

- I) **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m.
- II) **Discussion & Approval of March Meeting Minutes:** The June meeting minutes were approved. The July meeting minutes were approved with changes.
- III) **Continuing Business:**
- a. **COE Aquifer & Conservation Presentation:** Mr. Wheeler stated that the presentation had been moved to August 30. Mike Sullivan, Chief of Operations, MetCom, will be asked to attend.
 - b. **Introduction of New Members:** Member and guest introductions took place. It was announced that Steve Tripp was the primary new member. Laura Friess and Mindy Johnson were alternates, with no preference between them.
 - c. **Elections.** Mike Thompson, Marta Kelsey and Larry Hartwick declined to serve as Chairman citing various factors. As a result, Larry Langley was elected Chairman; Larry Hartwick, Vice Chair; and Barne Wheeler, Recording Secretary.
 - d. **COE Function under new By-Laws & Resolution.**
 1. **Voting by HD & LUGM.** The group agreed that having a health department representative on the COE was essential. Mr. Calvano has expressed a desire to continue to serve, but does not really care whether he votes or not. The group agreed that Mr. Calvano would be an ex-officio member of the COE, would participate and not be a part of quorum requirements. There was an idea to send a letter to the County Administrator informing him of this fact. It was discovered that LUGM performs a staff support role for the COE and can not participate as a voting or ex-officio member.
 2. **Role of Alternates in Meetings:** Both Laura Friess and Mindy Johnson expressed a desire to attend all meetings. If a quorum was not present, either or both could serve as voting members. If only one alternate were needed for a quorum, they would be responsible for deciding who would be the voting member.
 3. **Electronic Approval of Actions.** Occasionally, there has been time sensitive material discussed at a meeting that required COE approval before the next scheduled meeting. In the past, the material was drafted and circulated for approval electronically to be followed up with a formal vote at the next meeting. Silence was considered consent. The group agreed that this process should continue.
 4. **Web Site & Face Book page:** The website is a repository of every document ever published. Chris Burch runs the website, and COE uses a webpage with password to post material. Two previous COE members had access Barne Wheeler & Caroline King. Larry Hartwick volunteered to take Caroline King's place. Caroline King has also been running the Face Book page, which has not been very active. The current Face Book page is a "fan" page with limited posting capability. Steve Tripp volunteered to manage the page (Barne will coordinate transfer from Caroline). Steve recommended there be an alternate administrator, so he would discuss with Caroline whether she could continue in that capacity.
 - e. **Wither Goest the COE:** Barne Wheeler reintroduced the "Citizens' Environmental Concerns Survey" previously compiled by COE. The major topics were "Pollution of Waterways" and "Low Impact Development". With each topic was a rank ordering of 30 prioritized initiatives.
 1. **Paul DiBenedetto's Thoughts:** Paul reviewed a discussion from the last meeting about "Environmental Management Systems". The essence of the review was related to the Deming model (plan, do, check, act). The system focuses you on the important issues along with corrective action and auditing. Take

recycling as the example: figure out what is being disposed, what are the laws and regulations, see how it is being done, and then check to see if it is done. Someone has to manage the process. The first task is to do a "gap analysis" (what is being done and what is supposed to be done). Next is to build a system. It was agreed that COE is an advisory body and has no authority to command action on any issue, nor does it have more than a marginal budget which has been used mostly to implement the annual Expo.

2. **EPA Watershed Implementation Plan:** The group agreed that the Waterways Implementation Plan that is coming down the pike has the potential to affect everyone in the County. A suggestion was made to invite an expert, possibly from Maryland Department of Environment (MDE), to better educate us.
 3. **Environmental Concerns Initiatives:** One member mentioned that the COE had done a lot of work on this project and had identified Pollution of Waterways as the most important of all concerns; so, it seemed logical that the COE might further pursue this initiative by inviting environmental organizations to come and present their major concerns and activities in this area. The group agreed to try to do this for the next meeting. Larry Langley and Larry Hartwick would contact the St. Mary's River Watershed Association and the Potomac River Association to see if they would come to the next meeting.
 4. **Trees:** One member mentioned that the quality of the trees in the area greatly affects the quality of the water. DNR does not have current information on acreage and the health of trees. Expansion of this topic was left for further meetings.
 5. **Solid Waste Responsibilities:** The group agreed that COE has a Solid Waste responsibility, but no formal subcommittee. There was a recommendation to have Solid Waste issues as a standing part of the agenda starting in October. There was considerable discussion about CFL disposal as well as other electronics and hazardous waste.
 6. **COE Presence at Public Gatherings:** Right now the COE only participates in Earth Day activities. It was suggested that we might consider having a booth at the County Fair and Oyster Festival to get more exposure. A more dynamic display allowing the public to participate would be a way to increase visibility. Another way is to give something away e.g., trees. Again staffing over multi-day periods might present problems.
- f. **Setting a Date for Beginning Planning the Next Expo:** Last time, the Expo took place in October. The group agreed to do the next one in March and stay joined with the Plumbing Board for a joint expo. The budget for this year is unknown. No firm time was set for getting details moving, but Jada Stucker's continued heavy involvement was deemed essential.
- g. **Facebook Use Continuing Discussion:** See above.

IV) **New Business: None**

V) **Announcements: None**

VI) **Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.