

MINUTES
ENVIRONMENT & NATUARAL ASSETS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (ENA)
Wednesday, January 24, 2024
Conference Room, Admin. Bldg. – 1000

Present: Tim Peck (Chair), Brian Burgess, Karen Detter, Anne O’Connell, John Maziuk, Patricia Garcia, Don Wolski, Jeff Heavner (Board Liaison); Patty Gamby, Pat Benner excused. Carly Toulan speaking visitor from MCBP; Ginny Kearney resident visitor.

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

Chairman’s comments: Tim reminded the committee that the meeting is being recorded as part of normal Ocean Pines Association (OPA) business practice. He reminded the members that he always seeks consensus from the committee on issues addressed. He commented to Jeff Heavner on requesting feedback on progress of outstanding issues (detailed below). Given the list of outstanding issues, ENA is broadening its focus to collaborate with outside agencies. Tim noted the recent Bayside Gazette article that reviewed current issues ENA has addressed.

Public Comments:

Visting speaker Carly Toulan, a scientist since 2019 from Maryland Coastal Bays Program (MCBP), gave a review of their objectives, ongoing programs and opportunities for volunteer work in the area. MCBP was founded in 1996 and is funded primarily from the US EPA. The presentation reviewed the local bay watershed as an estuary of national importance including five main bays and the St. Martin River. There are several ongoing opportunities for community Involvement: monthly water quality sampling for nitrogen, phosphorus, oxygen, clarity, salinity, temperature, chlorophyll (high levels indicate algal blooms which degrades aquatic life), which is part of the NOAA phytoplankton monitoring network (Assateague Coastal Trust (ACT) also participates in this monitoring). Oyster Gardening is the biggest citizen science program in OP performed by full-time residents and in partnership with Protectors of St. Martins River (PSMR) (Mr. Jankowski a leader in PSMR sells cages and spat). There are 45 OP volunteers that work with MCBP and there are more that work with PSMR. Don Wolski noted that he has contact with a Sterling Tavern oysterman who has extra cages. The Horseshoe crab surveys occur in May-July to recover stranded spawning crabs. Volunteers are needed and training is performed in April/May.

Tim requested contact information for volunteer opportunities. Carly is the contact for volunteer programs and these are listed on their website/Facebook site.

See: <https://mdcoastalbays.org/the-programs/calendar/>

Lastly, Carly reviewed a short summary on invasive species including an available detailed report published by the Lower Shore Land trust, which is available on their website. The most prevalent invasive species include the multi-floral rose, phragmites, and Japanese Wisteria. The Spotted lantern fly is a problem on western shore as it spreads down from Pennsylvania. MCBP is updating a homeowners guide on this issue. The next ENA meeting will have a detailed presentation on this issue by MCBP.

Approval of Agenda: Motion by *Don Wolski*, seconded by *Brian Burgess* and approved unanimously.

Approval of Minutes: Motion by *Brian Burgess*, seconded by *Don Wolski* and approved unanimously.

ONGOING PROJECTS (see status table below)

- South Pond Buffer/Erosion Plan (shoreline) – it appears that this work potentially could be part of the habitat modification project. However, based on the MCBP update, shoreline repair is not planned in the design. This issue will likely need to be addressed in the future as a new project.
- Habitat modification for South Gate pond – Grant approval is with the U.S. EPA for final federal approval of funding expected in February. MCBP is in the design phase (see update below).
- Outstanding issues with OPA: it appears that the OP General Manager is addressing issues, but requested additional information: where to plant new trees in White Horse Park and the selected species; a contractor for annual goose egg addling. As directed by Jeff Heavner, Charging documents on these issues will be drafted by ENA for submittal to the BOD.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- Management of duck/goose warning signs at South Gate pond – Currently there are six signs around the pond, where two other signs are now being used for pedestrian walking safety on OPA trails. Anne O’Connell noted that two other signs originally along Racetrack Road were the most critical locations as that is where there were significant geese fatalities by passing traffic over a year ago. These locations were also allowed by the MD State Highway Administration. Based on this situation, ENA will need to submit directions to get two signs added.
- Route 90 Pond trail signs: the committee will be leading this project with support from the Recreation and Parks (R&P) committee. Carly noted that the draft concepts submitted by ENA to MCBP were very useful. MCBP will help on design. The Art League of Ocean City will be helpful in sign design. Sun Signs in Berlin, MD are a reliable local vendor for sign manufacture. Typically, a 2X3 ft sign costs \$200 and smaller signs may be \$100 each. The next steps are to create designs and illustrations, develop a cost budget to manufacture the signs, then submit a Charging document with this information to the BOD. Due to several steps involved, this project will take several months to complete. Patricia agreed to take the lead on this project.
- Nuts about acorns: Patricia Garcia has noted the existence of this state-wide program to encourage tree planting. This can be a noted item in future ENA educational materials.
- Turtle sanctuaries: Patty Gamby is drafting an ENA Charging document to recommend actions be taken and costs involved, such as install large, cut logs or other natural methods in the larger ponds.
- Greenstreet article: an article on pond algae has been submitted to OPA for the spring newsletter.
- Ocean Pines Day Kickoff and Expo Event 2024: this event has been approved by the BOD. ENA will set up an exhibit table with help by all the committee members. Don will lead this project with help from Tim. Brian with help from Patricia will create a short video of environmental topics to be displayed during the event. One topic may include a demonstration of the oyster cages. Two handouts will be created that show information from ENA and environmental issues in OP. Committee members will be needed to sit at the exhibit table for up to 4 hours. Carly recommended that topics address positive “do” actions, highlight

how to save money, recommend leaving some leaf covered areas on yards, and include a white board at the table where visitors can interact on their thoughts on environmental issues.

