

COMMISSION ON THE ENVIRONMENT MINUTES
Potomac Building
Minutes of December 1, 2010

COE Members present were Barne Wheeler, Chairman; Marta Kelsey, Daryl Calvano, Larry Hartwick, Caroline King, Bill Shreve, Mike Thompson, Mike Guy, and Sandy Neville and Xavier Prines. Others present were Paul Waxman.

I) **Call to Order:** Mr. Wheeler called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

II) **Discussion & Approval of November Meeting Minutes:** A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of September 1, 2010 as amended.

Mr. Wheeler asked if Mr. Prines would be resigning from the Commission. Mr. Prines stated he would in fact be resigning and this would be his last official meeting with the Commission. Mr. Wheeler asked that Mr. Prines submit a letter of resignation to Ms. Cannavo in the County Administrator's Office. The Commission discussed possible recommendations for filling Mr. Prines position.

III) **Continuing Business:**

a. Review of October Joint Plumbing/Gas Board & COE Expo

Mr. Wheeler asked for general comments on the Expo and asked that the members review the draft letter to be sent to Ms. Stuckert. Mr. Wheeler stated Ms. Stuckert has provided the Committee with a copy of her report. Ms. Neville stated she felt the time of year was bad, explaining that it was Columbus Day weekend which coincided with Patuxent River Association Days. Ms. King stated the amount of attendees was significantly smaller than in years past. Ms. Kelsey stated she feels holding the event in February or March is a better time of year. Mr. Calvano stated after attending the November Plumbing and Fuel Gas Board meeting he can say that they feel the same way. Mr. Calvano stated late winter early spring seems to be a better time to hold the event.

Mr. Wheeler asked if this event should be held every year. Ms. Kelsey stated she thinks so. Mr. Calvano pointed out that if this even is going to be held annually we would have to skip 2011 and hold the next event in 2012 simply because of the timing of this year's event. Ms. Neville stated Calvert and Charles County are both holding similar events and recommended teaming up with them for a joint event. Mr. Prines suggested coordinating schedules to make sure there's no conflict. Mr. Calvano recommended holding the annual event and every two or three years doing a tri-county event. Mr. Prines suggested holding the event in conjunction with another big event such as Patuxent River Association Days, or River Fest. He also suggested that we contact a number of firms who normally have booths at the event or donate prizes to see if they would like to make presentations during the Expo.

Mr. Guy recommended having smaller booths set up at events like the County Fair and the Oyster Festival rather than holding our own event every year. Ms. Neville stated the catering bill was outrageous this year and the food was not good. Ms. Neville stated she is unsure of the final amount and asked if Mr. Wheeler would ask Ms. Stuckert. Mr. Waxman stated the SWAC booth did not get much attention at the County Fair. Mr. Wheeler agreed stating that in past years when the COE has attended Earth Day the COE booth has not been well attended.

b. Use of Face Book

Ms. King recommended having the Face Book account linked to the somd webpage. Ms. King stated she feels Face Book could be more interactive. Mr. Guy stated Face Book can be used to post updates on our upcoming events, post pictures and/or videos, etc. Mr. Wheeler asked if Face Book could be used for surveys and/or gathering information on the quality of life in St. Mary's County. Ms. Neville recommended doing a "question of the week" on Face Book. Ms. King stated she could post a question just to see how well this is all going to work.

c. Green Building Update

Ms. Neville stated the U.S. Green Building Council –Southern MD Branch is having a strategic planning work session on January 12, 2011 from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. Ms. Neville stated hopefully we will have people attend who are in the same predicament as we are with the exposition. Ms. Neville stated she feels this is the beginning of what will be huge in green building within the tri-county area. Ms. King agreed stating we should focus on getting vendors that sell green building products rather than individual groups like the Riverkeepers.

Ms. Neville stated she has volunteered to attend the Sustainable Maryland bi-monthly meetings and would be willing to bring back any valuable information.

d. Update on Board of Appeals Rulings

Mr. Wheeler stated he feels the Board of Appeals allowed the applicants to do what they wanted to do within the context of proper stewardship for the environment in three out of the four cases. Mr. Wheeler stated the fourth case seems to be a case where the applicant did whatever they wanted to do without obtaining the proper permits however this case has not come to fruition yet. Mr. Wheeler stated he feels the guidance being given to the Board of Appeals tries to preserve the homeowner's rights within the context of consciousness of what's going on in the environment, specifically the Critical Area. Mr. Wheeler proposed that Ms. Ballard continue monitoring the Board of Appeals decisions and keeping the COE informed at our monthly meeting.

Ms. Kelsey asked what information is needed to ensure a property owner is going through the right process and obtaining the proper permits. Mr. Wheeler stated all you need is the address of the property, then call the Department of Land Use and Growth Management.

IV) New Business:

- a. **Code for Sizing of A/C Units & Duct Work** – Postponed to the next meeting
- b. **Possible Study Areas** – Postponed to the next meeting

V) Announcements

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

VI) Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.