



AIR AND CLIMATE PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE

June 19, 2017
5:30 - 7:30 P.M.

DRAFT MEETING SUMMARY

ACPAC MEMBERS (*VIA PHONE)

- Gretchen Goldman
- Robin Lewis
- Seth Heald
- Glenna Tinney
- Tamara Toles - O'Laughlin*
- John Howes

STAFF

- Amanda Campbell

1. CALL TO ORDER, AGENDA, MEETING SUMMARY APPROVAL AND INTRODUCTIONS

Gretchen Goldman, ACPAC Chair

The meeting agenda was approved without changes. The meeting summary was approved without changes.

2. ARLINGTON COUNTY'S NATURAL HERITAGE

Alonso Abugattas, Natural Resources Manager, Arlington County

Mr. Abugattas shared the development of Arlington's Natural Resource Management program, including highlights from the Natural Resource Inventory, resulting plan, and habitat restoration activities. The county conducted a thorough inventory in coordination with experts from across the region. Although it is an urban area with only 4% of natural land within county control, a recent inventory counted 24 mammal species, 30 damsel and dragonfly species, 32 reptile and amphibian species, 42 fungi species, 54 butterfly species, 101 moth species 197 bird species, and over 600 native plants.

Since the last inventory, several areas have been cleared of invasive plants and replanted with native species with the help of many volunteers that the county organizes through their invasive plant program. With a few changes to habitat management, such as adding vernal (seasonal) ponds and conserving land near a rare Magnolia Bog habitat, even more rare species returned, including 23 plant species found nowhere else in Arlington, gray fox, little wood satyr butterfly, and yellow-crowned night heron. Now the county reviews park plans and incorporates more nature-protective measures, such as no-mow areas.

Arlington cooperates with other jurisdictions and organizations in the region to share native seeds

and plants, such as wild rice from Anacostia Watershed Society. Arlington County joined the Mayor's Monarch Pledge and has completed more actions than needed to meet the pledge, including creating several monarch way-stations with the milkweed plants upon which the caterpillars depend. The county is working with others in the region on an 'early detection and rapid response' protocol for invasive plants (through the DC Cooperative Weed Management Area program) that will serve as a model for the nation. Their first Bioblitz was held this year in May and found nearly 470 species. These initiatives are helping protect Arlington's habitat diversity and resilience and foster an eco-aware public.

In response to a question, Mr. Abugattas said that his recommendation for the region is first to find out what you have. Protecting natural habitats works best when which jurisdictions work together to pool their expertise across the region.

In response to another question about how the program began, Mr. Abugattas said that a group of citizens that were involved in removing invasive plants and who were knowledgeable of the County's resources and came forward to propose and support the effort.

3. BIOPHILIC CITIES IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Stella Tarnay, DC's Biophilic Cities Initiative

Ms. Tarnay initiated a working group on DC's participation as a Biophilic City, and it has now evolved into an active civic group. The District of Columbia has remarkable natural assets, including two major rivers – the Potomac and Anacostia – and diverse species owing to its location at the confluence of the coastal plain and the piedmont regions.

Professor Tim Beatley, who penned a book on Biophilic Cities and launched the "Biophilic Cities" designation, defines the movement as:

Biophilic Cities are cities that contain abundant nature; they are cities that care about, seek to protect, restore and grow this nature, and that strive to foster deep connections and daily contact with the natural world. Nature is not something optional, but absolutely essential to living a happy, healthy and meaningful life.

Access to nature is fundamental to human health. Studies show that healing occurs faster when patients see a verdant view, and other health indicators are improved for people who live in treed neighborhoods. As more people move to cities, urban areas can be refuges for biodiversity too. Architecture, landscaping, and urban design can incorporate natural elements into the urban framework in creative ways.

The DC program coordinates among many partners – like Casey Trees, Earth Conservation Corps, and City Blossoms – to conduct their work. They have sponsored species inventories and a lecture series. The group is also promoting Park Rx which suggests to doctors to prescribe time in parks to their patients, citizen science including an app, school gardens (there are 125), bird-friendly building codes, and participating in the Los Angeles' based City Nature Challenge.

ACPAC members pointed out that biophilic design also raises property values.

4. ACPAC MEMBER TIME

John Howes, ACPAC Member

Mr. Howes described the challenges of recycling, focusing on rechargeable batteries since they can power devices, cars, and store renewable energy. Consumers recycle some materials more than others. For some materials, the recycling industry can make a profit, but others are more difficult.

Many batteries are not designed to be easily recyclable, and are landfilled which sometimes causes fires. Some manufacturers are reluctant to use recycled materials due to variations in quality. These challenges would need to be addressed before all of our battery powered equipment can be part of a more environmentally sustainable circular economy.

5. UPDATES

- EJ Toolkit: The toolkit is being reviewed by BEEAC and MWAQC-TAC members. ACPAC members will continue to solicit feedback from EJ advocates. Those members owing edits plan to send them this week.
- Climate and Energy Leadership Awards – reminder to nominate or apply!
- Ozone Season and Local Measures – ACPAC will discuss an analysis of local air quality measures in the fall.

6. ADJOURN