

EAQAC Minutes

February 1, 2012

Present: Steve Gibb, Stephen Shaw, Bernie Bloom, Ken Cantor, Eric Coffman (Staff), Paul Bubbosh, Melitta Carter, Ed Barbour, Jim McDonnell, Sam Biondo, Betsy O'Brien,

Absent: Aaron Cutler, Jody Foster, and Tim Whitehouse

January minutes were reviewed and approved.

DEP Update:

- About a 5 to 1 leverage characterizes projects that have been approved under the Residential Rebate Program, with zero resources remaining. The average award was about \$1,500 with a cap of \$3,000 and there is a waitlist. The program will not continue once funds are depleted.
- Eric Coffman will roll out a Commercial Multifamily Building Study in April with a focus on energy consumption. The goal is to achieve 25% reductions in every building constructed in the future.
- The Commercial Rebate Program continues. A number of interesting case studies will be forthcoming.
- The mygreenmontgomery.org website launched and the county is interested in volunteers to contribute content. Steve Gibb and Melitta Carter, among others, posted it to their neighborhood listservs and encouraged people to visit and contribute content.

Discussion items:

- 1) Steve Shaw reported on a **Wind Power** meeting organized by the Chesapeake Climate Action Network that he attended. About 50 people participated in the meeting which featured the agenda for energy conservation and water cleanup of the Network. An offshore wind project was voted down last year in the Maryland legislature but they are reviving the effort. One of the inputs in the debate was information from power sector officials arguing that the additional capacity is not necessary even factoring in the retirement rate of power plants. Melitta Carter and others noted that part of their concern is that "externalities" such as pollution are often not figured into the "costs" of continuing with current power sources. Some on the committee suggested EAQAC support offshore wind power for Maryland whereas others argued that wind technology may be antiquated in ten years and would deteriorate rapidly in the harsh marine environment. Jim McDonnell said that

one possible option is to let a Renewable Portfolio Standard come into effect and “let the market sort it out” but others were not convinced this is a viable path.

2) Set-Top Boxes

DOE is contemplating a new rule on set-top boxes which would set energy efficiency standards, especially in light of the energy demands of specific software used. The Public Service Commission may also prod efficiency efforts.

3) Building Codes and Ventilation

Bernie Bloom and Melitta Carter recapped their meeting with County Dept. of Permitting Services (DPS) officials on the IECC building codes that may not allow safe levels of indoor air exchange. Bernie Bloom shared “facts and perceptions” regarding the issue and laid out 4 options in terms of Montgomery County adoption of some of the codes and the timing involved. The officials were receptive to the information and discussions will be ongoing.

Action Items:

1. Eric Coffman, Jody Foster, and Melitta Carter will continue work on the public forum, possibly folding it into the fall “community day on sustainability” planned for the fall by the Universities at Shady Grove.
2. Bernie Bloom and Melitta Carter will follow up their discussions with DPS on the IECC codes.