



Carroll County Environmental Advisory Council

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Josh Hatkin, Chair
Sandra Zebal, Vice Chair

Brenda Dinne, Staff Liaison
Department of Land Use,
Planning and Development

Meeting Summary for January 15, 2014

Members

Josh Harkin, Chair
Sandy Zebal
Melvin Baile
Ellen Cutsail
David Hynes
Karen Leatherwood
Kim Petry
George Schooley
Chris Spaur

Other Attendees

County Government

Brenda Dinne, Special Projects Coordinator
Stephanie Utz, Recording Secretary
Jay Voight, Zoning Administrator

CALL TO ORDER –

Mr. Josh Hatkin, Chair, officially called the January 15, 2014, meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. in the Reagan Room (003) of the County Office Building.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES - Motion 191-14: Motion was made by Ellen Cutsail and seconded by Sandy Zebal to approve the November 20, 2013, minutes. Motion carried.

RECOGNITION OF SERVICE –

This was Chris Spaur's last meeting, as his second four-year term has come to an end. Mr. Spaur has served for eight years on the EAC, and in appreciation for his service, Chair Josh Hatkin presented him with a certificate. After receiving his certificate, Mr. Spaur thanked the group for the opportunity to participate and encouraged the EAC to fill his position with someone who can provide a fresh perspective. In the future, Mr. Spaur plans to work with the Carroll Forestry Board.

CHAIR & COMMITTEE REPORTS –

a. **SOLAR ENERGY SUBCOMMITTEE:** The Solar Energy Subcommittee has not met since the last EAC meeting, and, therefore, had nothing to report.

- b. SOLID WASTE WORK GROUP SUBCOMMITTEE: The Solid Waste Work Group Subcommittee had no new updates. There has been no movement from the Commissioners, and Ms. Dinne reported that she is unsure if a work order has been presented. Ms. Leatherwood discussed the status of the incinerator and was informed that the Commissioners are still debating the project as well as the mechanics of how to get out of it.
- c. ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS AWARDS SUBCOMMITTEE: Ms. Zebal informed the group that the process for accepting nominations for the Environmental Awareness Awards has begun. She urged members to encourage people and businesses to submit nominations, which are due by March 1, 2014. Ms. Zebal and Ms. Dinne spoke with Jon Kelvey, a reporter who wrote an article about the awards which was printed in The Advocate. Ms. Dinne also informed the group that a press release was sent out, and materials were distributed to individuals and entities on the distribution list. Ms. Leatherwood indicated that she would make phone calls to some of the people on the distribution list to encourage their participation in the nomination process. Ms. Zebal recommended communicating with members of the agricultural community about the awards, as the possibility for many nominations could come from that area. Ms. Petry wanted to know if EAC members could nominate people or businesses for the awards, and Ms. Zebal decided that this was an acceptable practice, as long as the member is not on the EAC.
- d. ENERGY USE & COST SAVINGS SUBCOMMITTEE: Mr. Hatkin informed the group that he recently had a meeting with Mike Whitson of the Carroll County Bureau of Facilities where they discussed the County's contract with Johnson Controls. The County has a contract with Johnson Controls to monitor the energy usage of 23 of the County's 45 buildings. At the end of each year, Johnson Controls gives an update on the cost savings for the buildings. Mr. Whitson gave Mr. Hatkin a variety of information on the contract and reports from Johnson Controls that contained a book of charts and graphs depicting the County's energy savings. As part of the contract, Johnson Controls guarantees the County savings on energy usage. If the savings goals are not met, Johnson Controls is obligated to pay the County a certain amount. The Carroll County Board of Education has a similar agreement with Johnson Controls and recently received \$25,000 when their savings goals were not met. Mr. Hatkin will continue to go through the documents he received from Mr. Whitson with the aide of Ms. Zebal. Most of the savings seem to have been through lighting system retrofits. The subcommittee will meet just before the EAC's meeting with the Commissioners on January 23, 2014.

TREE COMMISSION –

Nothing to report.

STAFF LIASION REPORT –

- a. Ms. Dinne introduced the new recording secretary, Stephanie Krome, to the group. Stephanie replaces Kim Dubbert as the EAC's recording secretary. She comes to the Department of Land Use, Planning, and Development from the Bureau of Roads.
- b. Ms. Dinne informed members of the EAC that the blue folders at each of their seats were their 2014 member packets. These packets include information on meetings, subcommittees, and bylaws, among other things. The proposed 2014 Work Plan was also included in the member packets. Ms. Dinne asked members to look over the Work Plan and

inform her of any changes or additions they thought should be included before the Work Plan is presented to the Commissioners.

- c. Ms. Dinne reminded members about the annual meeting between the EAC and the Board of County Commissioners on January 23, 2014, at 1:30 PM. The EAC Chair will review the 2013 Annual Report with the Commissioners and the proposed 2014 Work Plan. The purpose of reviewing the Work Plan is to get Commissioner input and concurrence on future projects for the EAC.
- d. Ms. Dinne reminded members that their Financial Disclosure Statements are due to the Ethics Commission per County Code.

