

**COMMISSION ON THE ENVIRONMENT (COE) MINUTES**  
**Potomac Building**  
**Minutes of February 1, 2012**

COE Members present were Mike Thompson, Barne Wheeler, Steve Tripp, Lawrence Langley & Marta Kelsey. Members absent were Mindy Johnson, Heather Moritz (SMHD), Laura Friess, & Paul DiBenedetto. Others present were Paul Waxman.

- I) Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 7:18 p.m.
- II) Discussion & Approval Meeting Minutes:** The January meeting minutes were approved with edits.
- III) Continuing Business:**
- a. **COE Participation at the Expo – April 21.** The following tentative decisions related to the COE's table and participation at the Expo were made, subject to further review and finalization at next month's meeting:
1. Planting w/seeds, dirt & paper cup – see III) b. below.
  2. Have a mock-up of a composting system – see III) b. below
  3. Handout explaining how children can measure their household's carbon footprint when they get home. Further discussion indicated that the group did not feel that this was a suitable undertaking for the expo.
  4. Info on septic system pollution & septic system grants. Larry Langley will contact the Health Dept. before the next meeting to see if they are going to have a booth at the expo, and if so, if they are going to cover this subject. Further discussion centered around the need to fully explain to the public the science behind enhanced septic system requirements before requiring families to spend large amounts of money to upgrade existing systems. This is particularly true in view of the small amount septic systems contribute to overall Bay pollution. Also, there was a comment made that if the flush tax is raised the public should be told exactly where the new monies collected are going to be spent.
  5. Bay Pollution. It was agreed to have a display showing the contribution various activities made to Bay pollution would be a good thing to show. Larry Langley said he had the charts showing the this for both Nitrogen and Phosphorous and that he would get them out and bring them to the next meeting. Marta Kelsey volunteered to contact the Chesapeake Bay Foundation to see if they had any handouts available explaining how individuals can, themselves, help stop pollution.
  6. Plan MD and/or Watershed Implementation Plan. General thought here is to have current status of both initiatives followed by an explanation of the potential impacts they might have on county residents.
  7. Take pictures of kids with their green idea and posting on screen using computer like last year. Since Larry Hartwick did the entire process last year and he is no longer a COE member, this activity should not be attempted this year.
  8. Solid Waste Recycling. A comment was made that there is no longer a sign at the convenience centers (CC) showing how much money is saved by recycling vs. regular trash disposal. Another comment was made that the traffic patterns at the CC are not conducive to recycling. A third comment was made that a large amount of trash that could be recycled is not. Charles & Calvert counties both have a much more proactive system at their CC's at which the attendants are more engaged in the effort. It was agreed that Larry Langley would contact Richard Tarr to: a) see why the cost savings signs are no longer @ the CC.; b) if DPW&T is going to have a table at the expo and if recycling will be covered. Depending on the answer to b) a decision can be made at the next meeting if recycling should be covered @ the COE booth.
  9. Steve Tripp indicated that he had several display boards of varying sizes at his office locations, that he has been trying to find a good way to dispose of them and that the COE might want one or more. He agreed to report back at the next meeting on the details of the displays where a decision can be made on whether to ask for one (or more).
  10. COE Expo Theme. Agreement that there ought to be a theme for our table. One suggestion was Reducing Waste @ Home; however, there was agreement that that was not broad enough. Further discussion @ the next meeting. Also, final decisions on what to have on hand @ our table to be made @ March meeting.
- b. **COE Participation on Earth Day – April 22.** The following were discussed relative to Earth Day participation.
1. The group agreed that having a planting w/ native plant seeds, dirt & paper cup for children would be a good activity to gain interest at our table. We would like Laura Friess to be in charge of setting up that activity would be good since she made the suggestion
  2. Have a mock up of a composting system – Larry Langley indicated that St. Mary's College has established two composting systems and that he had taken a number of pictures suitable for a display.

The composting system consists of a rotating metal barrel as one system and separate composting bins as the second. He has sufficient photos to establish a display and will be responsible for it.

3. Final decisions on what to have @ our table to be made @ the March meeting.

**c. Other Items Covered.**

1. **Web & Facebook sites.** Steve Tripp still on tap to have a “strawman” web site available for COE review by April.
2. **Current Web Page.** Barne Wheeler will contact Chris Birch to have the greensomd web site calendar have our COE meeting posted each month.
3. **Attendance.** Larry Langley to contact members who have missed more than three successive meetings and establish their intentions.

**IV) New Business:** None

**V) Announcements:** None

**VI) Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.