

Climate Change, Energy, and Environment Commission (C2E2)

Summary of July 25, 2022

Virtual Meeting

Members Present: Joan McIntyre (Chair), Carrie Thompson (Vice Chair), Jonathan Morgenstein, John Bloom, Emily Emery, Joshua Griset, Kevin Vincent, Majdi Shomali, Timothy Effio, Stephen D'Alessio

Members Absent: Mikaila Milton, Shawn Norton, Gilbert Campbell,

Guests: May Baptista, Cindy Lewin, Judy Collins (League of Women's Voters), Conner Pace, Doug Snoeyenbos (Energy Committee), Katherine Roberts, Caroline Haynes, Bernard Berne,

Staff Present: Rebecca Moser (DES), Demetra McBride (DES), Ryan Delaney (DPR), Jennifer Fioretti (DPR), Mike Coletti (campaign volunteer for Adam Theo)

1. Public Comment on General Topics

Judy Collins spoke on behalf of herself. She thanks the Commission for their work and is impressed with the actions of the group. Asked the Commission of their thoughts on carbon capture. The Commission has looked into it, despite its technical nature and industrial-oriented. The Commission does consider the carbon sequestration potential for trees and reducing carbon emissions.

2. Forestry and Natural Resources Master Plan – Ryan Delaney, DPR

Publication of the draft is set for August 1st, which will kick off engagement and comment period starting with the Natural Resources Joint Advisory groups meeting on Monday, August 1st.

Plan Outline:

Introduction

Value of Nature

Vision Statement

Planning Context

Public Realm and Private Property in the FNRP

Natural History of Arlington

Existing Conditions

Racial Equity

Challenges and Opportunities

Strategic Directions: For each strategic direction, the plan will prescribe actions that the County should take to implement the overarching policy goals, and then, finally, each action will be implemented through action steps, which are smaller, more operational tasks to move the policy forward. This structure mirrors that of the Public Spaces Master Plan.

1. Conservation
 - a. Increase and protect tree canopy, natural areas and biophilic features throughout the County.
2. Climate Adaptation & Resilience
 - a. Employ Arlington's natural assets to protect public health and well-being.
3. Biodiversity
 - a. Share vibrant landscapes with people, plants and animals.

4. Operations & Maintenance

- a. Manage organizational resources for maximum return.
- b. Set explicit outcome-oriented performance measures for each maintenance

Broad Actions for each strategic direction.

SD 1: Conservation

- 1.1 – Sustain Arlington’s tree canopy and natural lands
- 1.2 – Expand spaces for trees and natural areas
- 1.3 – Assess and account for all the benefits trees and natural areas provide to Arlington

SD2: Climate Adaptation and Resilience – Attempts to address the inequitable impacts of climate change in Arlington through recommendations that identify neighborhoods with natural resource deficiencies.

- 2.1 – Direct resources to climate-vulnerable hot-spots
- 2.2 – Consider site plan and building requirements that maximize climate protection capacity of trees and green space
- 2.3 – Cultivate and extend Arlingtonian’s commitment to conservation of trees and natural resources

SD3: Biodiversity

- 3.1 – Support healthy ecological communities of native plants and wildlife
- 3.2 – Monitor and manage the threats to ecological health and integrity
- 3.3 – Establish a County-wide natural infrastructure and conservation connectivity network
- 3.4 – Restore and manage water resources with a holistic, ecological approach
- 3.5 – Support the biodiversity that can coexist with humans in the built environment

SD4: Operations

- 4.1 – Set explicit outcome-oriented performance measures for each maintenance activity and schedules for assessing performance
- 4.2 – Continue to develop and review partnerships with independent entities outside the County’s boundaries or its direct control
- 4.3 – Provide a single platform to recruit, train and mobilize natural resource stewardship and forestry volunteers.
- 4.4 – Adopt regular, cyclical maintenance schedules for street trees and natural resources
- 4.5 – Target financial sustainability in support of forestry and natural resource management activities
- 4.6 – Practice and promote environmental responsibility in maintenance operations

The FNRP will be an element of the Comprehensive Plan, rather than a sub-element of the PSMP. This change addresses public input received from the Commissions, but others citing the need to provide recommendations for managing natural resources on private property.

Interdepartmental review of the draft confirmed the scop of the plan warrants status as a separate element.

Engagement Strategy:

1. Online Feedback form available for 8 weeks beginning August 1st 2022 Visiting EnerJag as well.
2. Online Draft for Comment available for 8 weeks
3. Pop-Ups August through September
4. Formal Commission Briefings throughout July and September
5. Community Forum – September – held later to allow time for the public to review the draft. This would be an opportunity for deep dives into specific topics and place to ask questions.

