

MINUTES
ENVIRONMENT & NATUARAL ASSETS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (ENA)
Wednesday, March 27, 2024
Conference Room, Admin. Bldg. – 1000

Call to Order: Tim Peck called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM

Present: Tim Peck (Chair), Brian Burgess, Patty Gamby, Anne O’Connell, John Maziuk, Patricia Garcia, Don Wolski; online Karen Detter, Pat Benner; Jeff Heavner (Board Liaison); Brenda Davis and Taylor Swanson speaking visitors from Assateague Coastal Trust (ACT).

Approval of Agenda: Motion by *Don Wolski*, seconded by *Anne O’Connell* and approved unanimously.

Approval of Minutes (2/28/24): Motion by *Patty Gamby*, seconded by *Brian Burgess* and approved unanimously.

Chairperson’s comments: Tim reminded the committee that the meeting is being recorded as part of normal Ocean Pines Association (OPA) business practice. Reminder for OP Volunteer appreciation dinner: 11 April, 7 PM, Yacht Club: 4 members attending with guests.

Geese signs and observed status from Tim’s recent work: signs are relatively lightweight and tend to be easily blown over by high winds. Two signs had damaged hinges due to disturbance. Eventually these signs will need stake anchors to prevent this problem. Lawnmower operators also tend to displace signs. Tim will look at sign to devise an anchor for the signs. An idea was to mount the signs permanently inside a landscape feature such as a flower feature. Next volunteer to maintain signs April-June: Patty Gamby. She will need backup for week of April 16 as assisted by Patricia Garcia.

Author for next Greenstreet article: Patricia Garcia offered to draft an article on invasive plants using references the ENA committee learned at our previous meeting with Lower Shore Land Trust.

Reminder for Maryland Coastal Bays Program (MCBP) event: 15 April, 0930-1100: Discover your Watershed at Lizard Hill.

Tim briefly reviewed the upcoming OP Executive Council meeting with the Board of Directors (BOD) and the chairpersons from all advisory committees. The ENA presentation will highlight accomplishments over the last year, problems encountered (such as lack of communication), recommendations for environment enhancements, potential budget cost items, and ongoing objectives for the committee.

Public Comments:

Visting speakers Brenda Davis (Executive Director) and Taylor Swanson (Assateague Coastkeeper) from ACT reviewed the history and purpose of ACT. ACT was established 54 years ago and is commissioned to preserve Assateague Island and the surrounding watershed covering 800 sq.miles with goals to limit uncontrolled land development. They are advocates for this cause working on initiatives through local government, the State, and federal regulatory bodies as well as working with land developers. Taylor Swanson is active in advocacy and works on development interventions and makes testimony at the State capital on legislative issues. One example of intervention involves the current land MCBP occupies was prevented

from being developed. They work on legislative issues at the State level. They monitor pollution problems in the area as regulated under the Clean Water Act. ACT is involved with education events in area schools including summer camps, as well as in other events for interested residents such as the MCBP Bay Day and the Ocean Pines Kickoff events. ACT has a hotline for notification and response to pollution problems. Examples of issues addressed included responding to a fuel spill at a marina; a water quality issue at a campsite in Newark, MD; trees dying along nearby Turville creek that was due to illegal herbicide use, which resulted in a County fine.

ACT executes water quality monitoring during the summer in the nearby water bodies and organizes volunteer groups to assist on these projects. The ACT speakers provided several handouts on information on ACT and a bag to collect litter on walks. Such trash collections can be posted online to monitor the progress in litter collection.

Brian Burgess asked about efforts to restore bird nesting areas and supporting MCBP efforts. ACT does not work on this directly. ACT is having a sale of native plants this spring.

Tim noted a problem on compliance with the State Critical Areas laws on home building in Ocean Pines, where waterfront as well as inland lots are completely cleared of all trees prior to construction. Developers appear to have a means to avoid preservation of native trees. Tim asked if ACT interacts with County permitting applications. Brenda suggested an educational event to review the purpose and enforcement of these laws with invitation to relevant compliance staff within the OP Administration (Compliance, Permit, and Inspections) and the County. A meeting in June or later at ACT offices was suggested to bring all interested parties together for discussion.

