

Draft Meeting Summary

COG Climate Energy and Environment Policy Committee (CEEPC)

July 22, 2009

In Attendance

Melissa Adams, Washington Gas
Kambiz Agazi, Fairfax County
Hon. Roger Berliner, Vice Chair, Montgomery County Council
Karl Berntson, Prince George's County
Allison Bishins, Center for Clean Air Policy
Austina Casey, District Department of Transportation
Hon. Robert Catlin, College Park
Hon. "J" Davis, City of Greenbelt
Stan Edwards, Montgomery County
Hon. Jay Fisette, Chair, Arlington County
Bucky Green, U.S. EPA, Sustainability Facilities Branch
Hon. Penelope Gross, Fairfax County
Bob Grow, Greater Washington Board of Trade
Hon. Susan Hoffmann, City of Rockville
Hon. Tom Hucker, Maryland House of Delegates
Hon. Alan Imhoff, City of Frederick
Mark Lowham, West Group
Hon. Andrea McGimsey, Loudoun County
Katherine Magruder, Maryland Clean Energy Center
Dale Medearis, Northern Virginia Regional Commission
Hon. Martin Nohe, Prince William County
Samuel Parker, M-NCPPC – Prince George's Co.
Hon. Redella S. (Del) Pepper, Vice Mayor, City of Alexandria
Hon. Chap Peterson, Senate of Virginia
Caroline Petti, AQPAC
Jeff Platenberg, Loudoun County Public Schools
Mark Rawlings, District of Columbia Department of Transportation
Hon. Dan Robinson, Takoma Park
Nikki Rovner, Virginia Department of Natural Resources
Brendan Shane, District of Columbia Office of Sustainability
Howard Simons, Maryland Department of Transportation
Dr. Dann Sklarew, George Mason University
Hon. Ryan Spiegel, Gaithersburg
Jo Anne Sorenson, Virginia Department of Transportation
Kanti Srikanth, Virginia Department of Transportation
Dr. Mark Starik, George Washington University
Hon. Daniel Sze, Falls Church
Harriet Tregoning, District of Columbia Office of Planning
Hon. Geraldine Valentino-Smith, Bowie
Lise Van Susteren, Chesapeake Climate Action Network
Kim Watson, Pepco
Hon. Jonathan Way, City of Manassas
Luke Wisniewski, Maryland Department of the Environment

Others Present:

Kristen Haldeman, WMATA
Matt Houlian, NARC intern
Debra Jacobson, George Washington Law School
Tom McCarthy, for Hon. Mary Cheh, DC Council
Richard Nietubicz, Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority
Diane O'Grady, Loudoun County
Alyce Ortuzar, Well Mind Association
Bob Owolabi, Fairfax County Department of Transportation
Kara Reeve, DC Office of Planning
Kris Wernstedt, Virginia Tech

Staff Present:

Monica Bansal, COG Department of Transportation Planning
Daniel Bisutti, COG DEP Intern
Leah Boggs, Environmental Planner, COG DEP
Mike Clifford, COG Department of Transportation Planning
Paul Desjardin, COG Director of Community Planning and Services
Stuart Freudberg, COG, Director, Department of Environmental Programs
Nicole Hange, COG, Policy Coordinator
Jeff King, Sr. Environmental Planner, COG DEP
Sunil Kumar, Sr. Environmental Engineer, COG DEP
John Mataya, Department of Community Planning and Services
Erin Morrow, COG Department of Transportation Planning
George Nichols, Principal Environmental Planner, COG DEP
Dave Robertson, COG Executive Director
Joan Rohlf, Chief COG Air Quality Planning, COG DEP
Lee Ruck, COG Counsel
Daivamani Sivasailam, COG Department of Transportation Planning

1. Call to Order, Introductions, Amendments to the Agenda

Chair Fisette called the inaugural meeting of the Climate, Energy, and Environment Policy Committee (CEEPC) to order at 9:50 a.m. All in attendance were introduced. There were no changes to the agenda.

2. Chair Remarks

The COG Board created the Climate, Energy, and Environment Policy Committee (CEEPC) largely to carry out the recommendations of the COG Climate Report. A number of the people on this committee were directly involved in preparing that report. The committee's official areas of responsibility includes climate change, energy, green building, alternate fuels, solid waste and recycling policy issues, and other environmental issues as the Board may assign.

