

MINUTES
ENVIRONMENT & NATUARAL ASSETS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (ENA)
Wednesday, May 22, 2024
Conference Room, Admin. Bldg. – 1000

Call to Order: Tim Peck called the meeting to order at 10:03 AM

Present: Tim Peck (Chair), Brian Burgess, Patricia Garcia, John Maziuk, Karen Detter, Don Wolski; Jeff Heavner (Board Liaison); excused Patty Gamby, Pat Benner, Anne O’Connell.

Approval of Agenda: Motion by *Brian Burgess*, seconded by *Patricia Garcia* and approved unanimously.

Approval of Minutes (4/24/24): Motion by *Brian Burgess*, seconded by *John Maziuk* and approved unanimously.

Chairperson’s comments: Tim Peck noted that the meeting is being recorded as part of normal Ocean Pines Association (OPA) business practice. Tim also expressed appreciation for the committee work on the MCBP Bay Day event and staffing the exhibit. Tim asked Jeff Heavner for any comments or updates (noted below).

Public Comments:

Jeff noted the following updates he received from the General Manager (GM) as the interface for submitted charging documents: in response to request new native tree plantings in White Horse Park, the GM noted that non-native cherry trees were planted in the park; the administration had discussed egg addling to control the geese population and decided to not act this year; the administration noted that extra tree logs are available to be used for turtle habitat in the ponds at a future date (no time frame given); the administration had treated the North Gate pond on 6 May to kill off excess algae (typically the treatment is a copper compound formulation); the recommended grass cutting practice of avoiding direct discharge into canals was communicated; there was no update on fish line tube recommendation; there is no plan to purchase new signs to be used for new geese signs; and there is a scheduled monthly meeting with Maryland Coastal Bay Program (MCBP) on the status of the South Gate pond shoreline improvements, but the last meeting was canceled due to participant illness. This shoreline project will likely be constructed in the fall.

In a follow-up to the tree plantings update, later on 22 May Tim observed the absence of any newly planted trees in White Horse park. Given that suggested cherry trees are not native, the committee will continue in the fall to pursue obtaining new native trees through state grants.

ONGOING PROJECTS (see status table below)

See updates from Jeff above.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- MCBP Bay Day after action review: Tim noted that the ENA exhibit was successful, public viewing at the table was respectable, but available handouts were rarely taken. Tim noted public comments provided: clean the canals, make people pick up their Dunkin cups in playgrounds, bring back leaf pickup, more turtle platforms, get rid of resident geese. The attendance to this event was average, likely due to other competing events in Berlin and Ocean City.

New project ideas that came up for the ENA committee included participating with the Surfrider Foundation (present at Bay Day) litter cleanup events, which can include the OP area; and sponsor an oyster cage at the Swim & Racquet park pavilion. The Protectors of the St. Martin River that sponsor the oyster cage program was present at Bay Day. Based on information from the Marine Activities committee, there has recently been over 100 requests for oyster cages. Presently there are no cages at this park location. The committee will move forward with this project. Tim will contact Joe Jankowski on getting a cage constructed.

