

Meeting Minutes

The Wicomico County Natural Resources Conservation Advisory Committee (NRCAC) met Tuesday April 9, 2019 at the Government Office Building at 3pm

Committee: Judith Stribling Matt Hurd John Groutt Aaron Cooper Alyssa Massey
Jared Parks Doug Stevens Chris McCabe

County Staff: Frank McKenzie, Planning and Zoning Weston Young, Executive's Office

Guests: Will Dyer, MD Forest Service Tara Holste, LSLT

The group voted to approve the March minutes.

Invasive Species Initiative

Mr. Parks provided an update to the invasive initiative. He introduced new staff member, Tara Holste, who is tasked with developing the plan for the project, including establishing a direction for future funding, designing outreach education, assisting with managing the Pemberton project, etc.

Ms. Stribling asked if the submittal for the CBT grant would be completed by June. Mr. Parks stated the draft should be ready by then.

Ms. Stribling asked about the prospects of receiving funding for the project in the next fiscal year. Mr. Young advised it was in the budget but needed to make it through the Council.

Mr. Young advised the group to make sure there was demonstrable progress on the eradication efforts at Pemberton by mid summer.

Mr. McCabe asked about getting herbicide from DNR. Mr. Dyer has been given specifications by Ryan Eiseman for Pemberton on equipment, costs, etc. to use in writing up the contract.

Mr. Parks asked that the subcommittee for the invasive initiative meet soon with the LSLT staff to figure out the direction of the grant writing process.

Ms. Massey updated the group on the ongoing invasive species removal project in the City Park. The City has already done one application on the City Park side; some species already showing impacts, English ivy not yet. Mr. Dyer will follow up with him on making the herbicide application more effective.

Dredge Spoil Application at Ellis Bay

Mr. Young gave a brief history – when dredging the Wicomico River, the agreement with ACOE is that the County finds the land, does some of earth work, the Corps pays the contractor but County has associated costs also. Of the two river sections designated by the Corps, the upper river still has capacity at the Sharps Point site (recently acquired 33 adjacent acres). Lower river potential spoil sites are mostly very wet forested lands and other wetlands. The ideal property is an upland farm, which deletes farming from its future usage.

Mr. Young proposed a Baltimore Harbor / Poplar Island- Hart-Miller Island type of solution, with a thin layer of sediment deposited on a marsh surface. Ellis Bay has substantial shoreline losses, and a plan to rebuild the shoreline using coir logs deployed with intertidal species vegetation was developed and implemented with assistance from Chesapeake Bay Foundation. However, there were issues with the project design that resulted in unacceptable sediment export.

Public works reached out to Coastal Compliance Solutions to come up with alternative sites, and Mr. McCabe is writing a new dredge management plan with engineered dredge reuse and replacement to benefit the shoreline and stone/sand dredge material placement areas for a 10-year dredge cycle. Plan to deploy oyster bars as stabilization. MDE seems receptive to approving.

Mr. Parks asked about filling mosquito ditches in the marsh.

Mr. Dyer raised the concern of restoring the area if it will be washed away by sea level rise anyway. Ms. Stribling stated that the primary objective was to find a place to deposit dredge material.

Mr. Young discussed issues with expanding shipping and barge traffic in the Wicomico River.

Mr. Groutt asked about whether or not this was a cost effective plan. Mr. Young advised that this option was the most effective option because the County would not have to purchase any land.