

The Mount Vernon Council of Citizens Associations, Inc.

P.O. Box 203, Mount Vernon, VA 22121-9998 **http://www.mvcca.org**

October 1, 2026

Chairman McKay and Members of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors

I am attaching a resolution that the MVCCA adopted on September 23, which addresses the process for restructuring the environmental Boards, Authorities and Commissions.

We believe that obtaining different views on proposed county actions is a critical step to building agreement and support. We were surprised at the reaction of some board members to the testimony of some who offered comment. It was unclear if the differences in perception could have been due to the failure to share information or other reasons. Multiple parties called for greater engagement of the county residents in this process to make the process more transparent and achieve the desired goals. We encourage open discussions to build agreement and support especially for those projects that materially affect communities in the county.

Thank you

Katherne Ward

Katherine Ward
Cochair
MVCCA

Attached Resolution

MOUNT VERNON COUNCIL OF CITIZENS' ASSOCIATIONS (MVCCA)
Resolution on the Process for the Restructuring of EQAC and Elimination of the Tree Commission
(MVCCA, E&R 2026-04)

Whereas, the County is in the process of reviewing Boards, Authorities, and Commissions;
Whereas, on August 25, the Board held a hearing on dissolving the Tree Commission and later approved the bylaws to support the reorganization of the Environmental Quality Advisory Council into the new Environmental Commission (see the August 25 video of the Public Hearing to Consider Amendments to Chapter 122: https://video.fairfaxcounty.gov/ViewPublisher.php?view_id=7);
Whereas, we believe that the changes adopted will diminish the attention, capabilities, and effectiveness on the issues addressed by the Environmental Commission, especially with the limitations on meetings and term limits for officers;
Whereas, the materials for this meeting, including the revisions to the bylaws in response to comments, were not available until the week before the Board meeting;
Whereas, public comments disagreed with the dissolution of the Tree Commission and the proposed bylaws for the new Environmental Commission. (see comments on testimony below);
Whereas, while some board members criticized testimony as at least partially incorrect, Supervisor Walter Alcorn agreed with many of the comments in testimony, and Supervisor Dan Storck asked that some of the concerns be addressed through changes to the bylaws and obtained agreement from several other Board members that the bylaws can be revisited;
Whereas, the comments offered during testimony reflected the concerns of the community and the MVCCA;
Be it resolved that the criticism by some Board members of those offering testimony was uncharacteristic of the reactions that we have historically observed.
Be it further resolved that the observations and opinions expressed as testimony should be respected as the view of that commenter/organization.
Be it further resolved that the County should establish a goal of building agreement and support for projects, policies, and other decisions of concern to residents.
Be it finally resolved that the County should endeavor to seek agreement and support for projects, policies, and other decisions of concern to residents based on timely notification of proposed changes that materially affect communities and consideration of public comments on these changes, making sure that the County and its citizens share a complete understanding of the underlying facts and rationale leading up to these decisions.

Examples of some comments: Did the County consider the value and cost savings resulting from the work of EQAC and the Tree Commission when it reported a projected savings of $20,000 and 600 hours?
One commenter noted that the County's metric of resources is penny-wise and dollar-foolish. We have thought that the value of the EQAC and Tree Commission has been to provide good advice to the Board of Supervisors, assist in establishing accountability,

and spread the word about County environmental programs, which both educates and builds support for these programs. Members of these BACs have been active in their communities and can be even more effective than County staff in explaining the benefits of programs to County residents and businesses. Testimony also highlighted provisions in the adopted bylaws that appear to be focused on saving resources but make it harder to build agreement and provide thorough analysis.

Staff asserted that the student member position on EQAC was such a success that membership should be increased to two student members, even though student members have been EQAC members to gain experience. Why was the position a success warranting an increase in the number of students from one to two when so many adult appointees who would have liked to serve on the new Environmental Commission will not be able to serve because the Commission will be limited to a total of 15 members?
Staff never shared why the student member position was a success. We are not aware of any BAC with more than one student member. Moreover, few BACs have even one student member.
Some from the County claimed that the process was open and allowed for reasonable comment, so why did commenters disagree?
Some testimony asserted that holding this vote in August, when many organizations do not meet, was inappropriate and should have been scheduled so that more organizations could participate. The MVCCA is among the organizations that do not hold meetings in August, and we can only agree with this comment. While the Board matter triggering this review was adopted in February of 2024, only a very rough draft was initially provided in June, and the meeting materials were not available until the week before the Board meeting. This process was the reason testimony recommended that the review of the reorganization of EQAC and dissolution of the Tree Commission be restarted and provide for an open process that allows interested parties to participate.

Approved by the MVCCA General Council