

Anacostia Watershed Citizens Advisory Committee
Meeting Summary
Tuesday, January 13th, 2009

Meeting Attendance:

Members and Associates

Mary Barber (District of Columbia)
Brent Bolin (Prince George's County)
Dennis Chestnut (District of Columbia)
Jim Collier (District of Columbia)
Jim Fary (Montgomery County)
Andy Fellows (Prince George's County)
Gabe Horchler (Prince George's County)
Dale Manty (Prince George's County)
Bruce Sidwell (Montgomery County)
Dan Smith (Prince George's County)
Bill Matuszeski (District of Columbia)

Guests/Interested Parties

Dana Minerva (Anacostia Watershed Restoration Partnership)
Dottie Yunger (Anacostia River Keeper)
Jim Connolly (AWS)
Jim Foster (AWS)
Mark Symborski (M-NCPPC)
Karen Buxbaum (M-NCPPC)
Fatimah Hasan (M-NCPPC)

COG Support Staff

John Galli
Aubin Maynard

Absent Members and Associates

Elizabeth Arnold (Prince George's County)
Susan Barnett (Prince George's County)
David Dunmire (Montgomery County)
Elaine Friehele (Prince George's County)
Luther Bruner, Jr (District of Columbia)
Brenda Bruner-Crumley (District of Columbia)
Elissa Feldman (District of Columbia)
Bob Ferraro (Montgomery County)
Christopher Pohlhaus (Prince George's County)
Larry Silverman (Montgomery County)
Irv Sheffey (District of Columbia)
John Garner (District of Columbia)
Mi Ae Kim (Prince George's County)
Lutz Rastaetter (Prince George's County)
Carl Reeverts (District of Columbia)

I. Welcome and Introductions

AWCAC Chair Mary Barber (District of Columbia) began the meeting at 7:30 pm. All present were asked to introduce themselves to the group.

II. Approval of 11-08 Meeting Summary

Action/Outcome: The summary was approved unanimously.

III. Maximizing Anacostia Restoration Plan Citizen Participation

Chair Barber provided a brief overview of the Friends of Sligo Creek's (FOSC's) involvement with the Anacostia Watershed Restoration Plan Interim Report (see AWCAC minutes from 2008 for further information on the Plan). She described FOSC's interaction as a "test case" on how to involve citizens and watershed groups, and the current presentation as a way to maximize that interaction.

Mr. Bruce Sidwell (Montgomery County) from FOSC began his report by first thanking Mr. John Galli and Mr. Phong Trieu (both COG), and the rest of the Plan Development Team (PDT) for their hard work in identifying so many potential restoration projects in Sligo Creek. He also felt that overall, the Plan was proceeding well. However, he had a few suggestions for improving overall communication, coordination with and participation on the part of subwatershed groups. These suggestions are summarized below:

- In hindsight, it was difficult to engage FOSC members to read such a long report, especially online, and those that did had a hard time articulating what was in the Plan to others. To address this deficiency, a short, 2-3 page-long executive summary for the overall report and appendices should be provided by the Corps. Mr. Sidwell provided a handout of a short list that would make such an executive summary effective and would answer the following questions: How did the plan come about? Who is involved? Who asked for it? What exactly will happen with the report? Who will implement it? Where will funds come from and who will receive them?
- For the subwatershed groups and their membership, a description of the relationship between AWCAC, the Partnership, the PDT, and the various subwatershed groups would be helpful. He commented that many subwatershed group members do not even know what AWCAC is, so an organizational chart would be helpful. Also noted that acronyms need to be defined;
- A large issue is that it is a mystery to FOSC members what the Plan will be used for, what congress's expectation are, or if the Plan will even be funded. To get additional support, it maybe useful to layout future plans for implementation; and

- Future PDT interaction with the subwatershed groups should allow for more time for interaction and feedback.

Ms. Dana Minerva (AWRP Executive Director) noted that she had recently spoken with both Ms. Diane Cameron (Stormwater Partners) and Ms. Nancy Stoner (SC and NRDC), and that they have reviewed the Plan. However, she could not presently share their recommendations. Ms. Minerva next expressed her opinion that the Plan’s focus is “misdirected” (relying too heavily on a “list of projects”), with potentially limited results, and not enough on the programmatic approaches. She next emphasized several programmatic approaches she felt were needed:

1. Strong development and redevelopment standards
2. Stronger MS4 requirements for Prince George’s County
3. Well funded ‘rainscape’ type programs across all three jurisdictions
4. A ban on coal tar asphalt sealants
5. 20% of local road budgets should be reallocated to address stormwater water quality issues.
6. Strong road codes

Mr. Jim Fary (Montgomery County) observed that the projects proposed in the Plan could receive funding from the upcoming federal stimulus package and a lengthy discussion followed.