DPR will be sharing summary infographics to orient the public to the plan’s content. Conveyor, a tool for the public to use to digitally provide comments.

Ryan is willing to return to C2E2 in September to give a more detailed briefing of the plan.

Questions:

Rethinking mowing – This is covered in SD3 and SD4. SD3: Tackling this for meadow management, no mow areas, in SD4, diving deeper into what DPR can do with their maintenance practices (i.e. air pollution, noise, etc).

Missing Middle study – How much cross fertilization between DPR and those working on missing middle. There is concern for loss of tree canopy, but MMS doesn't talk about this much. Can some of the answers to this be found in the FNRP? There are a lot of potential win-wins when exploring this. People who need this housing should have access to green space and trees, etc. too. The two documents coming forward reflect such wins and are aligned with each other's goals and priorities.

Jonathan: Are there clearly defined metrics in this plan? Major concern the Commission has with the CEP is the lack of clearly defined metrics.

Answers: A lot of the recommendations in this plan to do things regularly with time-bound metrics. Several recommendations to develop specific and measurable action items. DPR values feedback if metrics aren't clearly defined and if it doesn't hit the mark in terms of metrics. Feedback is requested and valued with the preliminary draft.

Are there metrics for carbon accounting for greenspaces? Certain varieties of grass, trees, soil balances, etc. can sequester carbon better than others. Answer: Ryan to follow up with Joshua on this question. His colleague knows the County's current practices better. The plan is adequately introducing natural capital, and that there are other benefits than shade that tree canopies provide. There are several evaluation mechanisms to deploy. DPR is aware of it, it has shaped their thinking, and hoping to implement the beginning of this conversation with this document as a first step.

Schedule for comments: Public comment period after August 1st through Sunday October 2nd. Working on final draft late fall into the winter. Get it through Board approval early 2023. The dates for this are vague and will depend on the extent of public comment. Not too late in September to receive C2E2s comments.

3. Decarbonization Tool Presentation – Steve Burr (DES)

This presentation was canceled due to an unforeseen event. It is rescheduled for the September 26th meeting.

4. Legislative Letter

The Commission has not received the request from the County Board for C2E2 priorities. The Board probably assumes the priorities will focus on defense of earlier legislation. Encouraging them to work towards building coalitions and setting the stage for when the political situation in Richmond improves.

Unfortunate things happening in Richmond right now, Demetra will brief the group at the end. It is an attempt to get us out of RGGE, de facto.

Most local jurisdictions in VA, including sub-governmental units like AIRE, have not built local alliances. We will try to build this to be more present and aggressive at the State Corporations Commission. Commenting as parties of interest is a stronger approach.

The Commission edited the Legislative Letter and unanimously .

5. Electronics Meeting Policy Adoption

The Commission reviewed the Electronics Meeting Policy. The County Manager has lifted the Emergency Declaration effective August 15th. The September meeting will be the Commission's first hybrid meeting post Covid-19. This meeting will be pushed back to a 7pm start time. Commissioners are required to participate in person. Presenters and staff may participate virtually.

Joan proposed a 6:30pm social hour with light refreshments prior to the meeting so that Commissioners and staff can meet one another.

The Commission unanimously voted to approve the Electronics Meeting Policy.

6. Commission Membership & Reappointments

The Commission has two vacancies and welcomes all candidates for review.

Rebecca: We need to follow a formal process for reappointments so that we have reappointment dates documented and adhere to term limits.

7. Work Plan Updates & Comments

County Board last week adopted the Capital Improvement Plan, which included guidance such as electrification as the default for renovation and new construction goal when feasible. Requires annual reporting in terms of what projects are completed. Tied with Decarbonization Decision Support Tool. Waiting for the release of the job positions for the Office of Climate Coordination and Policy – would like to know more about what this office will be doing. Hoping this is set up in the fall.

Overall, issues related to the County Board have moved the County forward fairly quickly. E.g. established the transition of vehicle fleet to electric. Addressing environment and climate change as a priority.

Tim to have Steve Burr present mid-September to the Energy Committee on the Decarbonization Tool. And again, to C2E2 at the September meeting.

Jonathan requests someone from CMO to speak about the new Climate Office. Requests to get it on the agenda. Question for Demetra: Who is in charge of the hiring/process for this office? Demetra: This discussion and this information is coming out of the County Manager's Office, not the AIRE team. If there are requests about the process, it must go directly to the County Manager's Office.

Upcoming projects.

CEP Implementation – Tim – No updates.

Buildings/SPRC Process – Emily - SPRC tracker in the SPRC folder. Owner for the Xerox building – Emily to take on. Joyce Motors in Clarendon, and the Ballston Holiday Inn in Ballston – Commissioners to pick up these projects. Volunteers: Majdi to partner on Joyce Motors. Tim to work on either Joyce Motors or Holiday Inn.

