

SEVERN RIVER COMMISSION
Regular Monthly Meeting Minutes
June 7, 2012 – 4:00 P.M.
Severn Room, 2664 Riva Road, 4th Floor

		Attendance Record
Members Present:	Lina Vlavianos, Chair	5/6
	Sally Hornor, Vice Chair	6/6
	Amy Clements	4/4
	Jeff Schomig	5/6
	Bob Whitcomb	6/6
Guests and Staff:	Brenda Weeks, AACo. DPW/WERS	
Members Absent:	Kurt Riegel	5/6
	Michael Robinson	5/6
	Joe Rubino	4/6
	Sheila Finlayson, City Council (Ex officio)	0/3
	John Grasso, County Council (Ex officio)	2/6
	Scott Hymes, MD DNR (Ex officio)	1/6

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Vlavianos called the regular monthly meeting of the Severn River Commission (SRC) to order at 4:15 p.m. in the Severn Room, 2664 Riva Road, Annapolis, MD. A quorum was declared present.

Riegel, Robinson, Rubino, Finlayson, Grasso and Hymes were not present. Two items were added to the agenda: (1) Carriage Hills and (2) Severn River Association Inspection Report.

PUBLIC INPUT / AGENDA ITEMS – No public input.

MINUTES

The Minutes for the May 3, 2012, regular monthly meeting were presented for approval. Whitcomb requested the following correction: On page 3 under agenda item Jabez/SHA in the last paragraph, the first sentence should read . . ."a site off of Route 178 . . ." instead of Route 32. The minutes were approved as corrected.

MOTION: A MOTION, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FOR THE MAY 3, 2012 REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING OF THE SRC AS CORRECTED ABOVE, WAS MADE BY HORNOR AND SECONDED BY WHITCOMB. THE MOTION WAS PASSED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE AND THE MINUTES WERE APPROVED AS CORRECTED.

ANNOUNCEMENTS / CORRESPONDENCE

1. Sent a follow-up letter to Ms. Karuna Pujara, State Highway Administration (SHA), to reiterate the importance of having the problems observed during the April 19 site walk corrected as soon as possible at Sites 1 and 3 and to coordinate with DPW in addressing the upstream erosion problems near Site 5.
2. Sent a second letter, dated May 4, 2012, to the County Council expressing SRC's opposition to Bill 15-12 and recommending that the County perform additional analysis to determine what impacts to the Open Space areas are implied by the proposed bill.
3. Received Mr. Thomas Lindsay's resume from the County Executive's office. Mr. Lindsay is the County Executive's newest selected member of SRC and is awaiting final approval from the County Council. He will fill the County vacancy left when Kurt Riegel moved to Annapolis and was re-appointed to fill a City vacancy.

OLD BUSINESS

Bill 15-12 Open Space

Vlavianos noted that Bill 15-12 passed. Any efforts to change the bill had little significance. The County has a working group to develop implementing goals for the legislation. This includes a step-by-step process of qualifications that has to be met for more active use.

No Discharge Zone

Clements noted she has nothing new to report at this time but will inquire and update SRC.

Septics

Whitcomb reported there is nothing new regarding septics at this time.

Slag

Honor reported her summary is based on documents from the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)--a report based on a USACE study at Mill Hill, a site in the Eastern Bay, and the Severn River providing data on heavy metal concentrations in water and sediment samples adjacent to the reefs as well as metal concentrations in tissue collected from oysters growing on the constructed reefs. After a comparison of the data, it was concluded the results indicate that slag is not an appropriate alternate substrate for oyster reefs. This conclusion is based on elevated concentrations of numerous toxic heavy metals in the environment associated with reefs constructed of slag at both Mill Hill and in the Severn River and in oyster tissue collected from the Severn.

Following a lengthy discussion, SRC agreed to send a letter to John Griffin, Secretary of Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR), with copies to the County Executive and USACE, strongly recommending that slag be eliminated as an alternate substrate for oyster reef construction in the Severn River and the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Honor will draft a letter and forward it to Commission members for input.

Oyster Restoration Activities

Whitcomb reported that the third oyster planting on Saturday, June 2, was very successful. A sizeable number of volunteers, including some young people, participated.

Whitcomb extended a pat-on-the-back to Honor for all her hard work. He and Honor are working together on an ecological education project for signage at Jonas Green Park. A grant was obtained from the Chesapeake Bay Trust through the Severn River Association (SRA) for the project.

Annapolis

Clements reported that the Board of Appeals recently addressed violations of the Forest Conservation Act at The Reserve at Quiet Waters but at this time she has nothing to report.

The City is having miscellaneous repairs/restoration done to the Hillman Parking Garage.

Critical Area

Schomig distributed draft copies of a thank you and follow-up letter to George Eberle, County Inspections & Permits (I&P). Following discussion and input, SRC continues to

have concerns that issuing VMP's to remove mature trees causes more harm to the shoreline ecosystem than any speculative benefit from pro-active erosion control. Mature trees provide excellent erosion control and water filtration, while fallen trees provide critical shoreline habitat. Hornor will provide a source to cite. The SRC recommends the County be cautious with its approval when authorizing the removal of vegetation, particularly mature trees as part of a VMP, and confine removal where such trees pose an imminent threat to the safety of surrounding people and structures. Public outreach was discussed but no conclusions were reached.

Because of the lack of resources available to conduct follow-up inspections of properties for which it issues VMP's, the Commission also strongly recommends that the County restore the inspection positions that I&P has lost over the past several years. Schomig will redraft the letter and forward it to Commission members for further input before finalizing the letter for distribution.

Schomig will inquire of the State Critical Area Commission if critical area information is provided to new property owners.

Jabez/SHA

As noted under "Announcements/Correspondence", a letter was sent to Karuna Pujara, SHA, to reiterate the importance of having the problems observed during the April 19 Jabez site walk corrected.

Stormwater Utility Bill 79-11

Hornor reported that Councilman Trumbauer is convening a work group of various stakeholders to discuss rewriting the new stormwater utility bill.

Website - There was nothing to report.

NEW BUSINESS

Severn River Association Inspection

Whitcomb noted that two audits were conducted by volunteers: (1) runoff protection on rain gardens; and (2) maintenance of bio-retention facilities. He suggested at this stage there is no need for SRC to be involved. SRA has been highly complimented on its efforts.

Carriage Hills

Vlavianos and Whitcomb visited a problem area off Route 178 where a very deep and wide hole has been scoured by runoff. Vlavianos will call SHA to get them to come out to the site and to urge corrective action.

Flush Tax

Concerns were discussed about an increase in the flush tax and money being diverted out of the Bay Restoration Fund.

PUBLIC INPUT/NEW ITEMS – There was no public input.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:58 p.m. The next SRC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, July 5, 2012, at 4:00 p.m. in the Severn Room (4th Floor), 2664 Riva Road, Annapolis, MD.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Weeks
AACounty DPW, Bureau of Engineering
Watershed, Ecosystem & Restoration Services