



## Chesapeake Bay and Water Resources Policy Committee and Climate, Energy and Environment Policy Committee Joint Meeting

### MEETING SUMMARY-DRAFT JULY 26, 2019

#### CBPC & CEEPC MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

\*Indicates participation by phone

- Amy Jackson, City of Alexandria
- Chris Rice, Maryland Energy Administration
- Cindy Dyballa, City of Takoma Park (CB-WRPC Chair)
- Craig Rice, Montgomery County
- Dan Sze, City of Falls Church (CEEPC Chair)
- Del Pepper, City of Alexandria
- Erica Bannerman, Prince George's County\*
- Erica Shingara, City of Rockville
- Erik Gutshall, Arlington County
- Joe Gill, Prince George's County
- Jon Stehle, City of Fairfax (CBPC Vice-Chair)
- Judith Davis, City of Greenbelt
- Kambiz Agazi, Fairfax County
- Karen Pallansch, Alexandria Renew Enterprises\*
- Konrad Herling, City of Greenbelt
- Libby Garvey, Arlington County
- Luke Wisniewski, Maryland
- Mark Charles, City of Rockville
- Matt Ries, DC Water
- Maureen Holman, DC Water
- Melissa Adams, Washington Gas
- Nicole Rentz, DC Council
- Penny Gross, Fairfax County
- Rachel Healy, WMATA
- Regina Moore, VDOT
- Sam Rosen-Amy, DC Council

- Shannon Moore, Frederick County
- Stan Edwards, Montgomery County
- Stephen Allen, Sr., City of Laurel\*
- Tim Stevens, Sierra Club
- Tristen Townsend, DC Water
- Tiffany Wright, Town of Bowie\*
- Vaughn Stewart, MD House of Delegates\*

#### ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES:

- Kim Goddu, Bethesda Green
- Pam Kenel, Loudoun Water
- Mike Knapp, Montgomery County
- Donna Lee, Climate and Land Use Alliance\*
- Laura Miller, Montgomery County
- Adam Roberts, Bethesda Green
- Tristen Townsend, DC Water
- Doug Weisburger, Montgomery County

#### COG STAFF IN ATTENDANCE:

- Leah Boggs, COG Environmental Programs
- Heidi Bonnaffon, 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
- Lisa Ragain, COG Environmental Programs
- Steve Walz, COG Environmental Programs (Director)

## **LINK TO PRESENTATIONS AND ALL MEETING MATERIALS**

<https://www.mwcog.org/events/2019/7/26/chesapeake-bay-and-water-resources-policy-committee-meeting/>

### **1. CALL TO ORDER & INTRODUCTIONS**

*Cindy Dyballa, CBPC Chair and Dan Sze, CEEPC Chair*

The CBPC Chair, Cindy Dyballa, and the CEEPC Chair, Dan Sze, called the meeting to order.

### **2. MEETING SUMMARY APPROVALS**

*Cindy Dyballa, CBPC Chair and Dan Sze, CEEPC Chair*

Meeting minutes for the May CBPC meeting and the May CEEPC meeting were approved.

### **3. COG'S TREE CANOPY SUBCOMMITTEE WORK PLAN**

*Brian LeCouteur, COG Department of Environmental Programs, Regional Forester and Michael Knapp, Montgomery County DPS, Urban Forester*

The Regional Tree Canopy Management Strategy was released in 2018, establishing the Tree Canopy Subcommittee which was officially launched in February 2019. The subcommittee, comprised of representatives from across metropolitan Washington, developed the following key strategies, presented in anticipated order of implementation:

- Strategy 2.2: Review tree policies and ordinances around region to develop a good foundation for jurisdictions to protect and expand tree cover.
- Strategy 3.3: Establish canopy goals for local scales. Working with the Chesapeake Bay Conservancy, provide a continuous data set to be used as a basis for action to achieve goals.
- Strategy 1.3: Plant trees following the “Right Tree, Right Place” approach to expand benefits (sequestration, storm water management, etc.).
- Strategy 3.1: Develop a Regional Urban Forest Action Plan
  - Identify the problems of trees (storm events on urban trees, powerlines, etc.) so that there are plans to mitigate any potential issues and to determine when not to plant.
  - Develop a plan to proactively address storm impacts on the region which is particularly important for jurisdictions with mature tree canopies.

Discussion:

- In order to recover from tree loss due to the emerald ash borer, jurisdictions will need to share lessons learned, focus on the care and feeding of new trees, and monitor which trees are most likely to thrive in a changing climate. Finding native species that can survive temperature extremes will be essential to fostering resilient tree canopies and forests.
- It will be important for the subcommittee to review concerns around mature trees coming down in neighborhoods during strong storms.
- Deer and invasive species present significant challenges to maintaining forests. Deer suppress undergrowth by eating baby trees and spreading seeds of invasive plants such as Bradford pears which crowd out native plants. Addressing these challenges will be politically and technically challenging.

- The subcommittee is focusing on native trees in part because they are beneficial to pollinators.
- Citizens can monitor the subcommittee's work by reviewing the documents posted to the website as they progress through their work. When the products from the two-year effort are available, there will be an opportunity for public input.
- The subcommittee is keeping heat island effect and social equity in mind when identifying where to plant trees in urban areas.