Crystal Plaza 5 – Joan – JBG Smith building in Crystal City, they are not planning on participating in the Green Building Incentive Policy. They will fall short of any baselines. Joan to follow up.

Ballston/Macy's Project – Majdi – Mixed bag regarding the items C2E2 is requesting. They are planning for: EV charging in the parking garage, all electric building except cooking for the grocery store. Requesting addition to the bonus density, seems outrageous, but looking at other developers, they all are requesting this.

Arlington Career Center – Stephen – no updates. John Bloom attended the last PFRC meeting a few weeks ago. They are planning for an all-electric building.

Solid Waste Master Plan – Carrie – County working to develop this plan, required by the state. Issued zero waste resolution in 2015. SWB pulled together public feedback and further brainstormed key goals for the plan. What they see as the 25 most impactful actions to meet or exceed 90% diversion from landfills or incinerators. Consultants will work on this, in addition to what they believe the impacts of these key actions, in addition to actions that they think will be most impactful. Plan will be approved and go into effect July 2024.

Transportation Commission/EVs – None

Pedestrian Action Group/Advisory Committee – Route 1 presentation from VDOT. Dramatically expanded pedestrian access and consideration of biking and ecological impact. Still Community concern, but have taken in this for the next phase of projects.

Bike Advisory Committee – Majdi – Continuous focus on reducing accidents and focusing on safety for bicyclists.

BioSolids handling at the Water Pollution Control Plant– John Bloom: Moving towards anaerobic digestion, which involves generating waste biomethane, identical to fossil gas, but mostly biogenic in origin and mostly renewable, as scientists define it. A net gain if used to displace fossil gas. Final comments to be submitted Friday July 29th. John requesting comments from Commissioners. Do we want to share comments with the Board or write to the Board? There were no objections to sending comments to staff.

Stormwater Utility – Stephen – Meeting Wednesday this week.

NRJAG – Big focus on Forestry and Natural Resources Master Plan. Will circulate the plan and will raise issues as appropriate.

8. PPA / VPPA / AIRE Updates – Demetra

Policy Related Updates:

- EVSE Rate Ordinance adopted July 16, 2022
- CIP adoption and board guidance July 19, 2022 (re electrification standards for government facilities)
- OSEM working with CPHD for annual zooming amendments (re stormwater facilities, such as vault pump stations).
- Flood Resilient Design & Construction Guidelines Manual – RPF in development and expected release in September 2022.

AIRE/OSEM Representation:

- VEPGA Board – for review and negotiation of Dominion contract
- PJMCCC – representation on both the steering and policy committees
 - Member of sub-committee for direct discussions with PJM, emphasizing local government role, need for competition and ratepayer/constituent needs and priorities.
- European Union International Urban and Regional Collaborative
 - 2022 cohort with Brussels, Barcelona, and Boston, MA.
 - Learning, sharing and an exchange – covers everything from transportation to green infrastructure and land use approached.

Policy – Commonwealth SCC Proceedings

- Community Solar / Minimum Bill – final order issued July 7, 2022 – established a minimum bill of \$55.10 (highest nationally). Major concern about this impacting program participation. Aug1-Oct 1 workshops may not affect this.
- Dominion EE/DSM Plan – post-hearing briefs filed 6/2, hearing examiners report filed 6/24. Recommended that programs be approved but administrative approval process for modification to existing DSM programs be rejected in favor of using gross savings metric. Comments must be entered by August 14.
- Dominion RGGI Rider Suspension – Dominion submitted revised RGGI rider (zoned it out) on 6/15/2022 to be effective July 1.
- Dominion Fuel Recovery Rate Increase – Evidentiary hearing held on 7/6 and 7/7 (transcripts from hearing can be found in the documents list). Note: Jurisdictional customers are amortizing these costs over 3 years, so there will be a giant regulatory asset for DVP where customers will be paying for this years after they used this energy.

Other Benchmarks & Key Events

- Renewable Energy – Government Operations Electricity – First; 100% (by end of 2022 calendar year).
- Zero-Net-Energy Buildings and Schools – First in number of certified buildings
- Green/Sustainable Building Square Footage 2022 – proportionately First
- Electrification of County (non-transit) Fleet – First in region (by 3x to 4x)
- EV Rate Ordinance – Second (Loudoun is First) with rate lower than commercial rate, Dominion rate, or Loudoun rate
- Solar Co-Op (Multi-State with SUN) – First in 3-state region
- Decarbonization Tool – First in Commonwealth

Events: Think Big October 2 – combined EV Drive National Week and Energy Month Event.

- EC and C2E2 to table the event.

9. Meeting Minutes

Meeting ended: **8:36pm**