Brenda noted a current effort to organize an OP citizens science group apparently organized by the Marine Activities committee to monitor water quality in the OP canals. Brenda noted efforts to fund the purchase of test kits so they can be used in the monitoring. Tim noted that it would be beneficial if our two committees worked together on this effort. Pat Benner noted that the nearby NASA office in Virginia has a citizen science project. Brian Campbell of NASA comes to the Bay Day event to promote the GLOBE project (Global Learning and Observations to benefit the Environment **Program**).

ONGOING PROJECTS (see status table below)

Tim noted the current status of open issues listed below. None of these issues were mentioned at the last BOD meeting. Tim noted frustration with the lack of feedback on the issues if the ENA committee can effectively act on its assigned functions. Committee members noted that a few of the issues need to be considered in a timely fashion by OPA to be executed effectively such as the geese egg addling and tree planting where free trees can be obtained from the State.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- Ocean Pines Day Kickoff event 2024 (April 20 or 27, 2024): ongoing group effort to prepare for exhibit. The 3-page hand-out document is finalized. Pat Benner offered to make color copies of the handouts for the exhibit table. The committee discussed how we could display the various handouts and information pages. Patricia offered to share an easel and we will construct a display board with the information. We will also need a display note pad to allow visitors to write down their environmental concerns. Brian Burgess and Patricia are working on the multi-component video displaying ENA issues with an approved script. Filming will

need to wait until the weather gets warmer and plants begin to bloom. We discussed a schedule of committee volunteers to man the table during the event. Tim will send out a schedule for members to complete. A box will be used to shade the video monitor.

- Colonial Village ghost forest: the ENA committee previously submitted a statement of Interest supporting efforts by residents in the Colonial Village Home Owners Association to get new trees. They have coordinated with a scientist at Maryland Department of Natural Resources to obtain trees through a grant, with anticipated planting of a large group of trees this spring in this forest area.
- MCBP: Bay Day, 19 May 2024, 1000-1400. ENAAC is registered to exhibit. We will need committee volunteers to sit table. We will use the same exhibits from the Kickoff event.

NEW BUSINESS (none at this time)

DICUSSION

- As noted by Don in an email, Tim reminded the committee of an opportunity to attend the Mid-Atlantic Ocean Forum in Lewes, DE on 13-14 May.
- Don noted that OPA is building mulch volcanoes around the area trees. This practice is severely detrimental to tree health and should be stopped. This will be a NEW BUSINESS item and Don will draft a statement on the issue to be submitted to OPA.
- Patricia noted she is researching potential grant funding to help manufacture the informational nature signs our committee will work on this year for installation around the Rt.90 pond.
- The committee noted an issue with John Maziuk email address that tends to reject messages for a few members. When Tim sends out committee documents, Patty Gamby will forward again to John.
- Patty noted she is doing some additional research on educational nature signs.

Date of next meeting – April 24, 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

- Complete filming of video clips for Kickoff Day showing ENA interests: Brian Burgess, Patricia Garcia.
- Tim to provide a Kickoff Day exhibit manning schedule to get members to volunteer for attending.
- In preparation for the OPA summer newsletter, Patricia will begin drafting an article on invasive plants. The article is due early June.
- Geese sign maintenance April-June: Patty Gamby.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO BOD (via BOD Liaison)

- None at this time.

ONGOING PROJECTS – OUTSTANDING ISSUES

PROJECT - ISSUE	INITIATED	STATUS
South Pond shoreline habitat	Dec.2022	MCBP grant approval, wait on EPA fund.
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	Charging document submitted
Turtle sanctuary logs	Feb. 2024	Charging document submitted
Rt 90 Pond nature signs	Jan. 2024	Future project
Colonial Village cypress trees	Feb. 2024	Statement of interest submitted

Adjourn: Motion by *Patricial Garcia* and seconded by *Don Wolski*.
Meeting adjourned at 1130.