

Climate, Energy and Environment Policy Committee (CEEPC)

MEETING SUMMARY: MAY 23, 2018

CEEPC MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: (*) Indicates participation by phone

- Hon. Dan Sze, City of Falls Church (Vice Chair)
- Dyan Backe, City of Gaithersburg (*)
- Erica Bannerman, Prince George's County
- Nick Bonard, NCPC
- Patty Bubar, Montgomery County (*)
- Dennis Cumbie, Loudoun County (*)
- Ira Dorfman, GWR Clean Cities Coalition
- Cindy Dyballa, City of Takoma Park
- Gretchen Goldman, ACPAC
- Penelope Gross, Fairfax County
- Erik Gutshall, Arlington County
- Jenn Hatch, DOEE
- Rachel Healy, WMATA
- John Lord, Loudoun County Public Schools
- Leta Mach, City of Greenbelt
- Gina Mathias, City of Takoma Park (*)
- Alexander Miller-Brown, Washington Gas (*)
- Scott Pomeroy, Scalable Strategies
- Ana ReWalt, City of Laurel (*)
- Koran Saines, Loudoun County (*)
- Pamela Sebesky, City of Manassas
- John Settles, Capital Sustainability (*)
- Dann Sklarew, GMU
- Chris Sommers, Arlington County (*)
- Tim Stevens, Virginia Sierra Club
- Colleen Turner, MDOT
- Kate Zyla, Georgetown Climate Center

ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES

- Laine Cidlowski, District of Columbia Office of Planning
- Andrew Kreider, Mid-Atlantic Sustainability Networks (*)

COG STAFF IN ATTENDANCE:

- Steven Bieber, COG Environmental Programs
- Leah Boggs, COG Environmental Programs
- Amanda Campbell, COG Environmental Programs
- Maia Davis, COG Environmental Programs
- Jeff King, COG Environmental Programs
- Brian LeCouteur, COG Environmental Programs
- Tim Masters, COG Environmental Programs
- Lindsay Smith, COG Environmental Programs (*)
- Steve Walz, COG Environmental Programs Director

1. CALL TO ORDER, INTRODUCTIONS, APPROVE MINUTES, CHAIR'S REMARKS

Vice Chair Dan Sze called meeting to order. Introductions by those in attendance and on the phone followed. Meeting summary from the March CEEPC meeting was approved.

2. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Built Environment Energy Advisory Committee (BEEAC) (*Gina Mathias, Chair*)

- BEEAC hosted the last of its solar market series workshops in April, focusing on microgrid technology and battery storage. These technologies are gaining traction and the group discussed implications and actions for utilities, government entities, and communities.
- COG is planning a solar technology tour in June. The tour will include two off-grid buildings where technologies like solar panels, solar daylighting, a web-enabled battery bank, a small wind turbine and a hydrogen fuel cell are utilized.
- The next BEEAC meeting will be on June 21. BEEAC will be focusing on energy resilience.

RESF #12-Energy Work Group

- The Regional Energy Support Function (RESF) #12 Energy Work Group is a subcommittee of BEEAC, chaired by Bill Eger. RESF #12 held a meeting, as part of the April BEEAC meeting, to review their application for the National Capital Region (NCR) Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) award. RESF-12's project was a Regional Energy Emergency Plan Consolidation and Gap Analysis. The objective is to improve communication and coordination among jurisdictions in the National Capital Region (NCR) and ensure an effective and timely response to energy emergencies. It also included reconciliation of liquid fuel-shortage management strategies.
- Bill Eger submitted the solution to the Homeland Security Executive Committee (HSEC) Advisory Council on April 26. RESF-12 expects to be notified of the outcome of their submission in June.

B. Air and Climate Public Advisory Committee (ACPAC) (*Gretchen Goldman*)

- ACPAC is working with MWAQC on the What We Can Do report – an effort to address measures that can be taken to improve air quality through local actions, energy efficiency, renewable technologies, and EV adoption. It will be presented at the MWAQC meeting directly after this CEEPC meeting.
- The Climate and Energy Leadership Awards program launched on April 22. The categories for the awards will be the same: government institutions, educational institutions, and nonprofit sector NGOs. Nominations are open through June 29.

C. Member Updates

- *John Lord, Loudoun County Public Schools* – In April, Loudoun County Public Schools (LCPS) was awarded the seventh consecutive Energy Star Partner of the Year award. LCPS broke the \$80 million of cumulative energy costs savings and broke 400,000 equivalent metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions reductions since the program began in 1993.
- *Cindy Dyballa, City of Takoma Park* – The City recently announced their Neighborhood Energy Challenge to sign up residents for 100% renewable energy in their homes with a group-buy contract structure. The goal is to get 25% of their residents signed up by September 30.
- *Colleen Turner, MDOT* – Renewable Energy RFP – There are six contractors on board to install renewable energy at MDOT facilities. Other government, non-governmental organizations, and nonprofit-entities can take advantage of this service agreement and have access to the contractors as long as the project falls within the agreement. This is not a funding opportunity, but Colleen can provide access to the project manager.
- Recognition of American University – they have become one of the first climate neutral universities in the country. They should be considered for an award this year.