For the balance of 2009, there will be a number of focus areas: strategy for meeting the COG Board's 2012 greenhouse gas reduction goal of 10% below business as usual; advancing specific initiatives, two of which we'll hear about today – street light replacement and home energy retrofits; outreach and education on energy efficiency and conservation; approaches for reducing emissions from the transportation sector – in partnership with the regional Transportation Planning Board; advocacy – on federal and state legislation related to climate and energy; and solid waste policy, especially as it relates to plastic bags.

The committee will also involve significant involvement of stakeholders. Appointments for the academic stakeholders are still pending.

The current meeting schedule is every other month on the 4th Wednesday from 9:45 am to 12 noon. The committee has a section on the COG website that provides an events calendar, a member list, and meeting documents.

For those who may be interested, staff has offered to schedule an orientation for those members who might like to learn more, especially about COG's Climate Change Report, as well as have a somewhat more in-depth opportunity to ask questions of staff. Members agreed that an orientation session would be helpful.

3. Review of Committee Bylaws

Mr. Freudberg provided information on the committee bylaws, including membership, voting, and technical subcommittees. Membership includes 25 elected officials from COG's membership, 17 stakeholders (4 federal agencies, 3 electric/gas utilities, 3 environmental community, 3 business community, and 3 from the academic community, and the chair of the Air Quality Public Advisory Committee), 13 state government representatives (state senate and house as well as state transportation, environment, and energy directors). Representatives from the Transportation Planning Board (TPB), the Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee (MWAQC), and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) Board of Directors will also be appointed in the event they are not represented already by a sitting committee member.

In terms of voting, a quorum will exist if 1/3 of the voting members are present. Actions will be based on majority votes. However, two thirds of local elected officials present must vote affirmatively to support any matter concerning work program, Bylaw amendment, advocacy statement, or recommendation to the COG Board.

Unlike the TPB and MWAQC which are independent policy boards, the Climate, Energy, and Environment Policy Committee (CEEPC) reports to the COG Board of Directors. Other such committees include the Metropolitan Development Policy Committee, the Chesapeake Bay and Water Resources Policy Committee, the Aviation Policy Committee, and the Human Services and Public Safety Policy Committee. Given the wide range of existing technical committees within the COG committee structure, there are currently no plans to appoint any new standing technical committees to report to CEEPC. The existing technical groups that are anticipated to directly report to CEEPC include the Energy Advisory Committee, the Intergovernmental Green Building Group, the Regional Energy Outreach and Education Workgroup, the Solid Waste Managers/Recycling Committee, and the Street Lights Workgroup. Supporting committees will include the MWAQC Technical Advisory Committee, Water Resources Technical Committee, TPB Technical Committee, Planning Directors Technical Advisory Committee, and the Emergency Managers Committee. Affiliated committees will include the Alternative Fuels/Clean Cities Partnership and Clean Air Partners. Members requested periodic updates on supporting committee activities.

4. Strategic Priorities

Mr. Freudberg provided an overview of the recommendations in the COG Climate Report, adopted by the COG Board on November 12, 2008. The core recommendations call for an 80 percent reduction in emissions of greenhouse gases below 2005 levels by 2050. The report also establishes short term emission reduction goals for 2012 and

2020. The report provides a variety of recommendations for energy and transportation, land use planning, outreach and education, adaptation, and financing.

Members then discussed strategic work program priorities.

Ms. McGimsey suggested that members identify top efforts that are succeeding and that could be replicated throughout the region. She said that a primer on how to carry out the program, including talking points would be useful. Ms. Tregoning agreed saying that it will be important to address how innovative practices can be more widely adopted and brought to scale. Ms. McGimsey said that for programs that could be expanded it will be important to better understand what issues were faced and which stakeholders to engage.

Mr. Way said that the current plan to develop a strategy to meet the 2012 goal by the end of 2009 is too ambitious given there would only be 2 meetings to reach agreement. Members agreed.

Mr. Sze suggested that with the tranche of recovery funds available that approaches be aggregated to seek assistance. He also suggested that new policy tools are needed. For example, some municipalities have adopted new policies that formally define emissions as waste.

Ms. Bishins suggested that opportunities for short term VMT reductions should be explored, including investing in pedestrian facilities, bus service extensions and more public information about alternative commute options. She referenced a recent International Energy Agency (IEA) report entitled "Saving Oil in a Hurry."

Mr. Fisette asked how the CEEPC should dovetail with TPB. Ms. Tregoning suggested that in the near term TPB staff could brief CEEPC on recent activities, including a bus rapid transit proposal and the ongoing "what would it take" scenario study.

