

EAQAC Minutes

September 5, 2012

Present: Paul Bubbosh, Ed Barbour, Ken Cantor, Eric Coffman, Steve Gibb, Stephen Shaw, Jim McDonnell, Aaron Cutler, Sam Biondo, Melitta Carter

Absent: Bernie Bloom, Tim Whitehouse

The July minutes were amended and approved.

Three potential new EAQAC members were interviewed and have been submitted to the County Council point of contact for approval.

Presentation from County Fleet Leader

Bill Griffiths is the Division Chief of Fleet Management Services (FMS):

Mr. Griffiths reviewed the composition of the County's bus fleet in terms of engine and fuel types and noted that with tight budgets, the replacement cycles are somewhat delayed and can lead to spiraling costs if neglected for too long. Paul Bubbosh noted that the number of pre-2007 heavy-duty diesel engines in place and the routes where both conventional diesel and the cleaner natural gas buses are running -- particularly with respect to minority neighborhoods and schools -- is a key EAQAC focal point. He expressed his hope that FMS would cooperate in a data mining exercise that would help the committee to understand the composition of engine types and routes currently used with an eye to easing pollutant burdens.

Griffiths noted that the County's Ride On program is the 52nd largest in the country and that in FY12, 21% of vehicles will be powered by alternative fuels compared with 16% in FY11 (public safety vehicles – police, fire and ambulances are excluded from these statistics). He noted that the pumping station for Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) is in downtown Gaithersburg, making operational logistics somewhat challenging for re-routing CNG buses distant from that source. Griffiths stated that FMS is looking to partner with the WMATA and the public schools to spread the capital costs of installing new alternative fuel depots in downcounty locations. In response to a question about "low-hanging fruit" to pursue environmental goals with the fleet, Griffiths said that the upcoming obsolescence of many County dumptrucks may present a purchasing opportunity that could include alternative fuel requirements.

Commercial and Multi-Family Building Study

Eric Coffman reported that multifamily units have been neglected in energy savings initiatives and may represent good opportunities to pursue the energy savings goals identified by the County's Sustainability Working Group. Building codes may present opportunities, but EAQAC members also warned that too stringent codes could shift businesses to pursue locating in other states. Jim McConnell asked whether energy use could be divided by a "gross county product" (like the gross national product economic metric) to give a proportional sense of energy intensity. Mr. Coffman noted that there is no County strategic plan for energy efficiency in buildings and so a mix of incentives, education, and challenge programs may be indicated after the County completes its analyses.

Committee Evaluation and Review Board (CERB) Visit

Bruce Goldenson, co-chair of the CERB noted that the board is charged with conducting a decadal review of 87 county commissions, panels and volunteer committees to ensure they are efficiently contributing to county affairs. As part of this, CERB members are visiting meetings but for the most part are only recommending that certain committees are "sunsetting" at the recommendation of some committees who have, for example, the same focus but in disparate regions that could be consolidated. An interim report is due in September, 2012, with a final report slated for March, 2013.

Action Items:

1. EAQAC members are invited to submit the names of potential new Committee members, with a preference for new women members. There are several open positions.
2. Eric will follow-up with FMS' Bill Griffiths to secure route and engine-type information on the Ride On program's fleet.
3. Paul will address the third action item from the July minutes (Paul to email Mark Elrich to ask what buses and what fuel type will be used for his proposed Bus Rapid Transport (BRT) program).