- ENA statement of yard waste disposal/leaf yard waste: OPA was informed of the ENA request to include leaf recycling in disposal operations. OPA has renewed the contract with Republic, which will pick up bags of leaves for disposal. John Maziuk noted that stockpiled leaves at the Public Works yard are ultimately trucked to a facility in Frankford, DE where leaves may be recycled for mulch.

NEW BUSINESS

- Colonial Village ghost forest spreading due to flooding. Cypress tree planting and OPA response. To be discussed at next meeting due to time limitations.
- Mid-Atlantic Marine Debris Summit review: to be discussed at next meeting.
- Issue: Sewage disposal originating from Glen Riddle is presently trucked and pumped into the OP treatment system. Apparently, the County is working on an upgraded facility at Glen Riddle and this transfer practice can be ended in the future.
- Pesticide spraying in OP for mosquito control. To be discussed at next meeting.
- At February meeting, MCBP and Lower Shore Land Trust will present on invasive species issues and volunteer opportunities for ENA to participate.
- At March meeting, Assateague Coast Trust will present opportunities on water quality testing.

DICUSSION

- It was commented that a resident would like to opt out of free, local newspaper deliveries on their driveways. It was commented that the publishers stop delivery if the drivers notice more than three papers accumulating on the driveway. Otherwise, the homeowner should contact the publisher directly to stop the deliveries.
- Tim discussed the open ENA issues with Jeff and follow-up actions. Jeff noted that OPA is looking at current issues. He suggested that ENA draft Charging documents on the issues with research information and estimated costs: goose egg addling, fish-line tubes, and White Horse Park trees.
- Tim noted that at the recent January OP Board of Directors meeting, the General Manager described the project to rebuild a soft shoreline around the South Gate Pond is moving forward. Tim noted the large amount of work Karen Detter put into researching this project in 2022. Tim requested from MCBP additional information on the status of this project including final approval of funding from EPA, which is expected in February (see information below from MCBP). The MCBP Watershed coordinator is Steve Farr and Kevin Smith is the program manager. The vegetation planting event is scheduled for May with design underway, and monitoring of the project in summer 2024. This project is expected to cover 4600 ft of shoreline with \$150,000 allocated for design and construction.

Detailed below is the recent update that MCBP provided on 30 January on the current status of working on the South Gate Pond shoreline project.

\$150,000 is allocated to support the Pond project using federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) funding. The current approach, as agreed to with John Viola and OPA Public Works, is a two-phased effort including the retention of a consultant to develop a comprehensive plan/design to address Pond shoreline stabilization and enhancement along with stormwater management and water quality improvement. This would identify and prioritize shoreline areas needing attention, including native planting where needed and desirable. OPA, with MCBP counsel if desired, would then select those prioritized areas for implementation with the remaining funds available.

MCBP is estimating the Plan phase to cost ~ \$50,000, leaving ~\$100,000 for the implementation phase. If that doesn't cover all the possible implementation activities, OPA would need to seek additional funding. MCBP may be able to help with that, but there is no commitment of additional funding at this time. MCBP will be getting a draft RFP for the Design consultant selection process to OPA in the week of 29 January 2024.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO BOD (vis BOD Liaison)

- None at this time.

ACTION ITEMS

- Draft ENA charging document on turtle sanctuaries: Patty Gamby.
- Draft ENA charging document on egg addling: Tim Peck
- Draft ENA charging document on fish-line tubes: Patty Gamby
- Draft ENA charging document on White Horse Park trees: Tim Peck
- Draft ENA charging document on adding two geese signs: Anne O’Connell
- Map for SOP#1: Patty Gamby completed in January.
- Start filming of video for Kickoff Day showing ENA interests: Brian Burgess, Patricia Garcia.
- Start organizing ENA exhibits for Kickoff Day: Don Wolski, Tim Peck
- Charging documents: Jeff Heavner will provide a template for ENA to act on open issues.

Date of next meeting – February 28, 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.

ONGOING PROJECTS – OUTSTANDING ISSUES

OPA PROJECT - ISSUE	INITIATION	STATUS
South Pond shoreline habitat modification	Dec.2022	Funding approval expected in February 2024. OPA planning project.
Installation of fish-line tubes	June 2023	Submit charging document
White Horse Park, new trees	Aug.2023	Submit charging document.
Goose egg addling	Sept.2023	Submit charging document.
Possible public works management of geese signs	Nov.2023	Closed
Statement on yard waste disposal and recycling	Nov.2023	Closed.

Adjourn: Motion by *Don Wolski* and seconded by *Brian Burgess*. Meeting adjourned at 1215.