

CEQ Meeting Minutes 4/27/2022

Meeting was held online, with much appreciated support by Brian Lindley of EPS for coordinating Webex.

7:00 Welcome by Dr. Brian Fath, Chair

7:05 Tony Bridges, Executive Director of Blue Water Baltimore (BWB), was present to introduce the topic of ongoing problem of water pollution involving two water treatment plants where Baltimore County sends our sewage. Alice Volpitta from BWB gave a presentation updating on current situation. BWB is currently in litigation over permit violations at Back River wastewater treatment plant. A public health advisory was issued for the area and the MDE website has up-to date information about the situation: <https://mde.maryland.gov/programs/water/Compliance/Pages/Back-River-WWTP.aspx>

BWBW is conducting weekly routine bacterium monitoring along with the Back River Restoration Committee and have looked at 49 sites in Patapsco. Their testing facility is tier 3 certified. There is also a question about the current condition inside the plant.

Legal update: Federal Clean Water Act case against Baltimore City is proceeding. There is a petition for judicial review. Over 1900 citizen letters have been sent to draw attention of lawmakers to the problem. A challenge is that interjurisdictional cooperation is needed as many counties and Baltimore City all rely on Back Water River plant.

BWB plays role of advocacy with city, state, and federal funding and from Bay Restoration Fund.

7:35 Opportunity for discussion.

The discussion involved several questions about the sampling and testing, and the dissent decree to bring them into compliance.

Joan Plisko asked about a role for CEQ in this issue, which led to three suggestions:

1. more surface water bacteria monitoring is needed
2. data sharing
3. multiple different types of stakeholders and recommendation of a BWB convener.

We will continue to follow the issue and stay in contact with BWB about updates as this problem.

7:50 Brian Fath gave an overview of the report on Forest Conservation in Baltimore County: Challenges and Opportunities. The report was nearly finished and looking for final feedback. CEQ will include points directly related to the resolution and also more broadly about forest health in the county. The report, with appendices is quite long so it will be kept as separate files. An accompanying cover letter will explain the rationale and parts.

8:25 Brief update was given on the Go Ape! adventure park zipline and ropes course under consideration for Oregon Ridge Park. No new information was available but a public online presentation by Go Ape! is scheduled for May 12.

8:35 CEQ business

March minutes were approved.

A plan for approving the FCA report was adopted. A final version was being compiled by Carol Newill, Lynda Eisenberg, and Brian Fath. Once complete will be sent to CEQ for review and comment, followed by an electronic vote. The goal is to have it passed and presented to Baltimore County Council by May 1, 2022.

End-of-year outdoor supper for CEQ on 5/22 at 6 pm at home of Dr. Newill was discussed and RSVP requested.

8:40 Adjourn

Remaining 2022 meetings: 5/25, 9/28, 10/26, 11/30.

Attendees

CEQ: Valerie Androutsopoulos, Brian Bernstein, Brian Fath, Justin Gallardo, Lois Jacobs, Steve Malan, Mahnaz Mazaheri Assadi, Joan Plisko, Karen Wynn

County Liaisons: Brian Lindley, Radu Zamfirach

Invited Speakers: Tony Bridges, Alice Volpitta

Guests: Meghan Bennett, Kevin Brittingham, Tom Krispin, Brady Locher, Marsha Mclaughlin, Michael Ruby, D'Andrea Walker