

OCEAN PINES MARINE ACTIVITIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES FOR JANUARY 16, 2024

MAAC Members Present: Donna McElroy (acting chairman), Sue Challis (acting secretary), Tim Connolly, Karen Steinberg, Michael Alpaugh, Kenneth Karr, Mike Reynolds, and John Latham (Board Liaison)

The meeting was called to order at 10:04 a.m. by Donna McElroy. The minutes from the last meeting on December 19, 2023, were reviewed and a few minor changes made and approved by the committee.

UPDATES ON OLD BUSINESS ITEMS

Boat Ramps – There was a discussion of recent articles in the Gazette regarding the Ocean Pines budget and the fact that plans are underway to install a card reader system at the Beach Club this summer. John Viola's office is on record as saying that he is willing to look at a similar system for the Ocean Pines boat ramps based on how this new system performs. The discussion also included a system that apparently was in effect for parking at the Yacht Club ramp several years ago, which resulted in ticketing. Points raised included whether this was a deterrent and who would enforce violators. Other suggestions were cameras at White Horse and Mumford's Landing parking lots.

Ocean Pines Farmers Market – Sue has submitted the application for an information table in the "Community Corner" of the Saturday Farmer's Market in Ocean Pines. We will be able to set up informational tables for various programs (oyster restoration, volunteer opportunities, turtle excluders required on crab pots) by notifying the Market manager one week in advance. We have up to four opportunities during 2024 to participate. Need to come up with a schedule and enlist the help of volunteers from the committee.

Presentation to Angler's Club – Donna McElroy and Ken Karr did a presentation to the Anglers Club in January on what the MAAC does and how we might work with them. It was reported that the presentation was very well received and that the members didn't realize how the committee has expanded over the years. We will continue to keep in touch with Club member and former MAAC member Jerry Leuters on future events we might help the Club publicize or participate in.

Dredging Q&As – Discussion on the answers received from the OPA on our questions regarding dredging in Ocean Pines. Our Board Liaison, John Latham, was able to get responses and had emailed them to members prior to the meeting. There was discussion on whether we as a committee would be allowed to publish a short summary of those answers for inclusion in the "This Week in Ocean Pines" article. Still no answer on who would be responsible for dredging in a waterway such as the canal from the White Horse Boat Ramp out to the St. Martin River. John will try to give an update at the next meeting.

Communications/Articles to Ocean Pines Residents – Sue Challis sent Dave Allen and Donna McElroy a draft notice that we'd like to include in the Ocean Pines "This Week in Ocean Pines"

ongoing – asking residents to submit their concerns and suggestions on marine-related issues. We need to have a volunteer from our committee willing to receive those requests via email. Sue is still working on a list of topics that could be expanded into articles starting in advance of boating season and continuing through the end of the year. She hopes to have it available to the committee at the February 20 meeting.

No Wake vs 6 MPH on waterways – Ken Karr supplied two handouts to the group explaining the difference between No Wake and 6 MPH on the waterways: No wake means no faster than 3 MPH – or the slowest speed needed to maintain steering. No Wake zones are regulated in Maryland by the Department of Natural Resources. He handed out a summary of the Law. The beginning and end of a no wake zone is usually indicated by a white and orange floating marker, a row of markers, or a large sign onshore. We currently have an onshore NO WAKE sign at the entrance of the St. Martin River which is so old that it's unreadable. There are currently no floating markers in the channel leading from the White Horse Boat Ramp out to the river. Although No wake zones are the most common, there are also Slow Speed/Minimum Wake Zones, typically marked as 6 MPH – but can be posted for any speed. The Coast Guard enforces violations of the 6 MPH limit.

Ken also handed out a recent magazine article from the February 2024 issue of Power & Motoryacht, titled "Fuelish Behavior". The article addresses how gasoline and diesel are damaging the environment and advises how federal law requires boaters to notify the appropriate authorities who will then undertake the clean-up. The article further discusses **how to clean up and contain gas spills** from both large and small boats, how and where to report a spill, and how to properly dispose of old gas. There was a discussion on whether the Ocean Pines Fire Department has a procedure in place for this, and whether this might be a good topic to include in our communications plan. John Latham volunteered to check with the fire department and others to see if there is a process for this in Ocean Pines and whether there is any program in Worcester County where used fuel can be dropped off and processed.

It was suggested by the members that the committee might prepare a summary of this information and add it to our article about boat safety.

NEW BUSINESS

Ocean Pines Kickoff – The OPA has approved the event for April 20, from 3 to 7 p.m. in White Horse Park. Most of the Committees are participating. We would need volunteers to "man" a table and we need to decide on handouts and other materials from related groups such as Coastal Bays and Assateague Coastal Trust to include.

MD Condo Law Change – John Latham briefly summarized the new law which went into effect October 1, 2023. He said the new law stems from the Florida incident where maintenance neglect led to the collapse of the building. He said this new law mostly impacts those smaller condos that have no reserves. There is a three-year compliance window. Donna said she has a copy of the new law to share if anyone is interested.

Boat safety information – Ken mentioned that Ron Fisher, the harbormaster at the Yacht Club, does an annual boat safety information email to slip owners there and that perhaps we should ask if we could distribute that information to all residents via the Ocean Pines email blast. Mike Alpaugh will contact Ron Fisher on this.

Mike Reynolds indicated he is still working on maps of the area in front of the Yacht Club indicating where NO WAKE markers may be needed. He hopes to have that prepared for our February meeting.

John Latham reminded the committee that there will be a special public meeting on the Jenkins Point Project at the Ocean Pines Golf Club on January 29.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:18 a.m. The next meeting will be held Tuesday, February 20 at 10 a.m. Our guests will be Liz Wist and Ellen Turnbaugh from the Maryland Coastal Bays Program.

Submitted by Sue Challis, Acting Secretary