D. Staff Updates

- *Steve Walz, COG* – Today, COG will post the Tree Canopy Management Strategy, which updates information like the amount of tree canopy and the activities that are happening across the region to help grow the tree canopy. This report recommends that a trade policy group is set up to address these issues. The report will be circulated with technical committees and then brought back to CEEPC.
- *Steve Walz, COG* – Resiliency Framework: ICLEI is piloting new adaptation services, that are currently mostly covered via grants. They are interested in working with a community(ies) in metropolitan Washington. There is a cost share match for anybody interested.

3. REGIONAL FOOD SYSTEMS

Laine Cidlowski, District of Columbia Office of Planning

“Food systems” refer to all the pieces that make up how food gets to consumers including production, processing, and distribution. In DC, there are 58 farmer’s markets, 71 healthy corner stores, more than 60 community gardens, and 11 commercial farms. The overall number of restaurants is going up in the region, while wholesalers, food processors, and distributors are moving into the regional jurisdictions around DC, bringing with them a shift in transportation patterns.

The District of Columbia Office of Planning (OP) works on food systems and policy related to these systems within the District of Columbia. The three main goals are: 1) they want to grow more food within the city, 2) they want to make sure that food is easily-accessible to residents, and 3) they want to support the local food economy. DC introduced incentives for grocery stores, as well as a new food policy council within the city. The new council focuses on bringing all of the pieces of the food system together. There are also groups interested in sustainable procurement like the Good Food Purchasing Program.

The District is doing better than most other US cities in terms of total number or per capita impact of the food sector. There is an opportunity for growth in this sector, while reducing carbon emissions through sustainable supply chain management. There is an opportunity to reduce food miles through local purchasing and greater collaboration within the food sector. There are strong local and regional supply chains that cater to the food industry in DC.

The federal government has an enormous impact on food systems. Currently, there is a controversy over the federal Farm Bill. It directly affects farmers that supply produce to the area, as well as school lunch programs, and food benefits like SNAP and WIC. If they were to cut SNAP or WIC in a significant way, the region would need to address how to feed thousands of hungry people. The Farm Bill discussions may seem abstract, but there would be an immediate impact for the local communities.

Brian LeCouteur, COG Environmental Programs

COG’s Regional Food Systems Program was launched in 2016 and is based on the agriculture program work that began in 2006. COG’s Regional Food Systems Program works towards making the regional food system more efficient and integrated. The program has been funded through a USDA grant and philanthropic funding. The USDA grant has ended, but the program continues with other funding. The goals of the program are based on production, distribution, market access, and institutional procurement. The Local Food Distribution Workgroup was formed last April and meets bimonthly to cover key issues in the food economy such as strengthening distribution partnerships, infrastructure for improved farmer market connections, and barriers to increasing the flow of farm food to the region’s buyers and consumers.

COG is currently updating the What Our Region Grows report, to be finalized in the Fall of 2018. The report illustrates the domination of grains in the region, although the grain production levels are

declining. Dairy is also in decline due to market forces. Agritourism has been growing in the region, and is a major source of supplemental income for farmers. Many farmers have jobs off the farm as well, as this allows them to stay on the farm and still produce an income for the farm.

Continued implementation of the Regional Food Systems Program and strategic planning with COG members for program development and sustainability is one of COG's focuses. The team will continue to reach out to COG members for strategic planning conversations on the future of the program, and plans to sustain it.

Discussion:

