

## Minutes

### COMMISSION ON THE ENVIRONMENT

January 3, 2007

Commissioner's Conference Room

Government Center

Leonardtown, MD

Members Present: Barne Wheeler; Marta Kelsey, Sandy Neville, Susan Blake, Kurt Engel, Bill Shreve and Sue Veith

Members Absent: Nancy Smith, Frank Allen, Daryl Calvano

I. Call to order: Meeting was called to order at 7:10 p.m., a quorum was present.

II. Review/Approval of Minutes – Not Applicable.

III. Continuing Business:

· Sustainable Building Forum. The Committee discussed remaining tasks to be accomplished:

- o Booths/Exhibitors: A list of the confirmed and yet to be contacted organizations is shown in paragraph 1 below with appropriate comments and responsibilities. Each exhibitor must be queried to determine what specific needs his booth must be provided needs to be done (Susan to accomplish, with assistance if required). The idea of developing a schematic for booth layout was discussed and the group felt this was a good idea (no one assigned responsibility yet).

- o Food: Need to see if the culinary department of the Technology Center could provide food for the event (Barne). If this fell through, need to see if some other organization – Harry Lundberg School or VFD Auxiliary could prepare the food (Barne). Concept of charging commercial exhibitors \$10 to defray food costs was thought to be a good idea. How to collect? Receipts?

- o Agenda: Still no "home builder" speaker confirmed as yet. However, Susan stated that she had a potential contact from the National Association of Home Builders who might be willing to be the speaker. She will attempt to get a POC from Guy Curley. There was discussion of using the Home Builder's time slot as a general question and answer session with all presenters fielding question; however, it was generally agreed that the Home Builder portion of the Agenda was key to satisfying one of the Agenda's key objectives, that of providing homeowners with a list of things they can do now to "green" their homes.

- o Publicity. Getting the Washington Post & Enterprise to cover the Forum was thought to be a good idea. Having the Forum posted on the County's web site needs to be looked into. Opening Comments. Sandy needs the group's help in describing the COE's goals/missions/objectives. It was agreed that this would be the initial topic at the next COE meeting. Results of this would also be put at the COE's booth.

- o Other comments on the Forum are shown in paragraph 2 below.

- Committee Membership and Operation:

- o Sue Veith believes that coming in June '07 the COE will have secretarial help for minute writing, etc.

- o There are now 9 slots for the COE, and one official vacancy (after Kurt's departure following the Forum). However, one member appointed to the COE has never come to any meetings. The group felt that this was not acceptable, and if his position is open, there are two vacancies. The chair for the COE was discussed but no conclusions were reached. Barne stated that Judith Jenkins had declined to accept chairmanship of the Water Policy Task Force, citing other pressing matters.

- o The group agreed to postpone discussion of membership issues until after the Forum.

- IV. New Business:

- COE Roles and Responsibilities: A general discussion of what the role and responsibilities of the Commission should be resulted in the following observations (see also paragraph 3 below):

- o The current purpose of the Commission is: "to promote environmental awareness by research, by information gathering, and by public meetings; to involve citizens through a variety of means to effect improved community understanding; to serve as county government's official representative in matters related to the environment. As such to serve a liaison with federal, state and other local governments and with civic organizations and the general public; and to investigate, to analyze, and to make recommendations on environmental matters as required by the Board of County Commissioners."

- o Barne indicated that he believed that the COE should become more proactive concerning some major issues facing the County, most of which will affect the environment. As an example, he presented a potential list he had compiled from various sources (see enclosure 1). He also thought that the average citizen needed a place her/she could go to express his/her concerns about things affecting the environment and quality of life in the County; and that perhaps the COE could serve in that capacity to some extent. Though no formal vote was taken, there appeared to be general agreement that a proactive COE was desirable. Susan Blake indicated that if we became more active that the COE might have to meet more than once a month.

- o Bill Shreve stated that we should get Commissioner input and guidance on this endeavor in light of the wording above that implies that we require tasking from them. Marta Kelsey indicated that a goals and objectives session should be scheduled so that the group could attempt to reach consensus on what it wants to do. Kurt Engel said that he believe the COE should formulate its preferences before soliciting outside input. The groups agreed that each member of the COE would forward at least 1 Goal to Barne Wheeler who would consolidate before the February meeting.

o Sue Veith and Sandy Neville both indicated that it would good to coordinate with other counties and environmental organizations. Sue said that there used to be a periodic "summit" of environmental agencies, but that this has fallen into disuse. There was general agreement that a coordination scheme was a good idea.

o If the COE does decide to encourage input from county residents, an easy mechanism needs to be created for them to do so. There is apparently an e-mail capability on the county web site, but its effectiveness was unknown. Barne Wheeler said he would try to send a message to the COE and see how it worked.

V. Announcements. The group agreed that an extra meeting might be required in addition to next month's scheduled one.

VI. Adjournment. The meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm.