

EAQAC Minutes

July 5, 2012

Present: Paul Bubbosh, Melitta Carter, Bernie Bloom, Stephen Shaw , Ed Barbour, Aaron Cutler , Eric Coffman

Absent: Tim Whitehouse, Jim McDonnell, Sam Biondo, Ken Cantor, Jody Foster, Betsy O'Brian, Steve Gibb

June minutes were approved.

Discussion Items:

1. Emissions from Diesel (Bernie Bloom):

Emissions from diesel are from several sources: on-road, off-road, background, area and ?. The effects from diesel exhaust from these sources have been studied extensively. CA has declared diesel particulates to be a carcinogen. The US Gov. declared in 1996 and again in 1999 that they were not. A study released in 2005 by a panel from The National Academy of Sciences undertook a study and provided results in 2005, but the Bush Administration did not release it. It was only published in February 2009 by the Obama administration. The study reported that chronic exposure to diesel particulates results in inflammation to the upper respiratory tract. "Chronic exposure", however, was not defined. The UN World Health Organisation (WHO) has determined that diesel particulates are a carcinogen.

In MoCo diesel is 10% of the particulate load. It is not evenly distributed in the county, nor is it a constant level over 24 hours. Concentrations are highest around bus depots (such as the WMATA lot in Rockville) and around the morning and afternoon rush hours.

However it is not as high as in other urban areas, such as Manhattan.

In MoCo major emissions of diesel particulates can be attributed to Ride-On buses, Metrobus and MCPS buses.

Age of Buses/engines: Older buses have higher emission rates. Bus engines manufactured in 2007 had better emission control than earlier models, and a further upgrade took place in 2010

Bus Routes: it is possible that the older buses are used in areas which service lower-income residents

Bus Depots: tend to be in lower-income neighborhoods

EAQAC should revisit the work previously undertaken and look at two aspects of this issue:

- the composition of the fleets of MoCo buses by engine manufacture year, and the state of retrofits on older models; and
- The distribution of the newer buses among the various routes.

Following receipt of requested information (see action items below), EAQAC can use National Renewable Energy Lab's site giving emission by engine model.

EAQAC will analyze the results to see how equitable the distribution of cleaner models is.

Another action for EAQAC could be to send a letter to MoCo asking them to consider vehicle emissions when selecting companies using off-road vehicles for projects in the county.

2. Attic Ventilation (Steve Shaw):

Steve had new siding put on his house and the company covered up his vents in the process. This reduces the airflow by about 75%.

There are two main types of attics, one where the attic space is not part of the house, and the ceiling acts as the boundary, the second where a sealed attic is part of the house with the roof as the boundary. In the first type, passive ventilation (open areas at the soffits or eaves and at or near the top of the attic space) and active ventilation (attic fans) keep it cold in winter to prevent ice melting and re-freezing in gutters, and move super-heated air out of the attic in summer, protecting roof shingles and removing moisture.

Siding companies should be aware of the type of attic, and work accordingly. There are no regulations or permitting requirements for siding companies, hence it is up to the home-owner to be aware of their attic's ventilation system and ensure that any work done on the house does not compromise it.

Home Energy Audits tend not to comment on venting in the attic.

DEP Update:

Commercial and Multi-Family Building Study: Public comment is scheduled between now and the end of August.

Continuing Issues:

- Bernie Bloom noted that EAQAC's website has still not been updated, following suggestions in September 2011. Bernie requested that Eric Coffman intervene on EAQAC's behalf with Stan Edwards. Eric noted that the post for Web-Master is vacant.

Next EAQAC Meeting:

EAQAC does not meet in August. The next meeting will be Wednesday 5th September.

Action Items:

1. Paul to email William Griffiths head of General Services Management (GSM) which runs the Ride-On Buses, on composition of fleet and routes.
2. Paul to contact MCPS on same issue.
3. Paul to email Mark Elrich to ask what buses and what fuel will be used for his proposed Bus Rapid Transport (BRT) program.
4. Ed. Barbour to send out studies on attic configurations.
5. Aaron Cutler to prepare a presentation at the next meeting on Pepco's response to the outages caused by the June 29th derecho.