

MINUTES
ENVIRONMENT & NATUARAL ASSETS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (ENA)
Wednesday, October 25, 2023
Conference Room, Admin. Bldg. – 1000

Present: Tim Peck (Acting Chair), Anne O'Connell, John Maziuk, Patty Gamby, Patricia Garcia, Jeff Heavner (Board Liaison). Online: Karen Detter. Pat Benner and Karen Baldwin excused.

Visitor: Don Wolski (online) for interest in joining committee.

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

Chairman's comments: Mr. Peck expressed sincere appreciation to the members for selection as committee chairperson; the next step is Board of Directors (BOD) approval. Mr. Peck reviewed a series of committee administrative and objective issues. He reminded the committee that the meeting is being recorded as part of normal Ocean Pines Association (OPA) process. In addition, given the usual full meeting content covering several subjects, the meeting must follow the approved agenda and avoid subjects that are out of content. He briefly reviewed the committee objectives outlined in OPA Resolution C-10. He noted the many efforts and projects the committee worked on over the last year as detailed in the submitted ENA annual report for 2022-2023. Lastly, he reviewed with the committee the policies on controlling communication with local media. Although media representatives may be present at meetings, formal communications of ENA members on ENA matters must be through the Board Liaison or the BOD. Resolution C-10 states that a member may not represent OPA on any matters with any entity.

Member application issues were updated. Karen Detter has been approved for a third term. The extension application for Anne in third term must be submitted for approval. The committee can accept new applications for current openings. Tim will obtain completed applications from Jeff Heavner and then make recommendations for member acceptance.

Public Comments: None

Approval of Agenda: Motion by *Patty Gamby* and seconded by *Patricia Garcia* and approved unanimously.

Approval of Minutes: Motion by *Anne O'Connell* and seconded by *Patty Gamby* and approved unanimously.

ONGOING PROJECTS

- South Pond Buffer/Erosion Plan – Grant approval is with the U.S. EPA for final federal approval of funding.
- Habitat modification for South Gate pond – we await response from OPA on acceptance of Tributaries company proposal for shoreline vegetation planting.
- Four outstanding issues with OPA (previously submitted to BOD, Parks and Rec. in 2023): planning for pond shoreline remediation; installation of fishing-line tubes at South Pond; installing information nature signs around Rt.90 pond; planting new trees in White Horse Park.
- Confirm with OPA if goose egg addling was performed in 2023. This action should be done annually for effective geese control.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- Management of duck/goose warning signs at South Gate pond – Patricia noted her recent effort to reset a sign, and some signs need occasional cleaning. John noted that mowing operations on occasion tend not to re-stand the signs. The committee concluded that that keeping the signs year-round around the pond would be practical to avoid time and costs to move and store the signs each year for least effort of OPA Public Works (PW). However, the winter season storage and spring time re-standing by PW would help with overall effort in maintaining the signs. The committee agreed to a plan for members to share effort in maintaining the signs. Tim agreed to draft a standard operating procedure (SOP) for members to follow including quarterly assignments for members to maintain the signs.
- Status on fish-gear disposal tubes at South Pond (endorsed by Angler’s Club): the committee previously drafted a diagram for 2-4 proposed locations and volunteer manufacture (\$36 estimate) and installation (initial proposal 8/2/2023). ENA needs approval to proceed on this task at this pond as well as the Rt.90 pond.
- Route 90 Pond trail improvements: the committee discussed the status of improvement strategies beyond nature information signs and repairs to footbridge. We discussed blazing trails for clear pathways. However, this project is more in line with the Recreation and Parks committee matters. Therefore, with our past submitted recommendations for signs, this matter is finished for now.

NEW BUSINESS

- Nuts about acorns: Patricia reviewed a Maryland DNR tree nursery program for “five million trees please” initiative. OP is in a current “mast” year of plentiful acorns and other tree nut production. The state tree nursery near Cambridge, MD collects various native tree seeds and accepts volunteer collections of seeds to grow new trees. There is a state \$25 coupon available to purchase a tree sapling from a participating nursery. The Bluebird fruit stand on Rt. 589 participates. With the need to increase tree planting in OP, this program will fit well with ENA tasks in the coming year. This subject would be an informative subject for the next Greenstreet article. Related to planting new trees in White Horse Park, we could use this program to obtain saplings. Tim suggested that more developed nursery trees should also be part of this effort to advance the effort to maintain a healthy tree canopy in the park as the older, existing trees continue to be removed.
- Turtle sanctuaries: The committee discussed low-cost alternatives to enhance turtle habitat in the ponds instead of manufactured platforms. Patty will compose an ENA statement to recommend action be taken to install large, cut logs or other natural methods in the larger ponds.
- New project ideas: Tim reviewed possible ideas for new actions by ENA in the new year: promote tree planting and preservation, mitigation of flooding potential in OP including effect of leaf accumulations in road-side swales, public education, control of debris disposal in canals, more interaction with regional agencies Maryland Coastal Bays (MCB), Assateague Coastal Trust (ACT), and National Center for Coastal Service. Tim noted that more interaction with these natural resource agencies will create new opportunities for ENA to act on OPA environmental matters including pollution of the OP canals. It is suggested to invite representatives from these agencies to the ENA meetings on occasion. Patricia will draft an ENA statement about leaf refuse accumulation in OP, concerns on the refuse company servicing OPA and the disposal of leaves. Tim noted the recent directions in the OP newsletter concerning leaf removal and disposal. Another subject noted by John was the frequent accumulation of cyanobacteria “green algae” in area ponds, including a portion of the Northgate pond in OP. This issue is an important educational issue on water quality. Lastly, Tim requested that the committee send other ideas for projects for the year.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO BOD (vis BOD Liaison)

- Request possible PW assistance with seasonal storage of geese/duck signs.
- Approval for fish-gear disposal tubes.
- Contact Recreation and Parks committee for possible joint effort on the Rt.90 trail upgrades.

ACTION ITEMS

- Draft ENA statement on turtle sanctuaries.
- Draft ENA statement on leaf disposal.
- Draft SOP for geese/duck sign maintenance.

Date of next meeting – November 29, 2023 at 10:00 a.m. in the Administration Bldg. Conference Room. This date moved from the 4th Wednesday due to Thanksgiving holiday. Also at that meeting, ENA will discuss if a December meeting will be held. Meetings will continue to follow a 4th Wednesday schedule each month for the year.

Adjourn: Motion by *Patricia Garcia* and seconded by *Patty Gamby*
Meeting adjourned at 1130.