



**Minutes**

**EPC MONTHLY MEETING**

**November 13, 2023**

**City Hall, Conference Room 2000**

**[Zoom Meeting Recording](#)**

**7:30 – 9:30 p.m.**

**Attendance**

<b>EPC Members (13)</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Staff</b>
Dan Beattie	PR	Melissa Atwood, T&ES
Eldon Boes	P	Ryan Freed, Office of Climate Action
Alexander Clark	P	Adriana Castaneda, T&ES Director
Benjamin Cuddy	P	Sarah Taylor, CMO
Jennifer Debias	P	
Kathie Hoekstra, Chair	P	
Anna Marino	P	<b>Guests</b>
Philip Mobilia	P	
Michael Olex, Vice-Chair	PR	
Theresa Romanosky	E	
Marta Schantz	P	
James Vandeputte	P	

**P:** Present; **PR:** Present Remotely; **A:** Absent - Unexcused; **E:** Absent – Excused; **N:** Not a Member

**1. Welcome & Introductions**

Chair Kathie Hoekstra called meeting to order. Introductions not needed, no public present.

**2. Public Comment**

No public comments.

**3. Introduction and Discussion with new T&ES Director, Adriana Castaneda, including main topics and rough dates T&ES will bring before EPC to consult/ collaborate on.**

Ms. Adriana Castaneda introduced herself, provided her background experience, and asked the EPC for questions they would like answered when she returns at a later meeting or via email.

#### 4. Administrative Items

##### a) Meeting Minutes

Vote on October 2, 2023, Working Meeting on Budget minutes for approval.

**Motion:** Ms. Marta Schantz; **Second:** Mr. Benjamin Cuddy; **Vote:** Unanimous approval.

Vote on October 16, 2023, regular meeting minutes for approval. **Motion:** Mr. Philip Mobilia; **Second:** Ms. Anna Marino; **Vote:** Unanimous approval, with Mr. Michael Olex and Ms. Jennifer Debias abstaining.

##### b) Reports from Commissioners

- Chair Hoekstra Update for EPC: Oleksandr resigned from the EPC and as our EPC representative on the Transportation Commission. Transportation Commission meetings are Wednesday evenings. Mr. Dan Beattie accepted the role of EPC member on Transportation Commission. Melissa will let City Clerk know and determine how to get on the docket for City Council to vote on Mr. Beattie's participation on the Transportation Commission.
- Update from Mr. Dan Beattie: Had a good meeting with Senator Ebbin and Delegate Bennett-Parker on what might happen in Richmond, especially around EPC priorities such as home energy efficiency and electricity efficiency improvements. Received email from the Delegate indicating that the Department of Energy should be implementing both the HOMES (Home Owner Managing Energy Savings) and HEERA (High Efficiency Electric Home Rebate) programs starting in January. HEERA is a 10-year program for low and middle-income applicants with point-of-sale discounts (versus waiting for refunds) for things like appliances and insulation upgrades to electrical panels. HOMES is an energy efficiency program where rebate/discount is based on increase in efficiency expected from the upgrade.
- Ad Hoc Stormwater Utility & Flood Mitigation Advisory Group (Ms. Jennifer Debias): Significant points from the last meeting include: (1) Councilman Chapman is advocating for the Ad-Hoc group to be made permanent. It is currently a temporary group with a one-year base term and three one-year option years. (2) The Flood Mitigation Grant Program has two proposed changes. The first would remove the requirement for applicants to have experienced and documented historic flooding on their property. The second would expand the grant program to multi-family buildings. (3) A new communications officer, Emma Wheeler, started on Sept 5, 2023 and will cover Flood Action Alexandria. (4) applying for another grant through the State community flood preparedness fund to develop a flood resilience plan. Grant is funded through the proceeds of REGI. Grant funds the City with 75% and the City provides 25%.
  - City staff mentioned that the Flood Resilience Plan would be an example of when T&ES might request discussions with the EPC. Timing depends on whether grant money is received.

## 5. 2024 Legislative Priority Discussion with Sarah Taylor

Ms. Sarah Taylor, the City's Legislative Director, introduced herself and her role. She is in process of putting together the City's legislative package now that elections are over and we know what the General Assembly looks like. There is a 51/49 Democratic majority in the House and a 21/19 majority in the Senate, with the same Governor.

