

VIRGINIA FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

Commonwealth of Virginia

ELECTRONIC MEETINGS PUBLIC COMMENT FORM

WE NEED YOUR HELP--Please give us your feedback regarding how meetings using electronic communications technology compare to traditional meetings where everyone is present in the same room at the same time.

1. Name of the public body holding the meeting: Department of Environmental Quality Public Hearing, VWPP No. 19-2036, Proposed Wegmans Distribution Center Wetland Filling Permit.

2. Date of the meeting: July 20, 2020.

3. What are your overall thoughts or comments about this meeting? _This was not the appropriate format to hold a meeting of this size and importance. The governor had permitted public meetings that followed appropriate safety measures with the building space and population considered to allow the public to face DEQ members face to face. Given the problems with Internet access and stability throughout Hanover County, this format effectively limited the number of people able to participate.

4. Where did you attend this meeting -- main meeting location OR from a <u>remote</u> location? (circle one)

5. Technology used for the meeting (audio only or audio/visual, devices and/or software used--please be as specific as possible--for example, speakerphone, iPad, Skype, WebEx, Telepresence, etc.): Used a MAC computer to allow for audio/visual with software required by DEQ (it was not Zoom).

6. Were you able to hear everyone who spoke at the meeting (members of the body and members of the public)?

 Poor
 Excellent

 1
 2
 <u>3</u>
 4
 5

COMMENT_Unable to hear members of the body speak well. Those who spoke from the public who used a telephone, were more clearly understood.

7. How easy was it for you to obtain agenda materials for this meeting?

Easy Difficult 1 2 3 4 5

COMMENT_Materials from DEQ were available on screen but I was not aware that there was any reading material available prior to the meeting began.

8. Could you hear/understand what the speakers said or did static, interruption, or any other technological problems interfere?

Easy	•			Difficult
1	2	3	<u>4</u>	5

COMMENT____Yes - interruption occurred.

9. If the meeting used audio/visual technology, were you able to see all of the people who spoke? Poorly Clearly 1 2 3 4 5

COMMENT_None of the remote speakers were seen through technology. The DEQ representatives were visible, but the camera was placed far away. One remote person used slides, but those were not shared with others on the screen, which was possible, but not done by those operating the technology.

10. If there were any presentations (PowerPoint, etc.), were you able to hear and see them?PoorlyClearly12345

COMMENT_As stated above in question 9, the PowerPoint presentation by the DEQ members was seen, but the presentation by a public speaker was not.

11. Were the members as attentive and did they participate as much as you would have expected? Less More 1 2 3 4 5

COMMENT__The members were attentive but there were no questions asked for clarity or _understanding. They only listened to the public statements.

12. Were there differences you noticed in how the members interacted?

With the other members present: Very Different No Difference 3 1 2 4 5 With members participating from other locations: Very Different No Difference 2 3 4 1 5 With the public: Very Different No Difference 3 1 2 4 5

COMMENT__There was little, if no interaction with the public other than by the one person in charge of technology and connectivity for the devices used by the public.

13. Did you feel the technology was a help or a hindrance?

Hindered Helped 1 2 3 4 5 COMMENT___If the technology had offered visual with the public speakers, and if the PPT for the public speaker had been used, then the rating would be higher, but the technology used did not help the public understand what was said and discussed.

14. How would you rate the overall quality of this meeting? Poor Excellent

5

Poor 1 <u>2</u> 3 4

COMMENT_____I have participated in many remote meetings in the last 5 months. This particular use was limited and did not help communicate adequately.

THANK YOU. Please send your completed form by mail, facsimile or electronic mail to the FOIA Council using the following contact information:

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