

COMMISSION ON THE ENVIRONMENT (COE) MINUTES
Potomac Building
Minutes of November 2, 2011

COE Members present were Lawrence Langley (Chair), Mike Thompson, Barne Wheeler, Heather Moritz (SMHD), Marta Kelsey, Steve Tripp and Laura Friess. Memebers absent were Mindy Johnson, Larry Hartwick, Paul DiBenedetto and Jenn Ballard. Others present were Sue Veith (LU&GM) and Paul Waxman.

- I) **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.
- II) **Discussion & Approval Meeting Minutes:** The September meeting minutes were approved.
- III) **Continuing Business:** Heather Moritz will represent the Health Department for the foreseeable future as Daryl Calvano has scheduling conflicts.
 - a. **Presentation by Sue Veith, LU&GM, on the Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP).** At the COE's request, Sue Veith kindly briefed the group on the latest WIP status. The following are points made.
 - 1. **Current Status.** County & State are in phase II of the WIP, which means coming up with initiatives to meet nitrogen loading targets set by EPA in the four major WIP areas: Agriculture, Urban, Septic, Forest and Wastewater. Current WIP efforts focus exclusively on existing infrastructure with no examination of future growth implications.
 - 2. **Timeframe.** November 15 BOCC presentation of deliberations to date. Nov – Jan finalize 2-year milestones. Jan – Jun public review and comment. Oct WIP Ph II to EPA for approval. The State wants to have the loading targets accomplished by 2020 whereas EPA's target is 2025. This is a significant disconnect which must be resolved.
 - 3. **Current Ph II Status/Thoughts.** Focus on existing efforts/initiatives underway or planned. Ramp up where possible. Consider alternate ways to accomplish improvements e.g., storm water management. Improve tracking & reporting system to monitor success of initiatives. New programs will be needed and existing programs (septic system upgrade) will need to ramp up significantly. Funding will be needed, maybe substantially increasing the 'flush tax'.
 - 4. **Nitrogen Loading Gap.** Current plans will still leave a nitrogen loading reduction gap, in some cases substantial e.g., septic system upgrade. How to tackle this gap? Perhaps tradeoffs between categories e.g., between wastewater (exceeds loading target) and septic which does not. Identify mitigation measures providing the biggest bang for the buck e.g., tree planting in urban areas. Consider regional loading tradeoffs.
 - 5. **Sewage System Expansion.** Eleven (11) developments near designated growth areas and now using septic systems have been identified for possible connection to somewhat nearby sewer lines/systems. Total homes affected approximated 5000.
 - 6. **Comprehensive Water & Sewer Plan (CWSP) Updates.** WIP will impact on the CWSP. Now there are differences between State & County minimum requirements where the County's are stricter. There are those in the county that desire to eliminate these differences by insuring state & county requirements are the same. Package treatment plants, present in other states that are designed to service small communities/developments are not permitted in MD.
 - 7. **Plan MD.** Has an urban focus and forces a 'one size fits all' mentality that the county opposes.
 - 8. **EPA Modeling Errors.** There are known problems with the science behind parts of the EPA's model used to forecast nitrogen loading in one of more of the four areas cited in par. a.1. above. One in particular involves the lack of defined science in nitrogen reaching the Bay from septic systems. As a result, loading appears to be based on broad assumptions that may not apply universally to all systems/localities/counties/states.
 - 9. **COE Involvement.** Stay tuned and be prepared to become aggressively engaged if it looks like the environment is being compromised by planners/decision makers
 - b. **Other Items Covered.**
 - 1. **Web Site.** Two people are capable of posting to the site. Ms. Moritz will prepare something about grant money available for septic system upgrade for posting on the site, possibly by the Dec meeting.
 - 2. **Facebook.** No action. Larry Langley provided Steve Trip with Caroline Kings contact info so he can start work on COE facebook improvements.
 - 3. **COE Event Display.** Larry Langley has materials for a new COE display for events. He will update.
 - 4. **Next Expo.** Combined Plumbing Board/COE Expo is scheduled for March. Decided to invite Jada Stuckert to our Dec meeting to start the planning process.

5. **Drug Disposal.** The Sheriffs Office will take excess medicinal drugs, no questions. You have to deliver, but better that putting them down the toilet.
6. **Earth Day.** Ideas for the COE booth: SS upgrade grant \$\$, 100 way to use vinegar, SMECO energy efficiency displays, WIP information.
7. **Meeting Attendance.** Don't forget to record your name when you attend COE meetings, as the minutes will be used to check By Law attendance requirements.

IV) **New Business:** None

V) **Announcements:** None

VI) **Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.