City has received all the proposals from Boards and Commissions, City Council, and City staff; and is now creating the overall list for the City Council's legislative subcommittee (Mayor Wilson and Councilmember McPike). All recommendations from Boards and Commissions go to the legislative subcommittee. Subcommittee starts the disposition process: What do we have the capacity for? What is a principle (overarching statement) that we support? What is specifically actionable and is likely to be a bill we know is coming from someone or we are going to ask a member of delegation to take on.

December 8<sup>th</sup> is the first meeting with legislative subcommittee and staff's subject matter experts that can address the implementation, what it would look like, and challenges, from a practical standpoint; and where Ms. Taylor considers the political aspects for it.

General assembly is 40% new members, so there is a learning curve. Getting ideas out there to socialize and educate people. Aspirational versus actionable. Discussed process of review and discussion before long session starts in January.

Discussed process, including bill limits in House and Senate and the importance of who becomes chair of each. EPC asked questions related to: granting local authority, how the veto game will play out, how to intersect the EPC's ask with things that are already set up for compromise, such as mental health, workforce development, etc, and bills proposed in the past the EPC should consider supporting to come back.

Ms. Taylor requested the EPC provide her the list of priorities from their letter to the Mayor and City Council, dated October 7, 2023. From that letter, EPC combined #1 and #2 into one request. Eash commissioner selected their top 3 choices, resulting in the EPC's order of priority from most important to least important: 1&2 combination, 6, tie for 3 and 4; tie for 7 and 8; tie for 4 and 9.

- EPC can ask Sarah the five buckets that she sees council focusing on. Once received, EPC members can send Kathie information on how EPC priorities can pair with buckets for final wording and submittal.

## 6. Discuss EPC letter of support for Zoning for Housing/Housing for All

One EPC member was concerned with #7, on Townhouse Zoning Analysis, where they would eliminate any requirements for off street parking for single use, two-unit, and townhouse buildings. Concern related to difficulty in finding parking and uptick in safety concern in Alexandria. Not supportive of eliminating parking requirements for new buildings.

- **Motion** to approve letter of support as written: Mr. Al Clark. **Second:** Mr. Benjamin Cuddy. **Vote:** 10 in favor, 1 opposed. Motion passes with majority.

## 7. Other Discussions:

- Mr. Eldon Boes requested to have City staff come talk about what's happening on the Coal Tar gasification plant cleanup. For about 125 years, Alexandria had a coal gasification plant where contaminants got into the soil, leaked through storm pipes, and reached Oronoco Bay. This has undergone monitored for a long time and working to line the pipes to keep contaminants out of stormwater. Oil sheen is still seen at times.
- Climate Health connection: Would like to have someone come talk about future plans for collaboration. Chair Hoekstra is in communication with a member of the health team, and they prefer to join a meeting later in the year.

## 8. Adjourn

**Motion to Adjourn:** Ms. Marta Schantz; **Second:** Mr. Benjamin Cuddy; **Vote:** unanimous approval.

The meeting adjourned at 9:39p.m.

Next regular meeting is Monday, December 11, 2023.

### **FY2024 Attendance**

Member	Sept 18, 2023	Oct 16, 2023	Nov 11, 2023	Dec 11, 2023	Jan 22, 2023	Feb 26, 2023	Mar 18, 2023	Apr 15, 2023	Retreat	May 20, 2023	Jun 17, 2023	TOTALS
Dan Beattie	P	P	P									100.0%
Eldon Boes	P	P	P									100.0%
Alexander Clark	P	P	P									100.0%
Benjamin Cuddy	P	P	P									85.71%
Jennifer Debias	P	E	P									85.71%
Cynthia Elliott	P	N	N									85.71%
Oleksandr Faryga	A	E	N									85.71%
Kathie Hoekstra	E	P	P									71.43%
Anna Marino	P	P	P									85.71%
Philip Mobilia	N	P	P									100.0%
Michael Olex	P	E	P									71.43%
Theresa Romanosky	P	P	E									85.71%
Marta Schantz	P	P	P									100.0%
James Vandeputte	P	P	P									85.71%