



CALVERT COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

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Calvert County Environmental Commission July 31, 2023 Minutes

Attendance: Dr. Dave Campbell (Chair), Dave Hardy (Vice Chair), Kevin Britt, Jim Levin, Jo Anna Lutmerding, Roman Matatov, Dr. Andy Rogers. Staff: Amalia Pleake-Tamm

Public: Dr. Mark Southerland (Safe Skies Maryland), Molly Moore (So. MD Audubon Society), Ron Klauda (Friends of Hunting Creek), Stacy Hutchinson (Chesapeake Biological Lab), Bob Estes (Friends of Hunting Creek), Sheila Stevens (Calvert County Public Schools), Molly Boron (St. Mary's County Commission on the Environment), Lilia (Cove Point Natural Heritage Trust), one anonymous member of the public.

- I. Call to Order at 6:02pm**
- II. Agenda for July 31, 2023:** The Environmental Commission unanimously approved the agenda.
- III. Approval of Minutes from [June 26, 2023](#):** Mr. Levin moved to approve, Dr. Rogers seconded, Dr. Rogers then abstained from voting; all other Commissioners voted to approve the Minutes and the motion passed.
- IV. Guest Speaker:** Dr. Mark Southerland ([Safe Skies Maryland](#)) spoke about bird-safe building initiatives. Building collisions have killed roughly a billion birds in the United States since 1970. Birds don't recognize windows as solid objects—they either think they can fly through them to what they see on the other side, or they see the bright sky reflected in windows. Birds are most vulnerable when taking off or landing, so the first 100 feet are the most dangerous elevations of windows. Bird collisions affect all birds, healthy or ill, young or old, however, long-range neotropical migratory birds are hardest hit.

To reduce bird collisions, survey your building for collision hotspots. Turn off interior lights at night so birds don't think they can fly inside. This is particularly important during spring and fall migratory seasons. Buildings can use bird-safe glass (etched or dotted with ceramic dots) (may be 10-25% more expensive than standard windows). Existing windows may be retrofitted with decal dots or line, or hang cords outside of windows. Retrofitting costs depend on accessing the windows (decals must be placed on exterior). The visible obstructions should be every 2x4 inches (or 2x2 inches for hummingbirds). (The Univ. of MD Chesapeake Biological Laboratory will be using some of these strategies in a new building slated to break ground this fall in Solomons.) Mr. Hardy mentioned later in the meeting that Calvert Pines Senior Center has taken steps to lessen bird collisions.

Maryland HB6 ("Maryland Sustainable Buildings") includes energy conserving standards provides for all new and substantially renovated buildings with 51% state funding to meet bird-safe standards per LEED Innovation Credit for Bird Collision Deterrence and ABC guidelines (schools are excluded). "Substantially renovated" refers to more than half of the façade being renovated. Ms. Lutmerding mentioned that bird-safe windows may help school safety as it can make it more difficult for outsiders to see into windows.

Dr. Southerland also mentioned that MD now prevents homeowner associations from forbidding environmental landscaping as long as they're maintained. ("Low Impact Landscape").
- V. Bird-relevant Code:** Ms. Lutmerding will draft up bird-safe building recommendations to be included for public comment on the Zoning Ordinance rewrite.

Maryland Relay for Impaired Hearing or Speech: 1-800-735-2258

1. The date, time, and location of any Environmental Commission meeting may be revised by announcement of an emergency, such as inclement weather, without further publication and may be confirmed on the County website or calling 410-535-1600 ext. 2727 on the date of the meeting.
2. Public comments during Environmental Commission Work Sessions are at the discretion of the Chairperson.
3. There may be a five-minute break at 7:00 p.m. at the discretion of the Chairperson.
4. A decision will be made at 8:00 p.m. whether to continue the meeting or reschedule.
5. Accommodations for persons with disabilities will be made with reasonable notice.
6. The Environmental Commission operates under *Robert's Rules*.

- VI. Budget:**
- a. Magnet purchase order: Mr. Britt shared an updated design. Ms. Pleake-Tamm will send it to Comm. & Media Relations before sending it to the vendor. Mr. Levin recommended sharing these magnets with local vendors.
- VII. Strategic Initiatives Update**
- a. Water Quality Initiative: Mr. Britt is reaching out to UMD Extension Service to arrange for a rain barrel workshop
 - b. Radon: Mr. Levin moved to request another radon proclamation in January, Ms. Lutmerding seconded, the motion passed unanimously.
 - c. Pump for the Bay: 10 entries received.
- VIII. Subcommittee Reports**
- a. FAQ revisions are taking a longer time as they're being reviewed by several Env. Commissioners and County staff. Mr. Levin will resend FAQ-revision excel spreadsheet listing the published FAQs along with the FAQ subcommittee members assigned to reviewing and reformatting each one. Once revisions are completed and approved, the County will produce a poster with QR codes that will link to each Environmental FAQ. Dr. Campbell suggested a smaller version to put on a handout or a postcard.

The FAQs should be no more than 2–3 pages; include how the information is relevant to Calvert County residents; and be designed for residents to get a quick answer to environmental questions, with links for people wanting to do a deeper dive into the research. Dead weblinks should be removed.

Dr. Campbell will look into the suggested frequency to test for radon. Mr. Matatov shared that some monitors continuously measure radon, VOCs, particulate matter.
 - i. Wildlife website: Dr. Rogers wrote a wildlife FAQ with ChatGPT.
 - b. Public Education/Outreach: Next event is Calvert County Fair Youth Day September 29th.
 - i. Patuxent River Appreciate Day (October ???)
 - ii. Southern Maryland Invasives Festival (October ??? , new event at Jefferson Patterson)
 - c. Guest Speakers: Will Hager can speak at August's meeting. Ms. Pleake-Tamm will try to get Dom Butchko (MD Ass. of Counties) to call in to discuss legislative updates. Mr. Levin may get Mary Hoover to discuss St. Leonard Creek water testing.
- IX. Sustainability Awards Program:** Tabled for now.
- X. Environmental Calendar:** Tabled for now.
- XI. Text Amendment #23-01:** Env. Comm'n noticed no environmental relevance or concerns.
- XII. Recycling facility fieldtrip:** Env. Comm'n is interested in visiting the eWaste recycling facility in northern VA.
- XIII. [Zoning Ordinance Update](#):** Ms. Pleake-Tamm will forward a comparison sheet of the existing Articles 3–9 and the proposed Articles 3–9. Received public comments are summarized on the website under the FAQ section.
- XIV. General Announcements:**
- a. Mr. Britt will look into a Cove Point LNG field trip. Dr. Rogers suggested visiting another building in Howard Co.
 - b. Dr. Campbell mentioned the One Room School House is having an ice-cream social on August 9 at Christ Church on Broomes Island Road.
- XV. Dr. Rogers moved to adjourn,** Ms. Lutmerding seconded, the motion passed unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 7:57pm.

Meeting Minutes were prepared by Amalia Pleake-Tamm (EC Secretary).