Ms. Valentino-Smith and Mr. Berliner said that moving beyond adopting recommendations to actual implementation is important to meet the reduction goals. It is important to focus on creating larger markets (e.g., alternative fuels and infrastructure) to improve quality and reduce cost.

Ms. Davis said that legislative priorities will need to be identified in advance of General Assembly sessions.

Mr. Berliner suggested that priorities be established through rankings based on relative contribution to emissions. He urged high priority be given to the building sector.

Mr. Sze suggested that under the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant program, jurisdictions should consider aggregating an energy sector approach through CEEPC. Such an approach might receive a warm reception from the Department of Energy.

Ms. Van Susteren asked that consideration be given to ways to make it easier for consumers to access/purchase green power.

Ms. Hoffmann asked for staff to develop a more user friendly work plan.

Mr. Fisette asked staff to develop a revised work program that covers the period ending December 2010. He also asked that staff circulate a request to identify possible replicable programs and to arrange for a briefing from TPB staff.

5. Project Reports

Mr. Nichols provided a status report on a new regional initiative to promote replacement of street light with new more energy efficient technology. He provided a series of examples of where new light emitting diode (LED) technology is being pilot tested or implemented at scale. In this region, both Dominion and Pepco have begun or are considering expanded pilot testing of new LED lights. Pilot testing is needed to demonstrate long term reliability, resident acceptance, energy efficiency, and cost. One other important task is for the utilities to apply and receive new rate tariff approvals from the public service commissions. Mr. Fisette expressed concern that the schedule for the pilot phase should be expedited.

Mr. King provided a status report on Home Energy Loan Program and Energy Audits. He summarized two recent initiatives to establish new municipal financing programs. Edison | Wright and the City of Annapolis are in the process of trying to establish a program where homeowners can pay back loans for energy improvements through their city water bill. Consultant Bill Dunnington and the City of Charlottesville, Virginia, are also in the process of exploring options to develop a fund for building retrofits. Based on analysis of program costs and benefits, Mr. Dunnington suggested that to be successful over the long term any home energy financing and building retrofit program must be brought to scale. In this region, Montgomery County has adopted legislation mandating establishment of a Home Energy Loan Program (HELP). Montgomery County staff are currently in the process of developing implementing regulations. Mr. Edwards said the current plans are to have regulations proposed in October. Mr. Berliner said that he is interested in determining ways to lower the interest rates for the program to zero. Mr. Spiegel suggested that municipal county housing inspectors be brought into the program to increase staffing efficiency. Mr. Fisette said the priorities should be to evaluate the need for certified auditors and contractors in the region, to determine the best options for financing and lowering financing costs, and to embark on efforts to publicize and market the program. Ms. Petti said that at the recent meeting of the Air Quality Public Advisory Committee (AQPAC), members expressed concern that the home retrofit program needs to be implemented in a way that does not cause an increased problem with indoor air quality.

Mr. Sze suggested that energy service companies could be invited to help fund lighting retrofits. He also suggested that COG consider replacing the lights in the COG Board Room to be more energy efficient. Mr. Fisette suggested that the region should also consider changing lighting siting policies, indicating that perhaps too many lights are being installed in certain locations. Mr. Simons asked that the emission benefit of lighting be evaluated.

6. Legislative Initiatives

Given time constraints, Mr. King provided a very brief summary of recent federal climate change initiatives. He referred members to the recent House of Representatives adoption of the proposed Waxman-Markey climate change legislation. He said the Senate will be considering climate change legislation in the Fall. Climate Communities will be circulating a request for member jurisdictions to sign onto a request for more funding allocations to local governments in the Senate version of the bill. Other recent climate change activities at the federal level include new tighter fuel efficiency standards

and an announcement that EPA will establish a greenhouse gas emission standard for automobiles.

At the state level, Maryland passed climate change legislation. Previous attempts had failed, but after a year of considerable stakeholder consultation, the measure passed.

7. Other Business

Mr. Freudberg said that staff are working on issues related to developing a regional program on plastic bags, in response to a COG Board resolution.

Mr. Berliner said that he is working on a proposal for a carbon neutral tariff for utility bills.

Mr. Shane announced that the District recently completed a green power purchase amounting to 50% of city consumption.

8. Adjourn

The next meeting is scheduled for September 23, 2009 from 9:45 am – 12 noon. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at noon.