

SEVERN RIVER COMMISSION
Regular Monthly Meeting Minutes
March 2, 2017 – 4:00 P.M.
Severn Room, 2664 Riva Road, 4th Floor

		Attendance Record
Members Present:	Charlie Kreter, Chair	2/3
	Sara Phillips, Vice Chair	1/3
	Lex Birney	2/3
	Claudia Donegan, MD DNR (Ex Officio)	2/3
	Kurt Riegel	3/3
	Dick Spencer	3/3
	Bob Whitcomb	2/3
Guests and Staff:	Meghan Spencer, AACo. DPW/WPRP	
	Jeff Allenby (Chesapeake Conservancy)	
	Lynne Rockenbauch (Severn River Association)	
Members Absent:	Jim Burdick	2/3
	Bill Kardash	2/3
	Del. Michael Malone, House of Del. (Ex Officio)	0/2
	Daniel Roche	1/3

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Kreter called the regular monthly meeting of the Severn River Commission (SRC) to order at 4:08 p.m. in the Severn Room, 4th Floor, 2664 Riva Road, Annapolis, MD. A quorum was present.

GUEST SPEAKER

Jeff Allenby of the Chesapeake Conservancy (CC) presented to the commission about the mission and vision of the CC while providing details regarding how the CC uses GIS for conservation and restoration in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. The main priorities of the CC are conserving remaining high functioning landscapes, restoring ecosystem functions to under-performing landscapes, reducing nutrient sediment pollution, working with agricultural landscapes & urban/suburban stormwater to reduce nutrient pollution, and monitoring impacts of climate change on wetland loss & upland migration. The CC also uses technology to virtually walk streams using land cover/use maps, stream maps and other web-based tools.

The CC is working with the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center (SERC) on shad-spawning analysis. They've also been developing high resolution land cover data for the Chesapeake Bay Watershed.

Following the presentation, Allenby then answered questions from the SRC and meeting attendees. The presentation is available at the SRC office.

PUBLIC INPUT / AGENDA ITEMS

Lynne Rockenbauch of the Severn River Association (SRA) said they hired their first staff member on February 27, 2017 to help with strategic planning, update communications technology, and water quality monitoring. Rockenbauch also mentioned that Project Clean Stream will happen in April 2017. A similar project in Plum Creek will take place after Project Clean Stream is completed.

MINUTES

The Minutes for the January 12, 2017, regular monthly meeting were presented for approval. Riegel addressed an issue with a portion of the minutes, and requested to hold voting on minutes until the March 2017 meeting.

MOTION: A MOTION TO APPROVE THE JANUARY 12, 2017 MINUTES, WAS MADE BY SPENCER AND SECONDED BY WHITCOMB. THE MOTION WAS PASSED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE AND THE MINUTES WILL BE REVISED AS APPROVED.

MOTION: A MOTION TO APPROVE THE FEBRUARY 2, 2017 MINUTES, WAS MADE BY BIRNEY AND SECONDED BY RIEGEL. THE MOTION WAS PASSED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE AND THE MINUTES WERE APPROVED AS WRITTEN.

ANNOUNCEMENTS / CORRESPONDENCE

- (1) Whitcomb has been reappointed to the SRC for another 3 year term.
- (2) Burdick has not yet been reappointed, and there has been no action or response from the City of Annapolis. Chair Kreter considers Burdick's membership active until otherwise notified.
- (3) In a letter from the State Highway Association (SHA) about the reconfiguration of the Severn River Bridge, the SHA plans to remove the median, as well as adding additional lanes and a shoulder. Whitcomb noted a new law about SHA spending requiring public water access if improvements are made on a highway bridge crossing a river. If the construction comes under the new law, Whitcomb wondered if there would be funds set aside for public water access. Kreter requested that Donegan find out more information.

OLD BUSINESS

Permit Notifications

Spencer has an issue with a proposal to develop a Tennis Center at Millersville Park (TCM). According to Spencer, Millersville Park is an approximately 20 acre agricultural area on the Annapolis side of the 97 interchange, and is owned by Anne Arundel County. AA County Recreation & Parks is working with the Tennis Alliance of Anne Arundel County (TAAAC) to develop the TCM with 4 indoor courts, 8 outdoor courts, and 2 clay courts. The TCM has faced local opposition from residents in the area. Spencer suggested that the county use pervious surfaces for the outdoor courts and a green roof on the building. SRC has an issue with the project because of the close proximity to the Jabez Restoration site, and the county needs to make sure the Jabez restoration isn't negatively affected by the TCM.

