

SEVERN RIVER COMMISSION
Regular Monthly Meeting Minutes
March 7, 2019 – 4:00 P.M.
Severn Room, 2664 Riva Road, 4th Floor

	Attendance Record
Members Present:	
Sara Phillips, Acting Chair	3/3
Lex Birney	2/3
Jim Burdick	3/3
Claudia Donegan, MD DNR (Ex Officio)	2/3
Ald. Rob Savidge, City Council (Ex Officio)	2/3
Dick Spencer	3/3
Bob Whitcomb	2/3
Guests and Staff:	
Erik Michelsen, AACo. DPW/WPRP	
Matt Johnston, AACo. Office of the County Executive	
David Barker, Severn River Association	
Meghan Spencer, AACo. DPW/WPRP	
Members Absent:	
Charlie Kreter, Chair	0/3
Kurt Riegel, Acting Vice Chair	2/2
Del. Michael Malone, House of Del. (Ex Officio)	2/3
Bill Kardash	2/3
Daniel Roche	2/3

CALL TO ORDER

Acting Chair Phillips called the regular monthly meeting of the Severn River Commission (SRC) to order at 4:09 p.m. in the Severn Room, 4th Floor, 2664 Riva Road, Annapolis, MD. A quorum was present.

GUEST SPEAKER – Erik Michelsen, AACo Watershed Protection & Restoration Program

Erik Michelsen presented to the commission about the past, current and future goals of the Anne Arundel County Watershed Protection & Restoration Program (WPRP). Michelsen gave an overview of the beginning stage of WPRP from 2010 – 2014, followed by information on Water Reclamation Facility Performance, Septic Systems, and the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Permit.

Michelsen briefly discussed where WPRP was prior to 2014, then discussed what has been completed between 2014 and 2018. The Phase 2 Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) goals included: Upgrading all county Water Reclamation Facilities to Enhanced Nutrient Removal (ENR), connecting approximately 50% of septic systems to public sewer, and retrofitting about 20,000 impervious acres.

Following that, Michelsen discussed the current status of WPRP-funded projects, as well as award winning projects and public outreach initiatives. Michelsen also discussed additional ways to engage the private sector, the WPRP Restoration Grant Program, as well as integrating water management by working with the Utilities and Highways departments, and working with a variety of implementation partners, educational institutions and environmental organizations.

In addition, Michelsen discussed the impact of increased street sweeping and the effect of salt vs salt brine during winter storm events. Michelsen then spoke about the Watershed Stewards Academy and their work during 2018, as well as the WPRP path to compliance by 2025. He provided information regarding the Total Nitrogen Load portion of the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) requirement from 2010 to 2025 and the WPRP's Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) beyond 2025, as well as the WPRP's long term outlook.

Following the presentation, Michelsen answered questions from the SRC. The presentation is available at the SRC office.

PUBLIC INPUT / AGENDA ITEMS

David Barker of the Severn River Association (SRA) discussed the future of the SRA. The annual report for 2018 was released and copies were distributed to the SRC. Barker introduced Tom Guay as the SRA Program Officer for the 3rd year. In 2018, the Back Creek Conservancy (BCC) consolidated with the SRA. Barker asked for cooperation and guidance from the SRC as well as an update on current SRC activities. Guay is working on water quality monitoring, oyster growing, and a living shorelines tool kit.

Barker said there is no current plan for the SRA, especially addressing the MS4 permit and Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) requirements for Anne Arundel County and the City of Annapolis. The SRA needs a long term strategy, and Barker recommends a joint meeting of the SRA and SRC to develop a work plan that benefits both organizations. Barker also requested that the SRA and SRC revisit the status of the properties listed in Gems of the Severn (1988), as well as building a long term habitat restoration strategy.

MINUTES

The Minutes for the February 7, 2019, regular monthly meeting were presented for approval.

MOTION: A MOTION TO APPROVE THE FEBRUARY 7, 2019 MINUTES, WAS MADE BY BURDICK AND SECONDED BY BIRNEY. THE MOTION WAS PASSED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE AND THE MINUTES WERE APPROVED AS WRITTEN.

ANNOUNCEMENTS / CORRESPONDENCE

Annapolis Environmental Summit

Savidge discussed the Annapolis Environmental Summit. The attendees mainly brainstormed ideas to environmentally benefit the City of Annapolis. There will be a follow up meeting once the ideas presented in the summit are finalized. Phillips requested more information because it will affect how the SRC addresses public policy. Savidge invited the SRC members to the City of Annapolis Environmental Matters Committee (EMC) meetings in order to follow up on legislation, but will provide updates to the commission on legislation as well.

Annapolis Waterways Cabinet

Savidge said that the intention of the Annapolis Waterways Cabinet (AWC) is to have a cabinet-level group that will work with department heads and coordinating watershed restoration and stormwater management in the City of Annapolis. Savidge will be the EMC representative, and will be chaired by Jackie Guild. Phillips asked for SRC participation recommendations, and potentially naming a delegate to the AWC.

Resolution 9-19

The hearing for Resolution 9-19 is on Monday, March 18, 2019, at 7:00 PM in the County Council Chambers. Resolution 9-19 concerns lot consolidation and reconfiguration in the Critical Area.

Draft Oyster Management Plan

Phillips requested Whitcomb make comments on the Draft Oyster Management Plan. Whitcomb agreed, but wants to have additional SRC input. Whitcomb has no concerns based on the DNR plan presentation, noting that some informal practices have been codified. Spencer suggested a natural harvest moratorium for 3 to 5 years, possibly on a rotational basis, due to over-harvesting, and an increase in tax per bushel of oysters harvested. Spencer feels that the environment is taking a back seat to the watermen.

Whitcomb feels this isn't a Severn River issue, as the Severn River is a sanctuary, and that the plan formalizes removing sanctuary status. Burdick asked if it was time to make comment, and Whitcomb agrees that it is the right time, but doesn't feel the need to support or object to the OMP. Phillips suggested that comments be limited to the Severn River only to avoid violating the SRC charter. Whitcomb noted the watershed in question is in the Tangier Sound, and supports DNR managing each oyster bar individually in terms of public harvesting. Phillips requested formal comment from the SRC to protect the oyster sanctuary in the Severn River. Whitcomb will prepare comments on behalf of the SRC.

NEW BUSINESS

NEW ITEMS

Stormwater Coalition

Spencer attended a stormwater coalition meeting the previous week. The main concern was regarding inspections and maintenance of stormwater facilities, specifically the high level of development in AA County and stormwater management during and after the construction process. Spencer sent an email with some thoughts following the meeting. The meeting attendees plan to create a small group to work with the county council. Spencer feels that stormwater management is part of the grading permit issue, and there is no permit confirming valid stormwater management plans from the contractor. Phillips said MDE has specific requirements for stormwater management plans when issuing permits, and that storm conditions are changing, resulting in stormwater management plans being overwhelmed.

OLD BUSINESS

Bulkhead Replacement

Donegan said there was a meeting with the Corps of Engineers, DNR, Claussen family and MDE. Donegan said there is progress being made, as MDE has come to the conclusion that there are issues with the ACE permitting process, as residents are considering a rebuttement as an alternative to living shorelines due to permitting issues. Phillips asked if support letters to ACE were worthwhile. Phillips will draft a letter and send to the SRC for comment. Donegan suggests that living shorelines will become more common if the permitting process is easier.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:14 p.m. The next SRC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 4, 2019 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