



CALVERT COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

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Calvert County Environmental Commission February 27, 2023 Minutes

Attendance: Dr. Dave Campbell (Chair), Dave Hardy (Vice Chair), Kevin Britt, Jim Levin, Dr. Andy Rogers, Mike Rooney, Neil Smith

Staff: Amalia Pleake-Tamm Public: Dr. Lora Harris and Shelby Johnson; Molly Boron, Ron Klauda, Bob Estes, Lila West

I. Call to Order at 6:03pm

II. Approval of Agenda for February 27, 2023: Mr. Levin moved to approve the agenda, Mr. Hardy seconded, the motion passed unanimously.

III. Guest Speakers: Dr. Lora Harris and Shelby Johnson on Cove Point Marsh

The Univ. of MD Cntr. for Env. Sci. Chesapeake Biological Lab. has been monitoring Cove Point Marsh restoration since 2010. Dr. Harris and Ms. Johnson work with the Chesapeake Bay Sentinel Site Cooperative, which is regional group measuring sea level rise in tidal marshes across the Chesapeake Bay. Sea level rise occurs from both thermal expansion of ocean water and melting glaciers and polar ice sheets. Scientists can measure each cause's effect and most rise is coming from the melting glaciers and polar ice sheets.

Sea level rise has several impacts: it accelerates current erosion; increases storm surges; impairs stormwater management; elevates groundwater that can cause septic system failures; and causes saltwater intrusion, which impacts sewage and septic systems, agriculture, forests, and water resources.

The most recent predictions (from 2018) estimate Maryland's sea levels will rise 1–2 ft from 2000 levels by 2050, and may exceed 4ft by 2100. Maryland's land mass is subsiding while sea level is rising—this causes Maryland's coasts to become flooded faster than other locations on a global scale.

Cove Point is a cusped spit and is therefore especially vulnerable to wave action and sea level rise. Ms. Johnson used NOAA's Sea Level Rise Tool to model a sea level rise of 2ft., at which point Cove Point septic systems will likely be affected; a rise of 3ft will start flooding the residential area; a rise of 4ft will cover most of the spit.

In 2007, the shoreline separating Cove Point Marsh from the Chesapeake Bay was breached during a storm, causing a major inundation of brackish water into the marsh. Dominion began repairing the sea breaches, built up a berm, and installed segmented breakwaters with a salt marsh behind a hardened revetment. MD Dept. of Nat. Res. asked for a monitoring process as part of Dominion's permit process. This monitoring includes pond surveys for salinity and SAV, continuous water quality monitoring, a weather station, surveying species of interest, species diversity plots, plant establishment transects, aerial imagery, sediment elevation tables, and erosion transects. Summer plant cover is doing well, as is biodiversity among the flora, and the sediment elevation is rising. However, the shoreline is eroding at a consistent rate.

Mr. Estes asked about restoration spending and Dr. Harris clarified that the Infrastructure Bill and Inflation Reduction Act have billions of dollars of funding for coastal resilience projects nationwide and that the Cove Point Marsh restoration was progressive in their restoration efforts. Additional efforts are underway, such as installing coir logs.

IV. Approval of Meeting Minutes: [January 30, 2022](#)

Ms. Pleake-Tamm acknowledged Dr. Rogers' corrections. Mr. Hardy moved to approve the agenda, Mr. Levin seconded, the motion passed unanimously.







Maryland Relay for Impaired Hearing or Speech: 1-800-735-2258

1. The date, time, and location of any Environmental Commission meeting may be revised by announcement of an emergency, such as inclement weather, without further publication and may be confirmed on the County website or calling 410-535-1600 ext. 2727 on the date of the meeting.
2. Public comments during Environmental Commission Work Sessions are at the discretion of the Chairperson.
3. There may be a five-minute break at 7:00 p.m. at the discretion of the Chairperson.
4. A decision will be made at 8:00 p.m. whether to continue the meeting or reschedule.
5. Accommodations for persons with disabilities will be made with reasonable notice.
6. The Environmental Commission operates under *Robert's Rules*.

V. Old Business

- a. Strategic Initiatives Update
 - i. Water Quality Initiative: Ms. Pleake-Tamm confirmed an ask for a DPW speaker to attend an upcoming Env. Comm'n meeting.
 - ii. Radon Test Prices: Ms. Pleake-Tamm hasn't received the new prices; last year they were around \$10/kit.
 - iii. Pump for the Bay: Ms. Pleake-Tamm announced the first raffle entry for 2024! Dr. Campbell volunteered to ask the Marine Museum and Tennison Cruise for tickets; Mr. Levin volunteered to approach Lusby Motors and Dreamweaver Café; Ms. Pleake-Tamm will approach Parks & Rec. Dr. Rogers suggested asking septic haulers to offer prizes. The group will repeat an outreach campaign to septic haulers.
 - iv. Ms. Pleake-Tamm mentioned an EPA program that's partnering with public libraries to "check out" air sensors to their patrons.