- Local dairy is meeting the local needs, but the farms are in decline. There is a lot of milk production in the area, despite a significant drop in production and the rapid rate of continued decline.
- There are many low paying jobs within the food sector economy. Interest in the living wage is very high among restaurant business owners. They are interested and concerned about how that would impact their bottom line, how it impacts their employees, how it impacts jobs. The equity impact on the larger community is a concern. If a lot of workers within the community are working within businesses in DC and have low wages, they may be living in surrounding areas because they can't afford to live in the District. Affordable housing, transportation, wage issues, and economy issues are prominent themes in the discussion.
- Circular economy as it relates to food systems is an important consideration. Buying from local farms and setting up the supply chains for this purpose is something that needs to be regionalized and extended across sectors. Getting universities to take part in these regional supply chains is a good step forward. Also, DC Water can sell Class A biosolids, which means they have a lot of fertilizer that could be connected into the agricultural system seems like an extremely exciting opportunity.
- Composting and curbside pickup is happening through the public works program in Prince George's County. They are working on rolling out curbside composting at the residential scale. They don't have solutions for commercial-scale or apartment-scale communities yet.
- The relationship between food and nutrition and healthcare costs is often left out of the conversation. Healthcare costs are driven by obesity and poor nutrition. There is also the equity issue of food deserts and access to healthy food. There is work going into healthy food access, education around direct food benefits like the produce plus program or farmer's market nutrition programs, or working with SNAP and WIC benefits.
- Many of the COG jurisdictions have food policy councils or groups that are working on food issues. For instance, Arlington County has Friends of Urban Agriculture. Fairfax County, Prince George's County, and Montgomery County have councils, and Frederick County is talking about one.
- With the approval of the community solar law in the state of Maryland, solar developers are looking to utilize farmland for clean energy development. Avoiding negative effects on the working agricultural land is a concern. There may be examples where people are able to grow agriculturally profitable crops underneath or around or adjacent to the panels or there could be enough panels could power the working farm without taking up all the working agricultural land.
- Many of the farms in DC serve as educational facilities. Keeping the idea and the concept of the farm alive is the goal. Shortening supply chains is another benefit. Farming is not taking the place of housing, but the place of a commercial development and it provides more benefits to the community beyond what a commercial development could do in terms of environmental benefits and community health.
- Montgomery County will be initiating a program to reuse/recycle/compost food waste from the commercial sector, as well as an educational program for residential property owners regarding food waste and composting.

4. COG SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES

Amanda Campbell, COG Environmental Programs

COG has made great strides regarding sustainability in the Center for Public Administration and Services (CPAS) building, in which COG is one-third owner. A report will be shared with COG members for feedback soon. The Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) was used as the sustainability disclosure protocol. The protocol includes social and financial aspects, but COG focused on environmental aspects. COG's

The CPAS building is almost 30 years old and 60,000 gross square feet. Some accomplishments include a green roof that absorbs about 12,000 gallons of rainfall a year, Green Seal certified cleaning service is utilized, about 300 pounds are recycled per day building-wide (about 20 percent of total waste), and there have been significant reductions in water and electricity use over the years due to several building upgrades. In addition, 80 percent of COG's 125+ employees use alternative forms of transportation and COG's fleet consists of one electric vehicle and one hybrid. COG recycles electronics and have replaced servers with more energy efficient equipment. COG also provides a community supported agriculture (CSA) benefit for employees.

One of the top challenges is that COG has higher energy use intensity than average DC office buildings. This may be due to the data centers that are housed in the building, or possibly because 1,500 people visit COG every month. COG produces 2,600 metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions per year. COG is proposing to form a green team to implement sustainability initiatives. Greening electricity purchases is also a crucial part of reducing impacts. Thereafter, COG will look at deeper sustainability options and gather some more information from energy audits to evaluate progress.

Discussion:

- Comparability should be considered – for example, putting GHG emissions in a square footage measurement to benchmark against peers.

5. REGIONAL ENVIRONMENT FUND WORK PROGRAM AND BUDGET

Steve Walz, COG Environmental Programs Director

At an earlier meeting, COG asked for input from members on the next year's outlook. The input was incorporated into the draft work program and budget and it has been offered to BEEAC and ACPAC for their input. COG will be asking for approval of the work plan and budget for the year. The program has nine work areas. Some funds will also be provided to the regional water quality program (COG thanks the City of Bowie for funding it this year).

The focus of the work plan is to support COG local government members implement actions in the Regional Climate and Energy Action Plan. Some examples of the work plan's tasks include:

- Support development of a utility data registry to make it easier for local governments to get data from utilities for planning purposes.
- Coordinate the Regional Emergency Support Function-12 to consolidate multiple, outdated energy emergency plans.
- Alternative fuel vehicle infrastructure and the interrelationships with the electric utilities.
- Support phase two of the 100 Resilient Cities work.
- ACPAC will be finalizing the What We Can Do report where co-benefits of energy and climate initiatives and vehicle emission reductions are explored.
- COG staff is working to bring additional resources into the region to transition away from inefficient diesel and higher polluting diesel engines both on boats on the river and locomotives at Union Station and others.

- Support recycling programs and manage the Go Recycle Campaign. , while also dealing with issues such as composting and organic wastes. COG also works on the Go Recycle campaign.
- Support for Regional Food Systems and Agricultural Programs.

The Regional Environment Fund Work Program and Budget were adopted by CEEPC.

6. ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned. The next CEEPC meeting will be on Wednesday, July 25.