

OCEAN PINES MARINE ACTIVITIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES JULY 16, 2024

MAAC Members Present: Dave Allen, chair, Sue Challis (acting secretary), Mike Reynolds, Michael Alpaugh, Ken Karr, and John Cacchio

The Board Liaison John Latham, joined remotely

Public Guest: Lyal Davidson, resident of Wood Duck

Minutes. The meeting was called to order at 10:05 a.m. by Dave Allen. The minutes from the June meeting were reviewed and approved with no corrections. Ken Tarr moved to accept, and Michael Alpaugh seconded the motion. Sue will send the revised minutes to Donna McElroy (secretary) to be sent on to Linda Martin and others.

OLD BUSINESS ITEMS

Water Testing Pilot Project in Ocean Pines. Sue Challis told the committee that Assateague Coastal Trust (the Committee's partner in the project) has had a change of leadership. Brenda Davis, our contact for the project, is no longer with ACT. Taylor Swanson, Coastkeeper, will be taking over the role of both Coastkeeper and Executive Director. Sue shared her experience with preliminary testing using the kit provided by ACT. She shared that the testing was easy to do, and recommended we move forward with getting a testing group together, ordering the kits, and meeting with Taylor Swanson for a brief training. It was brought up that Don Wolski, from the Environmental Assets Committee, was interested in participating as well. Michael Alpaugh provided his contact information to Sue. She will contact him to see if the Committee still wants to participate. John Latham said the funding from the Ocean Pines Board was approved (\$600) to purchase the kits. Volunteers from the MAAC: Michael Alpaugh, Dave Allen, Sue Challis, and John Caccio. Next steps: Identify the areas of Ocean Pines to be tested, frequency of testing, and procedures for recording results to complement what ACT is doing. Schedule a meeting with Taylor Swanson to go over goals of the project and confirm testing sites. Will report to committee at the August 20 meeting.

Oyster Gardening – Sue reported (from Joe Jankowski) that there are now 100 growers in the area, with 120 cages. Dave pointed out that there are currently growers using cages and spat oysters provided by Maryland Coastal Bays, but after this year, MCBP has indicated there will no longer be funding for the cages and supplies. Joe Jankowski (Friends of the St Martin River) continues to build cages for purchase, at cost, of approximately \$35 and provides baby oysters to growers at a cost of \$10 for 150. He works with MCBP to

deliver the oysters from growers to the group, which then deposits them in two locations in the St Martin River to build oyster reefs. John Caccio mentioned that we might want to talk with Rob Fisher, the harbormaster at the Yacht Club, to see if one or two cages near the boat ramp there might be permitted. Someone would have to maintain the cages, which involves washing them off every few weeks, and checking growth.

Communications to OP residents (articles and notices)

No Wake vs 6 MPH – Published in the “This Week in Ocean Pines” weekly email blast July 8.

There was a discussion about the new law effective July 1 (Nick’s Law) regarding operating a vessel under the influence and the increased penalties, which are now transferable to one’s motor vehicle license. The members of the committee said they had seen articles and stories on local TV stations about the new law. Sue said perhaps it would be better to try and contact one of the local Gazette or other news reporters to see if they would be interested in doing an article for more widespread coverage. Dave indicated he had submitted the information on the new law to OP Forum.

Solicitation of comments from residents. Michael Alpaugh has volunteered to take over this function (formerly accomplished by Karen Steinberger). He is working on a form for his use in collecting inquiries from residents and has established a separate email (m.alpaugh.maac.com) to receive comments. The committee also said it would be worth contacting Josh Davis to see if we could re-run the notice in an upcoming publication. John Latham reminded everyone that we must go through him in order to request time from Josh to discuss this and other items.

Dave then introduced our guest, Lyal Davidson, a resident of Wood Duck, who presented his concern about what he called “Turtle Island”, a small land mass in the Grand Canal, near the mouth of Manklin Creek. He and others there are trying to determine whether the island (which goes under water frequently in high tides) is part of Ocean Pines, and if so, can our committee do something about the debris (old crab pots, other debris) and an American flag someone has planted there. He said occasionally there are people in kayaks over there and it is a “junk heap”. Mr. Davidson said he had contacted Maryland Coastal Bays to see if they could remove some of the debris, but was told they don’t do their debris collection until the Fall. Davidson said he took note of the boat that apparently planted the flag there. Committee members suggested perhaps calling Sandi Smith, our contact at Maryland Coastal Bays, or even the DNR. We will have follow up at the August meeting on any new information.

Davidson also asked about our committee’s involvement or knowledge of dredging in the community. Dave Allen explained the information that we have received from the Board

about the 3-year plan and the most recent scheduled dredgings. Mr. Davidson commented that there are now many large boats in the Wood Duck area that are complaining about the water depth at their bulkheads and that there is almost “self dredging” going on by having boats with such deep drafts in and out of that area.

New Business:

Committee vacancy – Dave Allen announced he would not be returning as chair or a member of the committee when his term ends in September. He will notify the Board of his resignation and ask Linda Martin to post a vacancy for our committee. Sue indicated that her term is also up in September, but that she would like to renew her membership. She will file the necessary paperwork to do so.

Dave announced he had received notice from Maryland Coastal Bays Program that the annual Marine Debris Plunder will be held in Ocean Pines (White Horse Park Boat Ramp) on October 22. Parks and Recreation is currently coordinating with MCBP on this event. He said he had not been contacted by MCBP on any involvement with our committee.

The motion to adjourn was made by Michael Alpaugh and seconded by John Caccio. The meeting was adjourned at 11 a.m. The next meeting will be August 20, 10 a.m. Dave informed the committee that he will not be attending and will request that Donna McElroy act as chair.

Submitted by Sue Challis, acting secretary