- Review of the OP Kickoff event. Tim noted that the committee video that highlighted ENA objectives was well received by Ocean Pines Association, which will plan to post the video on their social websites.
- Geese crossing signs status: as noted above since OP will not be purchasing new signs at present, the committee concurred to move one, less critical sign near the library to a more critical location along the Route 589 shoulder to maintain a total of six signs for the area. In addition, Patty Gamby had completed a retrofit on all six signs with a cross-brace that will make the standing signs more secure and less likely to be blown over.
- Rt. 90 Pond nature signs: Patty not present for updates.
- Teach a Kid to Fish Day 22 June: Patricia offered to be the team leader to prepare the exhibit for this event. Given the purpose of the event, this exhibit will focus on the fish-line tube structures. Other exhibit features will not be needed, except providing some handout information.
- Greenstreet article: Patricia is currently drafting an article on invasive species and will submit it in early June. Tim suggested that the next article could review the State programs to provide new trees and efforts to get trees planted in Ocean Pines.
- Educational workshop event on application of Critical Areas laws. Assateague Coastal Trust (ACT) and MCBP are planning a workshop event on this subject later in 2024. Tim will provide updates as he receives them.
- Planning for new project on water quality monitoring and working with Marine Activities committee. Tim attended this meeting held by this committee on 21 May and learned that the committee is planning to obtain funding approval from OPA to purchase 10 water testing kits for a total of \$600. ACT will provide training to complete tests. Members from ENA will participate and use a few of these kits. Don Wolski will be the team leader to coordinate this project.
- Environmental communication project: as a future project, ENA will draft a proposal to complete environmental best-practices to be included with HOA documents. Topics can include issues reviewed in the ENA video. Based on Karen Detter's past experience in initiating projects, the following steps need to be taken: work with BOD liaison to communicate to the BOD a request to make a presentation on the ENA recommendation. BOD responds by scheduling the presentation in a later meeting. ENA prepares a slide deck on the subject including requirements for OPA in terms of funding and authorization. The liaison has to be the advocate in the process.

NEW BUSINESS

- Eliminate mulch volcanoes around OP trees: Don had drafted a recommendation statement on this project. Jeff noted that he will contact OPA to note this poor landscaping practice.

Given the specific issue, it was recommended to instead communicate the issue through info@OP.

- Invasive species identification in OP: Don likewise provided an update. Don met with Taylor Swanson of ACT to view problems common in OP. Removal of invasive plants was suggested as an annual project for the committee to work on in OP. Taylor offered to help us organize an event. Don had drafted a recommendation statement on this project. Jeff noted that we could work directly with the Recreation and Parks department in OP following the same process for the Adopt-a-park program noted below.
- Per the above subjects, Tim will work with Don on an updated template for committee recommendations.
- Adopt-a-park program: The ENA committee further discussed organizing a litter cleanup event including sponsoring an Ocean Pines park trail as apparently this committee has the Swim and Racquet park trail assigned at present. Patricia suggested an annual litter cleanup event on or near Earth Day or end of summer. It was suggested to adopt the Rt.90 trail instead. Tim will plan to submit a new trail adoption form to OPA. Tim will query the committee on what specific trail or park to adopt.

DISCUSSION

- Don suggested OP needs to have more recycling containers available in OP as there were no containers to recycle bottles or cans during the Bay Day event. Tim noted that there is one container for paper near the restroom house in White Horse Park.
- Don noted the presence of erosion near the Yacht Club. It was suggested to directly contact info@OP to raise this issue.

Date of next meeting – June 26, 2024 at 10:00 a.m. in the Administration Bldg. Conference Room. Meetings will continue to follow a 4th Wednesday schedule each month for the year.

ACTION ITEMS

- Jeff to contact OP Administration about the Public Works practice on tree mulching and grass cutting.
- Geese sign maintenance April-June: Patty Gamby.
- ENA exhibit at Teach a Kid to Fish, 22 June: Patricia.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO BOD (via BOD Liaison)

ONGOING PROJECTS – OUTSTANDING ISSUES

PROJECT - ISSUE	INITIATION	STATUS
Installation of fish-line tubes	June 2023	Charging document submitted
White Horse Park, new trees	Aug.2023	Charging document submitted
Goose egg addling	Sept.2023	Charging document submitted
Geese crossing sign additions	Feb. 2024	Signs declined by OPA. Closed action.
Turtle sanctuary logs	Feb. 2024	Charging document submitted
Rt 90 Pond nature signs	Jan. 2024	Initiated. To contact R&P committee.
HOA best practice packet	Apr.2024	Future project
Oyster cage operation	May 2024	Future project
Litter cleanup event	May 2024	Future project

Adjourn: Motion by *Don Wolski*, seconded by *Brian Burgess*. Meeting adjourned at 1107.