#### 4. TREE CANOPY: BENEFITS, POLICIES, & RESOURCES

##### Climate and Water Benefits of Trees

*Michael Knapp, Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services*

- Trees provide services in the following categories: social, economic, environmental, ecological, human health, and wood and food products. To maximize the benefits of these services, we must take proven steps to protect and expand tree canopies and forests, including planting proper species in proper places.
- The iTree Eco software from US Forest Service allows jurisdictions to use basic aerial photography to produce data regarding carbon sequestration and avoided emissions.
- According to a 2006 US Forest Service study the benefits of trees offset the costs associated with infrastructure damage (\$3.74 benefit per dollar spent on damage).
- The Enabling Legislation for Zoning in Virginia (2008) was the first broad tree conservation legislation passed in Virginia. It provides incentives for conservation and favors conservation over tree replacement. Fairfax County is the only COG Virginia jurisdiction to take advantage of this legislation, but others should consider it.
- Key strategies for protecting trees:
  - Adopting strong tree preservation ordinances;
  - Strengthening land use planning guidance and land development criteria to encourage tree preservation.

##### Prince George's County Tree Program and Policies

*Joe Gill, Prince George's County DOE*

- We need to seriously review development patterns, including projected policy outcomes and the impacts of climate change, 20-30 years out to avoid a crisis.
- Prince George's County has several tree programs and policies, the most important being the Forest Conservation Act. This legislation does not achieve no net loss of forests and does not require protection of any natural resource; it simply lists priorities for reasonable accommodation, which is potentially insufficient, particularly in the context of climate change.
- Here are a few questions for further consideration:
  - Should flood protection be a part of forest conservation?
  - Should tree removal be prohibited in floodplains?
  - Should MS4 stormwater programs get credits for forest retention, not just tree restoration?

## Montgomery County's Forest and Trees Greenhouse Gas Accounting

Donna Lee, *Climate and Land Use Alliance* and Laura Miller, *Montgomery County DEP*

- Context:
  - There is more carbon stored in forests than extractable fossil fuel deposits. Cutting forests down results in emissions (decay, burning, etc.).
  - In the US, forests and urban trees sequester ~13% of GHG emissions.
  - Forests are an essential part of the U.S. Mid-century Strategy for Deep Decarbonization. We must conserve, restore, and expand forests by 40-50 million acres by 2050 in order to achieve the level of carbon sequestration outlined in the deep decarbonization strategy.
- Montgomery County Project:
  - Objective: Enable communities to include forests and trees in their climate and action plans through development of GHG estimates.
  - Goal: Develop guidance that communities can use to estimate GHGs from forests & trees.
    - A lack of clear guidance was the biggest impediment to local governments including trees and their carbon sequestration in local climate action plans.
  - ICLEI's US Community-Scale Protocol: New Appendix on Forests & "Trees Outside Forests"
    - Montgomery County was one of three communities in the country chosen for piloting the new protocol. The protocol uses available data from the US Geological Survey and the UMD Tree Canopy project to add to local jurisdictions' understanding of the impact of their tree policies on GHG emissions.
    - The Montgomery County emission reduction/sequestration results will likely be proportionally lower than other communities because they have more people and emissions than most communities.
    - The tool will launch for all communities on August 12<sup>th</sup>.

### Discussion:

- Given that trees are public assets but privately owned, jurisdictions need to explore ways to incentivize private property owners to recognize the value of trees to them and the larger community. This is a more difficult issue in Virginia than Maryland because Virginia is a Dillon Rule state so local jurisdictions cannot act without state approval. Members discussed several potential solutions:
  - For Maryland communities, they could adjust the threshold requirement for government review of forest clearing accounting for the increased value of trees due to climate change. Currently, Maryland incentivizes private tree owners to keep forests as small as 20 acres and Alexandria has an ordinance that protects trees that are 200 years old or older.
  - Virginia communities might be able to link their efforts to preserve trees on private property to other regulatory issues such as water or air quality. Doing so would likely require collaboration among local governments. As of now, Virginia only allows localities to protect privately owned trees that are specimen, historic, culturally significant, or street trees.

- Members would like to further discuss how trees and transit can be complementary. How can efforts such as WMATA planting 325 at stations this year be strategically expanded to be more effective?
- A potential mechanism for protecting privately owned trees is to provide credits through storm water taxes to incentivize owners to keep them.

## 5. AG TASK FORCE PLAN

*Craig Rice, Montgomery County Councilmember*

If we are serious about solving the climate crisis, we need to support agriculture and sustainable methodologies. To advance agricultural solutions while considering environmental and economic sustainability, the Ag Task Force drafted a vision and outline of goals along with practical next steps which are encompassed in the Vision and Framework document. The Ag Task Force wants feedback on the draft vision and goals.

Discussion:

- Members were glad to see next generation farmers mentioned in the document but want to ensure that the task force explicitly addresses the needs of aging farmers as well.
- Global climate disruptions such as the droughts in California are creating food supply issues so this work is important in preparing the region to be food secure.
- Members would like to see a more explicit reference to climate change's connection to agricultural issues in the commission charge.

## 6. WRAP UP & ADJOURN MEETING

*Cindy Dyballa, CBPC Chair and Dan Sze, CEEPC Chair*

Announcements:

- Jurisdictions working on a local Climate Action Plan should contact Maia Davis to participate in a short luncheon meeting to discuss their progress with other member communities.
- The next CBPC meeting is September 20, 2019.
- The next CEEPC meeting is on September 25, 2019.
- The next Tree Canopy Subcommittee meeting will be in September. Specific date TBD.

The chairs adjourned the meeting.