

# EAQAC Minutes

January 11, 2012

**Present:** Steve Gibb, Stephen Shaw, Tim Whitehouse, Bernie Bloom, Ken Cantor, Jody Foster, Eric Coffman, Stan Edwards, Betsy O'Brian, Paul Bubbosh, Melitta Carter

**Absent:** Aaron Cutler, Ed Barbour, Jim McDonnell, Sam Biondo

December minutes were reviewed and approved.

## **Continuing Issues:**

**Proposed changes to building code:** Bernie Bloom, Melitta Carter, and Eric Coffman will reach out to the Department of Permitting Services after meeting with Bob Hoyt (Director, DEP) to convey the EAQAC's concerns about the proposed building code changes that, if adopted, would modify air exchange requirements for new construction. Bernie pointed out that there is an understanding at Permitting Services that the County is under no obligation to adopt the proposed code.

**Proposed public meeting:** Jody Foster offered possible venues in Rockville for an EAQAC meeting and tour of their new science center and other options for a public meeting to discuss energy and air quality issues in Montgomery County. Jody continues her attempts to contact possible partners at Montgomery College at the Rockville and Silver Spring campus. Eric mentioned that the University of Shady Grove's "Community Day" in the fall of 2012 will be focused on sustainability and the committee felt that joining in with an EAQAC session or booth might be a good plan.

## **DEP Update:**

- About a 5 to 1 leverage characterizes projects that have been approved under the Residential Rebate Program, with \$270,000 remaining. Applications are arriving and being approved on a regular basis. The program will not continue once funds are depleted.
- The Commercial Rebate Program continues. A number of interesting case studies will be forthcoming.
- The [mygreenmontgomery.org](http://mygreenmontgomery.org) website launch is slated for January 13 and the county is interested in volunteers to contribute content.
- A draft zoning text amendment for solar at large commercial organizations in the Agriculture Reserve has been floated but may meet stiff resistance from defenders of the reserve.

## **Discussion items:**

- 1) **Set-Top-Boxes (STB) and Digital Video Recorders (DVR) energy usage**

Ken Cantor shared research gleaned from the Natural Resources Defense Council and other sources about the \$2 billion a year in potentially unnecessary estimated energy costs associated with STPs and DVRs burning energy when not in use (i.e. “sleeping”). Estimates showed that average American households burn more energy powering these units than their refrigerators use. Some units from some cable providers may be more energy efficient than others and Ken would like to continue researching the issue by contacting the County’s Cable Franchise office about whether they gather information on energy efficiency. EAQAC members wholeheartedly support more investigation of this issue and look forward to learning more about what can be done beyond setting up some units on power strips (which can disrupt DVRs).

## **2) Building Codes and Ventilation**

Bernie Bloom revisited the upcoming issue of IECC building codes that may not allow safe levels of outdoor air exchange. Bernie 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. Bernie and/or Melitta will explore setting up a meeting with the Department of Permitting Services (DPS) to brief them on concerns raised by EAQAC members.

### **Action Items:**

1. Ken will continue to research STB and DVR energy use options and County awareness of the issue.
2. Eric, Jody, and Melitta will continue work on the public forum, possibly folding it into the fall “community day on sustainability” planned for the fall by the University of Shady Grove.
3. Bernie and Melitta will compare schedules and explore whether the mornings of January 20 or 27<sup>th</sup> may work for a meeting with DPS.