

**Environment and Energy Conservation Commission**  
Draft

Summary of April 25, 2016 Meeting  
2100 Clarendon Blvd, Azalea Conference Room

Members Present: Scott Dicke, Greg Miller, John Seymour, Sarah Meservey, Christine Ng, Gabriel Thoumi, Irwin Kim, Mike Hanna, Patrick Kenney, Kari Klaus, Noor Khalidi, Alex Sanders

Members Absent: Claire O'Dea

Guests:

Staff Present: Adam Segel-Moss (DES), Joan Kelsch (DES), Rich Dooley (DES)

**1. Public comment**

No public comment

**2. EA process revision**

Joan Kelsch and Rich Dooley presented to the Commission on the EA process revision. Joan Kelsch provided an update on the history of the EA.

Rich provided an update on the process being proposed to review and revise the current EA process. Rich detailed issues with the process that staff has heard regarding process, the need to streamline, definition of terms, timing of EAs, and elements that are not currently included (e.g. Dark Sky lighting and energy use). Rich noted that the ultimate goal is to get better projects, not necessarily a completed checklist. This may require a complete overhaul rather than tweaks.

The proposed process would include stakeholder group meetings to find the interests of each stakeholder group. Stakeholders include but are not limited to:

- County Staff
- Environment and Energy Conservation Commission
- Arlington Public Schools
- Community Planning Housing and Development
- Department of Environmental Services
- Parks and Recreation Department
- Civic Federation

Rich gave a framework for creating a new process. He noted that the DES Director is currently reviewing this process at the same time as the Commission.

Scott noted that the Commission established a 4.4 subcommittee for the EA process. The subcommittee has been spearheading process revisions in concert with staff. He asked the subcommittee members to provide comments on the proposed process.

Christine noted that starting at a 30,000 foot view is helpful to review the process. She noted that the Commission has been working to incrementally change the process. This could be a good way to come to a whole new process. Christine noted that the inclusion of

APS, Parks, and Parks staff project managers is a crucial point. She emphasized the importance of making sure that actual staff users are engaged in a process.

Gabriel suggested including CEPIRG and VDEQ as additional stakeholders. Scott also suggested Urban Forestry Commission and NRJAG as stakeholders.

Greg Miller noted the importance of keeping environmental justice issues in mind as this is revised. He noted that the MWCOG ACPAC is thinking about creating an EJ package for communities. Gabriel is part of ACPAC and will keep E2C2 and County staff apprised of any of those developments.

Scott asked that the process capture projects where environmental impacts are most significant. E2C2 has sensed that projects have slipped through the cracks and did not go through an EA process when an EA should have been conducted. A sense of trust needs to be built between the County and the public/E2C2 to show that projects that deserve an EA get an EA. He also articulated that the EA process should be manageable for everyone involved.

Scott noted that E2C2 has adapted by participating in as many project meetings as possible in order to inject themselves into the project development process, especially early on. While that has been effective, it is time-consuming and not sustainable long-term. Projects will always need an environmental advocate early in the process to recognize the environmental issues.

Joan Kelsch noted that timing depends on the intent and purpose of the EA. Joan also noted that most of the Board is new and doesn't necessarily know to ask about the EA.

Greg asked if the new process could address some of the issues of timing and create a standardized process for projects. Hopefully that could reduce the amount of work that the Commission has to do because it is baked into the process.

Alex noted that no matter what, it's always best to have Commission members at meetings to represent E2C2 issues. There is no way to replicate a person looking at project details and giving feedback. Joan suggested that one solution for that could be to increase the number of E2C2 members.

Staff thanked the Commission for their input. Staff will continue to finalize the details to revise the EA process.

### **3. White Papers, and the role of E2C2**

The Commission's Lighting Position Paper was circulated and discussed. The Paper is expected to be a living document that would help articulate the Commission's position for current and future projects and inform others. The letter includes a focus on light pollution mitigation and the importance of maximizing environmental benefits. The Commission is exploring principles documents, guidance, documents, and how they can or should be used.

Christine thinks the White Paper label may be too clinical for engagement with others. Alex noted concerns about three completely different audiences: the public, the Board, and staff. He feels that it would be very difficult to effectively address each audience with targeting information. He expressed that it is the Commission's job to explain issues without footnoting other documents. Alex also feels that once these are released to the public, they will need to be updated every couple of years.

The Commission agreed to get clarity from Hope Halleck on these kind of documents. Specific questions include:

- Can the E2C2 develop internal documents for training/reference? How would sunshine laws apply to these?
- Is E2C2 allowed to selectively circulate such documents outside the commission to people related to a specific issue area?
- Is E2C2 allowed to post these documents on our website alongside minutes?
- Can E2C2 reference these documents in working group participation or in letters to the board?
- What is E2C2 we allowed to call these documents?
- What exactly are the boundaries/scope of E2C2's work and engagement with the public?

A response will be provided to staff.

#### **4. Meeting Summary Review – February 2016**

Gabriel made a motion to accept. Approved unanimously.

#### **5. Old/New Business**

Greg reached out to Larry Marcus and Santosh about the lighting process and when it will be starting. From their presentation, it seems that they should be well along the way. No response was given from either of them.

John Seymour noted that the Williamsburg EA has been postponed until Fall. The entire working group is going to be on hiatus for the next few months while the staff looks into some of the questions around the project.

Noor Khalidi noted that the year round yard waste collection has been in place for about a month. They have started collecting data. Every house received an organics collection bin. There was a boom when collection began, but staff expects that to level off as summer arrives.