Dear Ms. Gochrach,

Please find the attached request from the Montgomery County Water Quality Advisory Group concerning the process for identifying and nominating candidates for the WQAG.

Please let either Keith or me know if you have questions or concerns.

Best,

Tracy Rouleau
Keith Brooks
Co-Chairs MoCo WQAG

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Tracy Rouleau
Do not go where the path may lead; go instead where there is no path and leave a trail ~ Ralph Waldo Emerson
January 8, 2018

Ms. Beth Gochrach
Office of the County Executive
Boards, Committees, and Commissions
Montgomery County, Maryland 20850

RE: Identifying and Nominating Candidates for County Advisory Committees

Dear Ms. Gochrach:

On behalf of the Water Quality Advisory Group (WQAG), we are writing to express our concerns about (1) the long delays in filling vacancies and (2) the way in which vacancies are announced and resulting low recruitment responses. The WQAG advises the County Executive and County Council on issues associated with water quality in the County and State, including streams, rivers, and other natural bodies of water.

The following describes the current process: As shown in Appendix 1, from the Office of the County Executive, Boards, Committees and Commissions (BCC) website, the vacancy postings for the WQAG are scheduled for May and are “generally” advertised in the prior March. With respect to our five vacancies, the posting was released on May 31, 2017 with a closing date of June 21, 2017 (only 21 days later). The WQAG did not receive a list of potential candidates until four months later – in October 2017, and for our most recent five vacancies, we received interest from only four applicants.

Even if we are now able to interview the candidates immediately and forward the list of recommended candidates to the BCC by December, it will have taken nearly nine months to fill the vacancies which were to be posted in March. And these candidates, if selected and approved, will not have full three-year terms – the county rules have their terms expiring in less than 2.5 years now.

Please also that that this year we have had five vacancies as current members stepped down at the end of their terms last spring, resulting in a number of our meetings being held without the quorum necessary to vote on issues before the WQAG.

We respectfully provide the following requests and suggestions to help improve the process and timeline for filling vacancies on the WQAG.

- Communications with candidates: Once candidates have applied, we request that the BCC will keep them better informed of the timing of the steps in the review process – particularly noting that under the current process, the decision may take six months or longer.
• **Wider distribution of vacancy notices:** We would also request that the BCC take steps to encourage more candidates to apply, and keep the vacancy announcements open for longer than 3 weeks. We would encourage the BCC to consider posting the vacancy announcements on Listservs or other forms of social media of interested organizations such as watershed associations or other civic associations. In addition, we suggest the BCC take advantage of departmental websites, such as that of the Department of Environmental Protection and its mygreenmontgomery.org website. Other options include using the existing county newspaper, the Montgomery Sentinel (in a way that the notice doesn’t get buried in the pages of legal notices), and using electronic newsletters such as Bethesda Patch and the NextDoor neighborhoods (Please see Appendix 2 for a more extensive list of suggestions).

• **Shorten the gaps between vacancies:** We respectfully request that the process for filling vacancies before the Office of Boards, Committees and Commissions be streamlined so that vacancies may be filled in a more reasonable timeframe.

We hope that the BCC can give us a timetable for when these steps can be taken, or provide other suggestions. We are willing to consult further on the issues and ideas cited above.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Tracy Rouleau,
and
Keith M. Brooks

Co-chairs of the Water Quality Advisory Group
This year’s vacancy was posted on May 31:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Release Date</th>
<th>Deadline</th>
<th>Announcement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>05/31/2017</td>
<td>06/21/2017</td>
<td>Leggett Seeks Applicants for Water Quality Advisory Group</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Appendix 2
Suggestions for places to post or contact re WQAG vacancies

1. Audubon Naturalist Society
2. Conservation Montgomery
3. Montgomery Countryside Alliance
4. American Society of Civil Engineers, local branch
5. Montgomery County Sierra Club
6. Montgomery County Stormwater Partners Network
7. Maryland Building Industry Association, Montgomery County chapter
8. Izaak Walton League
9. Various watershed groups - e.g., Rock Creek Conservancy, Potomac Conservancy, Friends of Sligo Creek, Little Falls Watershed Alliance, Muddy Branch Alliance, Neighbors of the Northwest Branch, Watts Branch Watershed Alliance
10. DEP’s My Green Montgomery website
11. One Green Montgomery
12. Bethesda Green
13. Safe Grow Montgomery
14. Montgomery Sentinel newspaper
15. Various neighborhood associations
16. League of Women Voters of Montgomery County
17. Online news: e.g., Bethesda Patch, Rockville Patch, MoCo247.com
18. County library branches
20. Montgomery County Civic Association
21. Other county civic associations – e.g., West Montgomery County Civic Association, Seven Oaks/Evanswood Citizens’ Association
22. Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce
23. Maryland Society of Surveyors, Potomac chapter
24. American Society of Civil Engineers, Catoctin chapter