VI. Subcommittee Reports

- a. FAQs
 - i. Wildlife FAQ: Dr. Rogers will continue working on this.
 - ii. Existing FAQ review: Mr. Levin will work with Mr. Hardy and Dr. Rogers to begin refreshing the existing 38 FAQs, starting with three each. (Mr. Levin will start with radon, sustainability, and low impact development.) Dr. Rogers noted we need to increase FAQ readership; if they're given to schools, the teachers need the digital versions so that the hyperlinks may be used. Ms. Pleake-Tamm will look at creating QR codes for them to display at tabling events.
- b. Sustainability: Mr. Levin will present a review on this at next month's meeting.
- c. Public Education/Outreach: The event calendar was adopted as follows:
 - i. Earth Arts Fest (Apr. 22nd weekend): This is replacing Green Life Expo  **Definitive yes; Ms. Pleake-Tamm will work with Ms. Kerr to set this up.**
 - ii. Children's Day on the Farm (Sunday June 4th @ Jeff. Patt.) **Maybe---more info needed**
 - iii. Patuxent River Wade In (June ??) 
 - iv. Calvert County Fair Youth Day (September) 
 - v. Patuxent River Appreciate Day (October) 
 - vi. Southern Maryland Invasives Festival (October, Jeff Patt) 
 - vii. US Oyster Festival 

Ms. Pleake-Tamm needs to request giveaways.
- d. 2023 Guest Speakers: Mr. Smith reported that he spoke with Mr. Levin about securing a speaker for July. Ms. Pleake-Tamm will circle back on a speaker from the nuclear plant.

VII. New Business

- a. Nametag and shirt call: Ms. Pleake-Tamm will contact new members for their tags and shirt requests.
- b. The Env. Comm'n follows the [Open Meetings Act](#). Maryland Attorney General's website includes a free [training](#) and the [Open Meetings Manual](#) for those who are interested. Ms. Pleake-Tamm noted that with the new quorum size of five members, public business cannot be discussed over email if five or more members are present on the email chain.
 - i. Mr. Smith offered to leave the Public Education Subcommittee to bring that subcommittee's size under five members.
- c. 2023 Financial Disclosure Forms are due to Ashley Staples-Reid by March 31st. Dr. Campbell and Mr. Levin win the prize for prompt completion. Ms. Pleake-Tamm did report to staff that the forms are difficult to fill out and submit.
- d. General Announcements
 - i. Mr. Levin reported that the Friends of St. Leonard Creek will be doing water quality sampling on April 1st between 9am and noon. They'll be measuring nitrate, nitrite, conductivity, turbidity. This monitoring began three years ago. Mr. Estes mentioned that all Friends groups are doing this as coordinated through the ACLT.
 - ii. Ms. Pleake-Tamm mentioned Feb. 2nd was World Wetlands Day in case that's useful for the Env. Comm'n's water quality campaign for next year. Also, a ruling is expected in June for [Sackett v.](#)

[EPA](#) (determining “waters of the United States”). Finally, the BOCC will be reviewing Mr. Ybarra’s and Ms. Lutmerding’s appointments on March 28th, along with a MD Geo. Survey presentation on Calvert’s groundwater resources.

- VIII. Public Comment:** Mr. Klauda asked Molly Boron from [St. Mary’s Commission on the Environment](#) to speak on their sustainability awards program. The program has five categories: students and schools; restaurants; businesses; nonprofits; agriculture; and individuals or households. For each category, the Commission offers suggested criteria so the applicant can demonstrate they’re operating beyond the norm in an effort for sustainability. Awardees receive handmade wooden plaques to display at their businesses or homes. 2022 awards will be awarded at the Commission’s Earth Day celebration.
- Ms. Boron was grateful for the opportunity to learn what a neighboring environmental commission was doing. Mr. Levin noted their work on partnering with UMD’s Extension Service to work on rain barrels and compost etc.
- IX. Mr. Hardy moved to adjourn, Mr. Levin seconded, the motion passed unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 7:44pm.**

Meeting Minutes were prepared by Amalia Pleake-Tamm (EC Secretary).