Ms. Minerva noted that she has asked the Partnership’s members to compile lists of restoration projects and that she hopes to get some public review input, but the need for a quick submission may minimize the degree of input. She hopes to be able to circulate to representatives. She said the steps to receive funding from the stimulus package will depend on the package’s form. It will either be “pork” or will be “block grants” to states.

- Mr. Galli noted that Montgomery County and the District of Columbia have recently provided their lists.
- Mr. Dale Manty expressed his concern that the Plan will continue to promote the employment of “yesterday projects” that don’t actually address the watersheds true problems. He advocated for the exclusive use of LID for dealing with stormwater issues.
- Vice-Chair, Mr. Mike Smith concurred that the focus should be on LID projects, as FOSC has recommended to the Corps. He also noted that FOSC is excited about the potential of the Breewood and Raydale Road restoration projects being funded.
- Mr. Galli replied that almost all of the 84 stormwater-related projects identified in the Corps Sligo Creek restoration inventory were LID projects.

- Mr. Jim Collier said that the projects need to be addressing two issues in the Anacostia: 1) reduce pollution by specifically targeting problems identified through TMDLs and 2) biological community restoration.
- Mr. Sidwell stated that FOOSC would like another opportunity for its members to review and digest the Plan, and would like to know what local political leaders think of it.
- Mr. Brent Bolin reiterated that subwatershed groups would benefit from more lead time from the Corps, and that they should remember not to underestimate the educational component.

IV. County Water Resources Plans

Mr. Mark Symborski reviewed the new Montgomery County Water Resources Plan (WRP). Mr. Symborski said that state mandate required all counties to complete a WRP by this year, and it was the first time that counties took a comprehensive look at water resources from land use, development, and other perspectives. The plan would use nutrient loading analysis among other things to shape future recommendations.

Ms. Karen Buxbaum (M-NCPPC) added that the Prince George's County half of M-NCPPC is also writing a similar plan for the county. She expressed her concern that modeling results would show that future "smart growth" could actually further degrade the Anacostia and other waterways; therefore, there is a need to move beyond "smart growth."

A lively discussion followed highlighting many aspects of various approaches to restoration and conservation of the watershed. Major discussion points are highlighted below:

- Mr. Fary pointed out the WRP must push for stricter fines to enforce whatever programs are proposed.
- Mr. Collier said that efforts to restore the Chesapeake Bay are failing even with all the modeling and dire warnings. Efforts in the Anacostia watershed should tie the river to drinking water standards to force the issue to the forefront.
- Mr. Jim Connelly (AWS) and Chair Barber stressed the importance of M-NCPPC PG&MC working together, perhaps even with the Partnership. Mr. Connelly also said that this will be difficult because Prince George's County does not have the authority to deal specifically with water quality issues. Ms. Buxbaum noted that Price George's County also lacked advocacy support to push through such a program.
- Mr. Manty said that such plans should be review/graded on both effort and success, like the Sustainable Santa Monica Project.

- Mr. Andy Fellows questioned the connection between the legal obligations of the MS4 permit and the new WRP. Mr. Symborski said they were still working that out.

V. Anacostia Storm Drain Curb Marker and Stenciling Campaign

Vice-Chair, Mr. Mike Smith described how he was still trying to push through an Anacostia- wide curb marker and stenciling campaign. He said that communication difficulties have been slowing the process down and representatives of Montgomery County wanted a county- wide curb marker and not necessarily an Anacostia-specific one, but would like AWCAC to help push for the campaign. Such work is key to increasing membership and citizen involvement.

Mr. Galli stated that COG is supportive of such a campaign and that COG will try to provide a small amount of funding to get the campaign moving forward. He added that curb markers can be fairly expensive at approximately \$8 each, but that stenciling is more cost-effective.

Chair Barber said she will set up a meeting between herself, Vice Chair Smith, and Mr. Galli to discuss the next steps in the campaign.

Action/Outcome: Chair Barber will set up a meeting between herself, Vice Chair Smith and Mr. Galli to move the storm drain stenciling campaign forward.

VI. Planning Upcoming AWCAC Workshops

Due to time constraints, the discussion of upcoming AWCAC workshops was postponed. Mr. Fellows did say that the Advocacy Committee had tentatively decided on the New Deal Café as the site for the March 7th ½ day workshop.

VII. Executive Director's Report

Ms. Minerva gave a brief update on the efforts to improve MD stormwater regulations. She said that AWCAC and subwatershed groups should specifically thank Senator Pinsky and Delegate Healy for signing on a letter of support for stronger regulations. She also said letters of support were sent from Maryland Stormwater Partners and the Anacostia River Keeper.

VIII. New/Old Business

There were no new business items.

IX. Adjourn