

Air and Climate Public Advisory Committee

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<http://www.mwco.org/environment/committee/>

The Air and Climate Public Advisory Committee (ACPAC) is an advisory body to the Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee (MWAQC) and the Climate, Energy, and Environment Policy Committee (CEEPC)

Draft Conference Call Minutes

Topic: Awards Program Discussion

Wednesday, August 21, 2013, 5:30-6:30pm

ACPAC Members: Sarah Bunn, Glenna Tinney, Gretchen Goldman, Caroline Petti, Andrew Kambour, Bill Butler

Staff: Joan Rohlf, Amanda Campbell

1. Review Agenda

Caroline Petti reviewed the purpose of the meeting: to discuss the concept and refine it for discussion at the next ACPAC meeting. The proposal will identify some recommendations and may include issues for further discussion.

2. Review of background materials

Amanda Campbell briefly reviewed background materials, CEEPC Resource Guide, and Best Practices and Policies to Reduce Greenhouse Gases. Ms. Campbell highlighted the added research on Virginia Municipal League's Go Green VA program and MWCOG's Commuter Connections Employer Awards program. For Go Green VA, applicants self-nominate and complete a checklist online to indicate implementation of a slate of sustainability measures. Applicants earn Green, Silver, Gold, or Platinum based on a point system. The program offered monetary awards in 2008 and 2009 which was discontinued due to repeat winners. Since 2009, awardees have been recognized at the annual dinner.

COG's Commuter Connections offers awards to any employer based on their ability to offer measurable commuter benefits that reduce automobile fuel consumption and emissions through fewer vehicle trips and miles traveled. If several organizations meet the criteria for a given category, a winner is selected at random.

Some of the awards programs examined have categories for different sizes or types of applicants. Some programs test applicants on a wide variety of sustainability measures, others offer separate awards for topic areas. Programs require varying degrees of detail in the application and many require documentation. Criteria used may include leadership, innovation, transferability, or measurability. There are many ways to design an awards program. Many programs have found creative solutions to issues that have been raised in ACPAC discussions.

3. Review and discuss revised award concept proposal

Joan Rohlf described the revised award concept proposal. Staff incorporated suggestions and ideas from the last ACPAC meeting and from research on other programs. The proposal now lists several

options which could be used in combination. A table lists a breakdown of COG jurisdictions in three categories by population size. One option is to choose three topic areas for awards every year. Many of the details regarding criteria and selection could be worked out through a joint CEEPC/ACPAC task force, since CEEPC will likely want to be involved in the development of the awards program details. Awardees could be recognized at a CEEPC meeting; a monetary award is another possibility if non-governmental CEEPC members are interested in donating funds.

Joan Rohlfs clarified that COG does not have a standardized way of dividing jurisdictions by size, but that doing so in the manner proposed would not be a problem. Ms. Rohlfs said that greenhouse gas inventories, existing buildings, and benchmarking were among the priorities that CEEPC identified through a member survey in 2011 and 2012. After the last CEEPC meeting, some members requested more assistance in green purchasing. Ms. Rohlfs suggested that the awards program could be an avenue for publicizing and incentivizing the new 2013-2016 Climate & Energy Action Plan and the measures it contains.

Several years ago, Jay Fiset spurred efforts on sustainability outreach, including the We Can pilot energy efficiency programs for homeowners. Then a COG Outreach workgroup began looking into developing a sustainability program for individuals/households. The proposal was dropped when jurisdictions decided it would only compete with existing local programs.

In response to questions, Ms. Rohlfs explained that COG has run other award programs but, as far as she knows, there have not been any programs where the jurisdictions compete against each other.

Caroline Petti said that the priority is to incentivize measures that work towards greenhouse gas reductions. Chair Petti requested that Option 1 be changed to a part of the proposal rather than a presented as an option. She also requested that an option be added to allow jurisdictions to choose the topic area or measure to apply for. Finally, Chair Petti asked that if topics are chosen by the task force, the reasoning behind choosing the topic areas should be explained to avoid a complicated discussion on the relative greenhouse gas reduction merits of each action in the plan. Chair Petti asked that the proposal make clear that the first year would be a pilot awards program to allow the task force to adjust the program as lessons are learned.

Bill Butler said that allowing jurisdictions to choose the topic area might make judging more complicated.

Andrew Kambour suggested offering different types of awards for implemented achievements and for progress or improvement in the prior year. Ms. Rohlfs suggested offering awards for outstanding achievement in the prior two years, and another on progress in certain areas or those who have started programs.

The group discussed whether greenhouse gas reduction should be the exclusive focus, and whether to also incentivize measures such as greenhouse gas inventories and resiliency that do not directly reduce greenhouse gases. Glenna Tinney agreed that emissions reduction should be the first priority. Gretchen Goldman suggested that the program could measure sustainability and measures that 'work towards' greenhouse gas reductions, and that greenhouse gas reductions could be included as one of the selection criteria.

Ms. Rohlfs suggested adding examples of measures from the Action Plan in the proposal. Chair Petti suggested discussing illustrative examples of broad judging criteria at ACPAC/CEEPAC that could be applicable to any of the topic areas, and including the examples in the proposal.

4. Discussion Wrap-up and Next Steps

Staff will send out a revised award concept proposal, incorporating suggested changes and proposed options for discussion at the September 16th ACPAC meeting.

5. Next Meeting Date: Monday, September 16, 2013