

**Environment and Energy Conservation Commission**  
Draft

Summary of March 25, 2019 Meeting  
2100 Clarendon Blvd, Azalea Conference Room

Members Present: Mike Hanna, Claire O’Dea, John Bloom, Sarah Meservey, Charles Girard, Carol Rakatansky, Colleen Orr, Kimberly Fedinatz, Jessica Skerritt, Teresa Leonardo

Members Absent: Mike Mesmer, Xuan Nguyen, Gabriel Thoumi,

Guests: Connie Ericson, Bernie Berne, Shawn Norton, Jonathan Morgenstein

Staff Present: Adam Segel-Moss (DES), Greg Emanuel (DES), Demetra McBride (DES), John Morrill (DES), Rich Dooley (DES)

**1. Public Comment**

Connie Ericson provided public comment on behalf of Audubon Northern Virginia. She noted that the Bike Element is moving forward. She expressed concern about trail lighting within the Bike Element. Ms. Ericson also recommended strongly that the list of priorities in the Bike Element be amended such that natural resources protection be elevated to a higher level, first priority.

Bernie Berne provided public comment on Benjamin Banneker Park EA as well as the Bike Element. He noted that the Banneker Park EA is woefully deficient. He feels that the impervious areas has not been clearly disclosed. He also feels that widening of the trail is excessive and creates unsafe conditions. Moving to 12 feet is not necessary from his perspective.

The Bicycle Element, he noted, did remove the one trail that many objected to. Mr. Berne noted that widening trails is not in alignment with the ASHTO standards where trails should be narrow to limit speed. He also asked that the Bike Element be amended to limit mowing around the paths to 3 feet.

**2. Budget Update – Greg Emanuel**

Greg Emanuel provided an update on the budget and thanked the Commission for their recent comments through John Bloom. Greg detailed where funds are going in in the Manager’s budget and the issues that the Board is evaluating. He noted that this is a work in progress and will be in flux until the final Board budget vote occurs.

Greg understands that there are ongoing concerns about funding and staffing. There was a base budget drafted. The Board advertised a high tax rate to give them

flexibility to balance priorities based on community input and more clear revenue projections.

The Commission asked what the ongoing investment will be in energy efficiency. Greg noted that the updated Community Energy Plan (CEP) will help inform that discussion but more so in future budgets.

Greg noted that the Rethink Energy (AIRE) budget is currently at \$1.6 million. He noted that this is \$100k lower than the previous budget year since one-time CEP funding was allocated last year. That said, he noted that there is new additional \$125K in PAYGO funding in DES Facilities. They work in conjunction with AIRE staff to update County facilities.

Claire noted that a couple years ago, there was more money in AIRE to pay for projects around the County. That was taken out of the AIRE and dispersed elsewhere. Greg responded and agreed that it is indeed the case. He also noted that staff are working on numerous ways to achieve CEP targets. He noted that the greatest assets to implement energy efficiency are the AIRE staff.

Greg noted that the actual tracking of where funds are going and how savings are calculated is difficult. As an example, the Solid Waste facility is under design for renovation. This is where the AIRE program is integrated into County operations. Air leak testing of the facility uncovered enormous gaps and leaks in the facility. Through the success of the AIRE program, corrective action is being taken that would not have otherwise happened. This kind of commissioning and building envelope testing result in holistic renovations with more efficient County facilities.

Greg noted that Jessica Abralind and Joan Kelsch have been working hard over the past year to update Arlington's Facility Sustainability Policy which has been embraced by all departments and will set the model for sustainable construction for County government buildings. Greg reiterated that AIRE's work has been integrated throughout the County.

The Commission noted that AIRE staff are fantastic, but that they need more tools and resources to do their work.

John Bloom said the main point of the testimony, that for years now, E2C2 has been concerned about the move away from dedicated residential utility tax funding. The public was sold on an energy tax, one of the nation's first carbon taxes, where energy is taxed specifically for energy efficiency programs. That was the first request in the budget testimony. John B. emphasized that while previous budgets have impacted AIRE, this is the first year it is being moved completely into the general fund.

Mike Hanna noted that there is a Stormwater utility tax. What if the County said, that Parks does stormwater, Schools and others do stormwater, and that stormwater utility tax funding can go elsewhere. Mike noted that it doesn't feel transparent to

have passed the utility tax predicated on funding for AIRE then swap where it is directed. The funds have been increased and redirected without any evidence that the RUT funds are creating new energy efficiency projects that wouldn't have been funded otherwise.

John Bloom noted that there seems to be a bit of a false dichotomy. John added that as the Board was debating this, and last year too, it isn't enough to redirect utility tax funding with the hope that other departments implement energy efficiency. It's great that EE is better understood now, but there is a critical role that AIRE needs to fill in order to implement the CEP.

Charles asked if Schools and Affordable Housing can be required to commit to energy efficiency efforts with the new funding. Greg noted that following the money is the tough part. Once money is sent to Schools or Affordable Housing, the County has little or no control. It goes without strings because the APS Board gets to make its own budget decisions.

Greg noted the he feels the AIRE team is staffed at a level where they can be on the leading edge but not bleeding edge. Greg believes that this is where the Board wants to be.

John Bloom noted that this is the year that finalizes the elimination of the dedication of the residential utility tax for AIRE. Greg agreed to look into this but noted that AIRE is essentially getting the same funding as the prior year with the exception of the one-time funding.

Mike Hanna noted that the Commission would like to see that funding rededicated to AIRE. There may be other ways to distribute funds, but only if it is energy-related and creates new projects that wouldn't have otherwise been funded.

Mike H. asked if Greg would talk about the Solid Waste planner. Kimi detailed what the planner could be doing. Greg noted that zero waste wasn't proposed this year but that staff haven't given up. Greg noted that there is still a strong enough staff to draft a zero-waste plan. The multifamily solid waste program may be impacted due to reduced staffing. The single-family solid waste program may be impacted as well. Kimi asked why not freeze instead of eliminating the position? Greg noted that permanent decisions are more useful for planning purposes.

Greg again thanked the Commission for their input and engagement on the budget process. He detailed next steps and asked that they remain connected to the process to express their sentiments as they see fit.

### **3. Budget Letter Review**

The Commission discussed the draft Budget letter and approved it unanimously as amended.

**4. Bike Element Letter Review**

The Commission discussed the draft Bike Element letter and approved it unanimously as amended.

**5. Benjamin Banneker Park EA Letter Review**

The Commission discussed the draft Benjamin Banneker Park EA letter and approved it unanimously as amended.

**6. Meeting Summary Review – February**

Approved unanimously.

**7. Old / New Business**

Claire thanked everyone for support and input on POPS. She noted that the Request to Advertise is out for the POPS plan. Everything looks like it is on track.

Colleen noted that she is attending Urban Forestry meetings. She noted that mountain biking came up as an issue lately. Advocates are pushing for mountain bike trails in Arlington.

John Bloom noted that Cathy Lin, Energy Manager for APS, presented at the Energy Committee meeting. Dominion Power will be presenting at the next Energy Committee meeting about EVs and possible partnerships.

Sarah noted that the Old Dominion and 26<sup>th</sup> street task force is voting on options with the process coming to a close. There is discussion about moving some operations underground at the site but that would come at substantial cost.

Kimberly reported on the Solid Waste Committee. She noted that multifamily and commercial recycling rates are both up. ECARE is coming up on May 4<sup>th</sup>. Food scraps may be brought to Solid Waste at the Trades or at Farmers Markets for composting. Also, a draft memo for zero waste has been delivered to the County Manager for consideration and review.