Spencer noted that AECOM is the contractor involved in the project. Birney noted opposition from county residents, as well as addressed issues about the financial aspect of the project, such as debt and funding issues. Birney feels that it's unlikely the project will be completed any time soon for the above reasons.

Water Access

Spencer suggested that Kreter write a letter to the school board about public water access at Arlington Echo, but also stressed that there are other issues with opening Arlington Echo for public water access. Whitcomb says that pressure doesn't overwhelm the current needs and uses. Spencer noted that there are areas that haven't been used for public access that are appropriate. Whitcomb said that the county has progressed in developing a web site for the public water access committee.

Spencer said there's potential public water access in Round Bay. Donegan proposed a kayak public access site off General's Highway near Severn Run. Whitcomb requested a trailerable launch area on each side of the kayak launch site near Severn Run. Kreter mentioned the land trust north of Sherwood Forest. Spencer noted that the land trust was owned by AA County Recreation & Parks.

Future Presentations

- Spencer would like Erik Michelsen to deliver his presentation from the Watershed Stewards Academy (WSA) Conference on February 25, 2017
- Kreter requested a presentation from the SHA on the Severn River Bridge Plan
- Spencer wants a presentation from John Page Williams from the Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) about work on the Severn River, Lou Etgen from Alliance of the Chesapeake Bay (ACB), and a University of Maryland (UMD) representative to talk about

the citizen monitoring program

No Discharge Zone

Spencer received an email last week from David Barker of the Back Creek Conservancy (BCC) about Maryland House Bill 885 proposed by Del. Seth Howard in response to the closing of oyster harvesting activities in Rhode River in 2016. Spencer feels that HB 885 is poorly worded, as it references sewage discharge, where it can be discharged by boats, as well as opposing the Clean Water Act. Spencer says that Del. Howard has been informed of the issues with MD HB 885. The hearing for HB 885 will be on March 24, 2017.

Spencer mentioned that a commission had been proposed in the Environment & Transportation Committee. Riegel thinks the pursuit of perfection may become a barrier to progress. There is currently momentum in Anne Arundel County and the City of Annapolis, but the creation of a new committee could bring No Discharge Zone (NDZ) progress to a halt while other issues are debated. Spencer agreed, and opposes Del. Howard's introduction of a new committee.

Annapolis Yacht Club

Kreter said that 110 Compromise Street is currently under construction.

Oyster Restoration Activities

Whitcomb presented to county and state legislative bodies. A letter was sent to the Oyster Advisory Commission (OAC) to have an AA County representative on the commission. The Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) came out with a compromise proposal to trade off sanctuaries for fishing zones. Whitcomb said most trade off sanctuaries are on the Eastern Shore and don't directly impact the Severn River. The sanctuary proposal for Whitehall Bay is still on the table.

Kreter asked about the next oyster planting date. Whitcomb says the next date is in June 2017.

Spencer said that Maryland House Bill 924 was submitted by Del. Gilchrist. Whitcomb says there has been no progress on oyster sanctuary selection. Spencer wants to know if there's a way around the state by forming a Severn River oyster restoration alliance. Whitcomb says that one year of oyster restoration was funded by grants. Spencer suggested harvestable reefs from the 450 bridge to Chase Creek, and also suggested planting reefs from Chase Creek to Sherwood Forest without harvesting would clean the water enough to harvest below. Spencer said Jodie Baxter presented a public/private partnership proposal for the county oystermen. Whitcomb noted that there was no specific waterway designation, and would leave that decision up to the watermen. Spencer suggested that something similar happen on the Severn

River. Whitcomb said there was already a public partnership with watermen on the Severn River.

Website

The web site is on hold until the April 2017 meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

PUBLIC INPUT/NEW ITEMS

There was no public input.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:47 p.m. The next SRC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 6, 2017 at 4:00 p.m. in the Severn Room (4th Floor), 2664 Riva Road, Annapolis, MD.

Respectfully submitted,

Meghan Spencer
AACounty DPW, Bureau of Engineering
Watershed Protection & Restoration Program