OLD BUSINESS –

- a. UPDATE ON CODE CHANGES RE: SOLAR ENERGY (JAY VOIGHT): In a change from the proposed agenda, EAC members agreed to let Jay present on Solar Energy before discussing the 2014 Proposed Work Plan. Mr. Voight introduced himself to the new members. He informed members that he proposed code changes to the Commissioners. On December 3, 2013, Mr. Voight discussed with the Commissioners proposed changes to the zoning code related to solar facilities. The concerns raised by the Commissioners were not so much related to commercial and industrial areas as how solar facilities would affect land in the Residential, Agricultural, and Conservation Districts. Mr Voight provided a brief overview of the proposed changes for the benefit of the new members. The Board expressed concern that solar farms are not a proper use for preserved agricultural land. They were also concerned about the type, size, and quantity of solar panels that should be permitted on residential properties and the impact on the property as well as neighbors. Mr. Voight is currently working on setting up community meetings to get input from the public about solar facilities in order to revise or refine the proposals to present to the Commissioners. Ms. Zebal asked Mr. Voight if the proposal included anything about the size and appearance of solar panels. Mr. Voight informed her that there is nothing specific about the appearance beyond setbacks and a formula for the number of panels permitted. They are more concerned about the location of solar panels. Not much can be done about the appearance of solar panels, but the size and location of panels will be important factors. Ms. Petry asked Mr. Voight to inform the EAC members about the dates of any community meetings that are scheduled, which Mr. Voight agreed to do. Mr. Spaur was concerned about the public's ability to attend meetings, and questioned whether the proposal would be made available on the web. Mr. Voight said that could be done. He said he would be sure that the EAC members received copies of the new proposals as well. He indicated that citizens can contact the Zoning Office at 410-386-2980 with any concerns and comments. Mr. Spaur also expressed concern about the aesthetics of solar panels, and Mr. Voight referenced the recent revision to regulations on outdoor advertising. Mr. Voight and EAC members then went on to reference various businesses in the area that are utilizing solar energy currently including the Kohl's in Eldersburg and Ft. Dietrich. Mr. Voight and EAC members also agreed that it would be beneficial to look at regulations that other states and counties currently have in place to help create guidelines for Carroll County.
- b. 2014 PROPOSED EAC WORK PLAN - APPROVAL OF FINAL DRAFT - Mr. Hatkin asked the group if anyone had any thoughts or comments on the work plan. Ms. Dinne responded that she had already received responses from some members of the group after she initially

sent out the draft in December and has subsequently made those changes. They are reflected in the current draft. Ms. Dinne informed the group that the current version of the work plan was considered a final draft. If approved by the EAC, it would be sent to the Commissioners on January 16, 2014, for review prior to the joint meeting on January

- c. 23. She asked if the group had any additional ideas for topics for the upcoming year. Mr. Hatkin mentioned how Taneytown was considering the implementation of pay-as-you-throw trash service, which Hanover, Pennsylvania, is currently doing. Pay-as-you-throw trash service is when residents buy trash bags that are a certain color or have certain distinguishing features. Only these bags are picked up by the waste disposal company employed by the town or municipality. This is done to encourage people to produce less trash and to encourage people to recycle more. Ms. Leatherwood informed the group that pay-as-you-throw is most effective in towns, because it is a more controlled environment. After this discussion, it was decided that, as Chair, Mr. Hatkin would take the lead in reviewing the proposed work plan with the Commissioners during the Annual Joint Meeting on January 23, 2014. Ms. Dinne asked the group to officially approve the final draft of the proposed work plan, which was unanimously approved.

APPROVAL OF 2014 PROPOSED EAC WORK PLAN – Motion 192-14: Motion was made by Sandy Zebal and seconded by Karen Leatherwood to approve the final draft of the proposed 2014 work plan. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS –

- a. “RAIN TAX” DISCUSSION: Mr. Baile raised concerns about environmental groups criticizing Carroll County because of their stance on the rain tax. Mr. Baile was offended by the criticisms since Carroll County has many BMPs in place along with Ag Preservation and stormwater techniques that he felt are ahead of the rest of the state. Mr. Baile informed the group of an e-mail written by the Chesapeake Bay Foundation stating that Carroll County wanted the state to have “crap cakes” rather than crab cakes as a result of Carroll County not fully implementing the rain tax laws. Various members offered views on why certain perspectives and actions have been taken by the State, by environmental groups, and by the Commissioners. Ms. Dinne cautioned the members not to say we are in full compliance with our permit. There are many aspects of the permit to comply with. As far as the restoration requirement, the County has met the 10 percent requirement in the current permit and has made progress toward the next 10 percent. However, we expect the next permit, when re-issued by MDE, to requirement an additional 20 percent restoration requirement (rather than just an additional 10 percent). We have budgeted for a good portion of that 20 percent but will still have some additional to do. After some additional discussion of the topic, Ms. Dinne clarified the basis for the letters regarding fines related to the stormwater fee that were received by Carroll, Harford, and Frederick Counties. She said Carroll’s letter and fine were based on the Attorney General’s assertion that Carroll has not complied with the law to create a fee. Frederick’s and Harford’s potential fines are based on the assertion that their fees do not adequately fund the program. The amount of the fees is, therefore, different as well. The members continued to discuss their views on the stormwater fee and Bay-related issues. Ms. Zebal inquired about how Carroll County can spread the word about all of the good it has done for the Bay

and encouraged members to brainstorm ways this could be possible. Mr. Baile said he would forward the e-mail from the Chesapeake Bay Foundation to Ms. Dinne to send to other members of the EAC. Ms. Dinne clarified that all states within the Chesapeake Bay's watershed have to comply with the same requirements from EPA. It's just that Maryland has chosen a very aggressive approach in its commitments to EPA. She also explained that those who are further from the Bay have to reduce more to make a 1-pound reduction at the Bay than those who are closer to the Bay.

OTHER –

There was no other business to discuss during this meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENTS –

There were no public comments during this meeting.

ADJOURNMENT - MOTION NO. 193-14: Motion made by Chris Spaur and seconded by Ellen Cutsail to adjourn the January meeting. Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 4:19 pm. The next regular monthly meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 19, 2014 at 3:00 p.m. in Reagan Room (003) of the County Office Building.