



Loudoun County



VIRGINIA

WHERE TRADITION MEETS INNOVATION

Loudoun County Environmental Commission
Marc Aveni
Department of General Services

Council of Governments Board of Directors Meeting
March 9, 2022

Environmental Commission

- Board established unanimously December 2020
- Detailed By-laws
- “Advise and make recommendations to Board on policies and practices dealing with the environment, sustainability and the management of energy”
- “identify issues”, “advance environmental justice”, “recommend new initiatives”, “create annual work plan and report”, “engage the public”, “conduct environmental excellence awards”

Environmental Commission

- 17 members appointed by Board for 4-year terms
- 15 voting members (not schools and water utility)
- Public utilities, Loudoun public schools, Subject matter experts, Non-profits, At-large residents
- * Staff support in Dept of General Services (DGS)
- * Budgeted staff person located in DGS

Pre-process/First Meeting

- Call members/introductions
- Ask for themes/interest in chair/vice chair
- Organize themes
- First meeting July 2021 totally virtual
- First meeting FOIA/COIA
- Second meeting members speak and intro themselves, mention “themes”

Process To Date

- Subsequent 16 meetings developed themes into 5 initiative areas and many possible proposals
- Numerous standing committee meetings
- 1 virtual public input session Nov 2021 on themes and actions
- Over 80 online comments and 12 speakers during public input
- Each theme has 2 proposals

Five Themes

- Sustainable Energy
- Natural Resource Protection
- Environmental Justice
- Public Engagement
- Government by Example

Sustainable Energy

- Reduce data center fossil-fuel energy usage
 - Incentivize energy efficiency renovations of data centers
 - Explore/expand green hydrogen as fuel source
- Increase use of solar power
 - Evaluate “solar zoning” to accelerate utility/non-utility scale solar and other renewable energy use
 - Enable solar as appropriate by sector and County region, (initial focus on residential and commercial)
- Reduce energy usage in new/existing buildings
 - Incentivize energy efficiency of existing buildings
 - Promote new development towards net-zero emissions

Natural Resources

- Promote healthy watersheds
 - Expand stream buffers (make them wider)
 - Review status of existing watershed management plans
- Dashboard to track critical environmental indicators
 - Map environmental resources and impairments
- Update land management policies
 - Propose tree ordinance to limit total lot clearing
 - Identify and protect priority wildlife corridors

Environmental Justice

- Identify EJ areas of concern
 - Develop EJ risk maps overlaid with Energy Equity Emphasis Areas
- Promote energy equity with underserved populations
 - For example, low-income assistance w/solar panels, home weatherization and used EV purchases, community solar in non-HOA areas, EV charging in streets and for multi-family housing
- Expand outreach to underserved communities for input on commission goals

Public Engagement

- Conduct Loudoun Environmental Excellence Awards
 - Includes residents, educators, business and non-profits
- Invite broad public input into commission goals
 - Host annual Energy and Environment Public Forum
 - Host roundtables with stakeholders such as HOAs, developers, agricultural community, etc.
- Develop strategic partnerships with targeted groups to further commission goals
 - For example, non-English speaking, over 55 communities, higher education institutions, non-profits

Government by Example

- Develop Loudoun energy plan with specific goals/measurables
 - Annual Loudoun energy report to residents and Board
 - Track County GHG/energy usage in easy-to-follow manner
- Reduce County facility energy usage/environmental footprint
 - Sustainable construction practices in all new County facilities
 - For example, implement automatic “lights off” when rooms are empty, water bottle refill stations, expanded recycling opportunities at County facilities
- Sustainable County landscape management
 - Develop plan for native plants and no invasive plants for all County landscapes
 - Develop nutrient management plans for all County maintained turf

Now What?

- Discuss with EC, prioritize into max of 10 proposals
- Discuss themes with staff in other departments
- Talk to HOAs, Chamber, non-profits
- Staff “fully develops” 10 proposals
- Summit with Board ~ May 2022 for their input and direction on proposals

First Five Proposals

- Expanded options for tree protection
- Define/create wildlife corridors
- Create on-line tool to make environmental data accessible to public
- Evaluate existing WSM plans for possible projects to do joint with HOAs
- Expand solar in residential and in utility scale

Last Five Proposals

- Define Energy Equity, look for areas of opportunity, engage partners and non-profits for ideas
- Conduct feasibility study for possible Loudoun County Green Bank
- Conduct feasibility study for possible Loudoun Community Choice Aggregation
- Develop Energy Strategy for Gov by Example
- Conduct Environmental Awards Program

Must Consider

- FOIA and COIA rules
- In person vs electronic meetings
- Meeting agendas and management
- Public participation
- Handling minutes and presentations
- County website and calendar
- Guest speakers
- Working with other County Departments

Final Thoughts

- “High touch” effort
- Staffing at Department level gives credibility
- Invite broad participation
- Don’t get in front of your Board
- An example of how well government can work!

Contact Information

Marc Aveni Marc.aveni@loudoun.gov

Environmental Commission Webpage

<https://onboard.loudoun.gov/board/3503>

Environment Webpage

<https://www.loudoun.gov/environment>