

## **Minutes: OPA Environment & Natural Assets Advisory Committee Meeting February 26, 2025**

**Members Present:** Pat Ryan Garcia (Chair), Brian Burgess (Vice Chair),, Patty Gamby, John Maziuk, Don Wolski (via Teams), Jeff Heavner (OPA Board Liaison). Anne O'Connell and Pat Benner were excused.

**Call to Order:** Pat Garcia called the meeting to order at 10:06 a.m.

### **Approval of Agenda**

Patty Gamby made a motion to approve the agenda which was seconded by Brian Burgess and approved unanimously.

### **Approval of January 2025 Minutes**

Patty Gamby made a motion to approve the January 2025 minutes. Brian Burgess seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

### **Chairperson's Comments:**

Pat Garcia reminded the members that the meeting would be recorded and posted on the OPA YouTube channel. She noted the committee's meeting start time has been permanently changed from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. to accommodate the Budget & Finance Committee's need for a more private room.

### **Follow-Up on Projects Needing OPA Approval/Action**

- Charging document requesting signage and Social Media posts on proper use of Fishing Gear was prepared and will be submitted before March meeting.
- ENAC Facebook page request: Board liaison said he would discuss this with OPA Marketing and Public Relations Director Josh Davis.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **Goose Control & Suspected Avian Flu Deaths**

The Committee discussed the loss of resident domestic geese and other waterfowl in the South Gate ponds possibly from the avian flu that has been identified throughout the area. Board liaison reported that Josh Davis of OPA is in contact with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources but had not yet received a report. Members noted that they were still seeing live wild geese around the Ocean Pines ponds although some reported also seeing dead geese.

### **OP Report Green Street Columns**

The chair noted the deadlines for the upcoming 2025 issues and asked for topic suggestions and volunteers to write the columns. The chair agreed to write a column for the spring edition on environmentally responsible lawn care

### **2025 OPA Kickoff Event & MCBP Bay Day Exhibits**

The chair reported that the two events are now scheduled back-to-back on the same weekend—Season Kickoff on Saturday, May 17, 11:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. at Veterans Memorial Park and Bay Day on Sunday, May 18, 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. at White Horse Park. Discussion ensued about the logistical and volunteer issues that would impact staffing exhibits for both events. The committee voted to have an exhibit at the Kickoff event only. The exhibit will feature items

demonstrating ways to “Reduce-Reuse-Recycle” and possibly an oyster gardening demo and a raffle to give away a trash picker and bucket. Pat Garcia will contact Republic Services about artwork for a potential “refrigerator magnet” giveaway at the event. She noted that she had purchased a green tablecloth for the exhibit and would loan a large umbrella to shade the table.

### **Horn Point Field Trip**

Don Wolski would look into a possible June date for a visit to Horn Point although he said that summer was a busy time of year there because of youth camps. He suggested it may be better to plan a fall visit.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Manklin Creek Sewage Spill**

The Committee discussed a sewage spill identified by Worcester County Public Works on February 7 and caused by a 10-inch sewer main break near the corner of Ocean Parkway and Cathell Road. The break caused about 1,200 gallons of sewage to leak into an adjacent marsh, which drains into Manklin Creek and was possibly caused by the extremely cold temperatures. The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) issued a public notice temporarily restricting shellfish harvesting in Manklin Creek. Committee members did not notice any visible pollution in the creek and noted that oyster farming in the community is carried out for improving water quality and not for consumption

### **Earth Day Cleanup**

The Committee revisited the idea of organizing an Ocean Pines cleanup day on Earth Day, April 22, 2025, and discussed potential sites and logistics. Don Wolski suggested collaborating with OC Beach Heroes for additional resources and support. Pat Garcia said she would reach out to that group.

### **Collaboration with Recreation & Parks Advisory Committee**

Pat Garcia reported on recent email exchanges with the R&P Committee chair and possible collaboration with them. She discovered that the R&P Committee was not consulted on the recently announced OPA initiative to install personal watercraft floating docks at the Swim & Racquet Club.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 12:05 p.m.