



Wicomico County Natural Resource Conservation Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

January 10, 2023

3-4:30 pm

Room 201 GOB

Committee: Judith Stribling John Groutt Alma Hackett Jared Parks Will Dyer
Dylan Laconich

Attendance: Cassie D. Dyson Brian Soper

New Members Introduction

Ms. Stribling announced two new members were joining the committee including Mr. Josh Hastings as the new representative for County Council. Ms. Stribling asked Mr. Laconich to introduce himself. He stated he is the new Sustainability Specialist for the City, previously attended Salisbury University, and further described his academic and professional successes. Ms. Stribling asked all members to introduce themselves to Mr. Laconich, they elaborated on their roles in the committee.

Meeting Minutes

Mr. Parks made the motion to approve the meeting minutes for the previous meeting in December. Mr. Dyer seconded the motion, and the motion passed.

Rosenwald Foundation

Ms. Stribling announced she wrote a letter of recommendation to the Julius Rosenwald Foundation on behalf of the committee and shared the response letter from the Foundation. Ms. Hackett stated members of the San Domingo School committee met with members of the Board that determines if the Park will be chosen in Washington D.C. and that the review was ongoing. Ms. Stribling described to Mr. Laconich that the school in San Domingo is one of several built by Julius Rosenwald as an African American School. Mr. Groutt stated the NRCAC committee thought it was important to support the School's inclusion in the proposed National Park because Green Infrastructure is important for conservation of landscapes for Historic Sites. The committee discussed Barren Creek Road, which has been closed due to flooding damage, and whether it was important for access to the San Domingo area. After further discussion regarding ecological impacts, economic impacts, and permitting requirements for reconstruction of the road, the committee concluded that restoration of this road was probably not justifiable.

Green Infrastructure

Ms. Stribling stated Mr. Parks had been in contact with Mr. Keith Lackey regarding his students' research on Green Infrastructure policy, but the majority of this work focused on comprehensive plans rather than the zoning code. Ms. Stribling stated Green Infrastructure language for Wicomico County is within the LPPRP. It appears that most counties have not extended the GI conservation into a zoning code mandate. Mr. Parks discussed the Water Resources element of



the Comprehensive Plan and the role the Lower Shore Land Trust had in helping the public. Mr. Parks elaborated on Hazard Mitigation Plans in neighboring counties, Mr. Soper stated he was a part of writing this plan in Dorchester County. Mr. Soper stated when the plan was created it was completed at the same time the Critical Area maps were being updated. Mr. Soper elaborated on techniques and planning strategies for creation of the plan and ways to help the public. Mr. Groutt discussed retreating (moving infrastructure to make room for sea level intrusion) as a method of Hazard Mitigation, and The Nature Conservancy had previously looked for a community that would utilize this method but could not find a community to do so. The committee discussed strategies used in Dorchester for sea level rise and Hazard Mitigation Planning.

Mr. Parks further discussed his conversation with Mr. Lackey regarding how to implement the information collected. Mr. Soper stated it is important to have a set message that the community can agree with as a collective. Mr. Parks stated he agreed. He noted that Wicomico County is one of the only counties with high-importance areas on the Green Infrastructure maps. Mr. Groutt suggested The Natural Conservation Foundation to help assist with Green Infrastructure planning. Mr. Laconich stated he would be able to do a cost benefit analysis on externalities of Green Infrastructure. Ms. Stribling told Mr. Laconich if he needs any further information about the committee she can provide any necessary information. Mr. Parks and Ms. Dyson discussed where the LPPRP can be located online as well as historical documents regarding Green Infrastructure the committee has created.

Invasive Species

Mr. Dyer stated the Pemberton Invasives Team is continuing with Basal Bark Treatment and foliar spraying at Pemberton Park and it was almost maintained enough to turn maintenance over to the County. Mr. Dyer noted the Forest Service is going to burn several piles of brush and then the County will be able to mow the area several times a year to maintain the area. Mr. Dyer met with Victoria Spice and Chuck Poole the week prior to discuss the Wisteria infestation at Cedar Hill. Mr. Dyer stated he was confident the Wisteria could be maintained if it is treated while it is dormant. Mr. Groutt inquired about the types of treatment utilized, Mr. Dyer elaborated and further discussion regarding treatment methods ensued. Mr. Parks stated new staff has started at the Lower Shore Land Trust and will be taking over responsibility of multiple projects. Mr. Parks stated Lower Shore Land Trust would also work on treatment of invasive species at City Park as well as a long term management plan.

Operational Guidelines

Ms. Stribling stated during the previous meeting the committee voted to change operational guidelines dependent upon receiving a legal opinion. She further elaborated Ms. Dyson received a legal opinion that the committee needs to present all changes to operational guidelines to County Council for approval and should include any other changes they deem necessary as to only go before Council once. The Committee further discussed the Operational Guidelines and decided it would like further clarification from legal counsel about their specific language. Ms. Stribling asked Ms. Dyson to present the suggested changes to legal counsel for approval prior to going before County Council.



City Updates

Mr. Soper stated the plastic bag ban is moving forward in the City, specific regulations are being discussed.

National Fish and Wildlife Federation Foundation Grant

Mr. Parks stated he previously worked with Mr. Tyler Walston to more efficiently spend Forest Conservation dollars to protect smaller parcels, and save large lump sums to protect large forests. Mr. Parks expressed his concern about difficulties managing grants through an entire grant period due to high turnover in the Government sector. He stated the Lower Shore Land Trust is now working with Delmarva Restoration and Conservation Network (DRCN) on a forest and agricultural work group. The Lower Shore Land Trust has received a grant to plant 27,000 trees in a riparian buffer given it is within the Chesapeake Watershed. Mr. Parks stated there was an area selected that unfortunately is not available anymore but the trees have been purchased already. Mr. Parks stated he has close to 50 acres worth of trees that need to be planted and is looking for land to plant the trees, and requested the committees help in locating an area to plant. Further discussion regarding ideas for places to plant the trees ensued amongst the committee. Mr. Parks discussed other potential grants with the committee.

Staff Introductions

Ms. Lori Carter wanted to introduce new staff members to the committee including Trey Whelan and Gary Pusey. She stated there may be opportunities for the committee to work with new staff.

NRCAC Logo

Ms. Dyson inquired about designing a logo for the committee, she stated Mr. Hall said Mr. Whelan could help with the design. The committee discussed opportunities to pay a professional to design the logo. The committee also discussed what they would like on the logo