



**ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION**  
INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

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**TO:** Board of County Commissioners  
**VIA:** Julian M. Willis, County Administrator  
**VIA:** Mary Beth Cook, Director, Department of Planning & Zoning  
**VIA:** Carolyn Sunderland, Deputy Director of Planning  
**VIA:** DeCarlo Brown, Planner III - Environmental Planner / Environmental Commission Liaison  
**FROM:** Jim Levin, Chair, Environmental Commission *AL*  
**DATE:** January 25, 2021  
**SUBJECT:** 2020 Annual Report from the Calvert County Environmental Commission

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**Background:**

The Calvert County Environmental Commission (EC) was created and its mission defined by Resolution No. 11-75, adopted March 18, 1975; Resolution No. 20-77, adopted September 27, 1977; Resolution No. 19-78, adopted July 11, 1978; and Resolution No. 40-07, adopted September 25, 2007. These Resolutions were repealed and replaced with Resolution No. 16-18, adopted April 17, 2018.

The EC is an advisory committee charged to make recommendations, after thorough study and deliberation, to the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) on matters pertaining to the environment of Calvert County. The EC's arena of activities includes, but is not limited to, water resources, biodiversity, sustainability, aesthetic impacts, socio-economic impacts, and the general health and welfare of county residents. The EC's mission also includes public education and outreach.

**Discussion:**

In this year of the COVID-19 pandemic, the EC met in person in January and February of 2020, cancelled our March and April meetings, and held monthly meetings in May through December virtually. Because of numerous cancellations, we participated in only one public education/outreach event. The EC continued to promote the Pump-for-the-Bay contest, hosted seven guest speakers, provided comments and recommendations to Planning & Zoning staff, and produced three new lists of frequently-asked questions (FAQs) that were posted on the EC's website to educate the public on several environmental topics. The EC also began work on several new initiatives: plans for a campaign to increase public awareness about the health risks of exposure to indoor radon gas, investigations of methods to develop a greenhouse gas inventory for the County, and a compilation of environmental sustainability and management elements. See Attachment for details.

**Fiscal Impact:**

Budget: \$6455.00

Expenditures: \$5323.50 YTD

**Conclusion/Recommendation:**

Continue to support the Calvert County Environmental Commission

**Attachment:**

2020 Accomplishments, 2021 Goals, Important Environmental Issues, and 2020 Attendance Record

## Attachment

### **2020 Annual Report from the Calvert County Environmental Commission to the Board of County Commissioners**

#### 2020 Accomplishments:

- Studied environmental issues relevant to Calvert County by continuing a Guest Speaker program that featured seven speakers who educated EC members (and interested members of the public) on Southern Maryland Sierra Club activities, managed aquifer recharge, solar power development and electric vehicle infrastructure in southern Maryland, environmental law in mitigation, graywater reuse regulations in Maryland, Maryland Department of the Environment's environmental sustainability programs, and climate planning in the Washington-Metropolitan region.
- Prepared lists of frequently-asked question and answers (FAQs) on Timber Harvests, Injured Wildlife, and Land Resources and posted these FAQs on the EC's website to educate County residents.
- Educated and interacted with the public at the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Science and Energy Expo hosted by Calvert County Public Schools.
- Continued the Pump-for-the-Bay contest that encourages County residents to regularly pump-out their septic systems and upgrade to more efficient nitrogen-removal systems to reduce nutrients that seep into the groundwater and enter the Patuxent River and the Chesapeake Bay. The EC awarded prizes to 6 of the 15 entrants in the 2019 contest.
- Responded to a request from Planning & Zoning staff and prepared a report and recommendations on "Guidelines for Protecting Streams in Urbanizing Landscapes".
- Submitted comments on the draft Nuisance Flooding Plan report to Planning & Zoning staff.
- Investigated the severity and extent of the indoor radon gas problem in Calvert County homes.
- Submitted a proposal to Planning & Zoning for a Radon Awareness Campaign to educate County residents about the health risks of exposure to indoor radon gas. encourage them to measure radon levels in their homes, and take mitigative action, if necessary, to reduce radon to safe levels.
- Investigated methods available to measure and monitor greenhouse gas emissions.
- Recommended to Planning & Zoning that the County become a member of ICLEI to obtain their protocols and technical support so the EC can take the lead on conducting a greenhouse gas inventory for Calvert County.
- Developed the framework for a matrix of environmental sustainability and management elements to help guide EC initiatives and recommendations to the BOCC.

- Said 'good-bye' and 'thank-you' to outgoing EC members Craig Simmons, Chris Roettgen, Shelby Cross, Patricia Long-Bradley, and Jane Dodds. Said 'hello' and 'welcome' to new EC members Andrew Rogers, Amanda Knobloch, and David Hardy.

#### 2021 Goals:

- Schedule six Guest Speakers for educational presentations at EC monthly meetings.
- Increase County-resident participation in the Pump-for-the-Bay contest.
- Launch the Radon Awareness Campaign featuring a radon test kit give-away program and seek funding to expand the Campaign to also include a Lower Your Radon Level contest.
- Review, comment, and submit recommendations on draft Zoning Ordinance rewrites and Town Center Master Plan updates.
- Respond to requests from the BOCC, Planning Commission, and Planning & Zoning staff for comments, advice, and recommendations.
- Participate in face-to-face public education and outreach events, if any such events are held in 2021.
- Utilize the environmental sustainability and management matrix to formulate specific recommendations to Calvert County government agencies for improving or extending environmental management efforts as well as identify tasks the EC can pursue to better support environmental and sustainability efforts in the County.
- If approvals are granted, help compile the data needed to conduct a greenhouse gas inventory for Calvert County.
- Prepare educational materials on plastics: including plastic pollution, recycling, bioplastics, and the growing disposal problem associated with the increased use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs) due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Complete a new FAQ on Native and Non-Native Plants and post it on the EC's website.
- Seek and encourage qualified candidates to apply for appointment to the EC to achieve the full complement of 11 members.

#### Environmental Issues Deemed Important by the Environmental Commission

- Growth and sustainable development decisions, including updates to the Town Center Master Plans, should be consistent with and embrace the Goal and Visions that focus on the natural environment and are clearly laid out in the new Comprehensive Plan adopted by the BOCC in August 2019. Using language that appears in the Comprehensive Plan, land use decisions should "*preserve the*

*natural, cultural, and historic assets of Calvert County” to ensure that “our landscape is dominated by forests and fields.” Land use decisions should also ensure that “our wetlands, streams, and forests and the Chesapeake and Patuxent support thriving plant and animal communities.”*

- Because the southern Maryland region is receiving more frequent intense storms, existing stormwater management facilities in the County should be regularly inspected and, if necessary, upgraded to render them more effective in managing stormwater runoff to achieve zero adverse impacts to the environment.
- Current stormwater management practices should be improved to better handle intense storms, have enhanced capability to minimize sediment erosion from construction projects, and protect County waterways.
- To support more effective stormwater management actions, maintain wildlife habitats, protect stream ecosystems, and also sequester carbon, clearing forests in the County should be discouraged/prevented and planting trees should be encouraged/incentivized.

Monthly Meeting Attendance Records for 2020 (enclosed)

