

Minutes of the Marine Activities Advisory Committee Regular Meeting

August 20, 2024

Members Present: Donna McElroy (Acting Chair), Sue Challis (Acting Secretary), Ken Karr, Tim Connolly, John Cacchio, Mike Reynolds (remotely)

Board Liaison: John Latham (remotely)

Guest: Don Wolski, member of the Environmental Assets Advisory Committee

CALL TO ORDER:

Donna McElroy called the meeting to order at 9:57 a.m.

ASCERTAINMENT OF QUORUM:

Donna McElroy reported that there was a quorum. She also indicated she would double-check the procedures and parliamentary rules on this, and at the same time, said we should have someone on the committee willing to be the parliamentarian and remind us of Roberts Rules of Order and other procedures.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

A motion was made by Ken Karr and seconded by John Cacchio to approve the agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes from the July 16, 2024, meeting, with one correction. Sue agreed to make the change and forward to Linda Martin.

REPORTS:

Ocean Pines Canal and Waterways Water Testing Project – Sue reported that the water testing kits that were purchased with funds from the Ocean Pines Board have been distributed to four members of the committee (Sue, John Cacchio, Dave Allen, and Michael Alpaugh) and one to Taylor Swanson, the Assateague Coastkeeper. Testing for dissolved oxygen, nitrogen, phosphate, PH and turbidity (water clarity) is being done every other Wednesday at five different locations around Ocean Pines and will continue through the second week in October. Taylor is testing at the White Horse Park boat ramp in addition to his regular bacteria testing/reporting. Data is being input by the committee volunteers and recorded in the Assateague Coastal Bays database.

Oyster Gardening Update- It was reported that after this year, Maryland Coastal Bays will no longer be able to provide free cages and oyster spat to some current growers. Sue indicated that Friends of the St. Martin River (headed by Joe Jankowski) will continue to provide cages and seed oysters at a cost of \$45 per cage, including seed oysters. Once the oysters reach maturity they can be donated to Coastal Bays. Joe coordinates that exchange

and provides new seed oysters to growers at a cost of \$5. A question was raised as to how many people out of the approximately 100 growers (with 120 cages) were currently being supplied by each of the participating groups. Sue said she would find out and report at the next meeting. She also said that nearly 2,000 oysters from the combined programs had already been collected by Maryland Coastal Bays this summer and have been added to the two reef locations in the St. Martin River.

Discussion with Ron Fisher, Harbormaster – John Cacchio – at the last meeting John suggested that we put an oyster cage in the Yacht Club area, near the boat ramp as part of a community education program and perhaps a way to get more participants in the existing oyster gardening program. He said he was talking to someone recently in an informal capacity, and he didn't see a problem with it, if it didn't interfere with the launching of boats. An email from Joe Jankowski to John indicated that there is already one cage at the Swim and Raquet Club that was placed there by the Environmental Assets Committee and pointed out that if these are placed in public spaces, someone still needs to manage the cage (a year-round commitment). John said he would take the responsibility for the one in the Yacht Club area, if approved.

Comments from Residents – Michael Alpaugh (no report)

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Marine Debris Plunder (sponsored by Maryland Coastal Bays Program and Ocean Pines Parks and Recreation) to be held at White Horse Park Boat Ramp on September 22. Our committee has no direct involvement, except to support the effort and spread the word to the community on ways to participate (by land and by sea).

New Articles for “This Week in Ocean Pines” from the MAAC – Donna suggested that we give Josh Davis an article on “Nick’s Law”, which went into effect this summer. There was also a suggestion that we ask if there could be a “placeholder” maybe once a month in the Ocean Pines email to residents where MAAC could put out information to the community. Ken offered to keep the committee advised of any new Coast Guard or other governmental regulations of interest to community boaters that we could then communicate out.

NEW BUSINESS

Proposed Charging Document/Request for OPA Board Action by the “Joint Advisory Committee” – Donna had emailed two documents to committee members in advance of the meeting that she received from Gary Miller (chairman of the Aquatics Committee) and was asking for a recommendation from the committee as to whether the members were in favor of advancing this document to the Board. She gave some background information on the (once) yearly meeting that takes place between the Board and the heads of each of the Advisory Committees, which also includes submission of an annual report of each committee's accomplishments over the past year. The draft charging document Gary has circulated to each of the committees is asking for more frequent, formal communication between the heads of the Ocean Pines departments (or main contact person) that the

various advisory committees interact with – including attending quarterly meetings with the committee. There was a discussion among the MAAC members present, and the consensus was that we would not support such an action at this time. John Latham, our Board liaison, also pointed out that there is currently “no such thing as a *Joint Advisory Committee*”.

Following a discussion, the MAAC members present at the meeting unanimously voted against both proposed charging documents. On the question, “As presented to us, do we wish to support document #1, titled ***Joint Advisory Committee’s Charging Document Request for OPA Board Action by the Advisory Committees*** on the issue of having the Executive Council Committee meet on a quarterly basis, the members voted “no”. And on the question, “As presented to us, do we wish to support document #2, titled ***Joint Advisory Committee’s Charging Document Request for OPA Board Action by the Advisory Committees*** on the issue of allowing the Department Head, or main contact person for each of the advisory committees to attend advisory committee meetings on a quarterly basis, the members voted “no”.

Donna agreed to get back to Gary Miller with our committee’s feedback on this issue.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Donna introduced and asked for any comments from our guest from the Environmental Assets Committee, Don Wolski. He said the EA Committee was interested in hearing more about the water testing pilot project and asked Sue for the Ocean Pines testing locations. He also said it might be a good idea to have someone from the MAAC attend a future EA meeting and give the update in person. He also suggested that if another oyster cage is being put in a public area, that perhaps an educational sign of some kind could be put there as well, to help the public understand the program. He said the EA Committee was interested in taking a tour of Horn Point Labs near Easton to see how oyster seeds are grown, and that perhaps MAAC members may be interested in going along.

Donna said that at the August 10 Annual Meeting in Ocean Pines, during the public comments section, a resident named Karen had voiced concern over the canal water quality in the Pines and felt that there is no talk about their condition or how to address the problem. Donna said that it has been suggested to her that a representative from MAAC may be willing to use this as an opportunity to make a brief presentation to the Board of the water testing pilot project with Assateague Coastal Trust. John Latham said we might want to get on the agenda for the **October Board meeting** with a presentation or to just provide a statement during the Public Comments part of the meeting. All agreed this would be a great opportunity; we will finalize our intentions at the September MAAC meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

The motion to adjourn was proposed by John Cacchio and seconded by Sue Challis. The meeting adjourned at 11:27 am.

Respectfully submitted, Sue Challis (Acting Secretary)