

Anacostia Watershed Citizens Advisory Committee
Meeting Summary
Tuesday, September 10th, 2009

- DRAFT -

Meeting Attendance:

Members and Associates

Mary Barber (District of Columbia)
Susan Barnett (Prince George's County)
Brent Bolin (Prince George's County)
Bill Duncan (Prince George's County)
Jim Fary (Montgomery County)
Andy Fellows (Clean Water Action)
Gabe Horchler (Prince George's County)
Dale Manty (Prince George's County)
Harriette Phelps (Prince George's County)
Dan Smith (Prince George's County)
Mike Smith (Montgomery County)
Irv Sheffey (District of Columbia)

Guests/Interested Parties

Dana Minerva (Executive Director, Anacostia Watershed Restoration Partnership)

COG Support Staff:

Aubin Maynard

Absent Members and Associates

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

I. Welcome and Introductions

Chair Mike Smith (Montgomery County) began the meeting at 7:30 pm following a social hour that started at 7:00 pm. All present were asked to introduce themselves to the group and to share any updates.

II. Approval of the 7-14-09 Meeting Summary

The 7-14-09 meeting summary was approved unanimously.

III. AWSC Update

Chair Smith briefly described the last Steering Committee meeting. He indicated that DCWASA had given a presentation on the new storm drain pipe network leading to Blue Plains treatment plant, and the presentation will be available on anacostia.net (see steering committee summaries in the archive section). Chair Smith also said there would be a Anacostia related summit next spring, Ms. Dana Minerva (Executive Director-Anacostia Watershed Restoration Partnership) would explain further, which he hoped everyone would attend.

IV. Executive Director's Report

Ms. Dana Minerva (Executive Director-Anacostia Watershed Restoration Partnership) updated the committee on her activities, resent partnership related events and important upcoming dates.

1. There will be a special meeting of the Steering Committee (SC) September 24th for review of the Anacostia Restoration Plan (ARP). While the meeting will be open to the public, the focus of the meeting was for SC input.
2. Ms. Minerva indicated that she was working with the USACE team on the programmatic approach piece of the ARP, which she had been pushing to be included.
3. The Action Agenda is in the process of being completed, as member jurisdictions have submitted updated lists of restoration activities.
4. George Hawkins, head of DC Department of the Environment (DDOE), is leaving his position for a job with WASA. While it is a real blow for DDOE and the partnership, it may be advantageous to have a friendly face at WASA.
5. There has been no word on the DC MS4 Permit. Ms. Minerva indicated she actually heard that the EPA gave a draft permit to DC, but it has not been made public or released to anyone.

6. As the result of the litigation related to the Montgomery County MS4 permit Prince George's County will likely withhold releasing their permit until the litigation is cleared up.
 - Mr. Bill Duncan (Prince George's County) inquired about the projected time it would take to settle litigation.
 - Ms. Minerva said that it was likely to take awhile, likely more than a year. The first court ruling included very dangerous language. Simply put, the ruling indicated that Earth Justice and the Anacostia Waterkeeper could not sue Montgomery County because they did not have adequate standing. Such language could have wide ranging effects.
7. Ms. Minerva attended a meeting on the Montgomery County stormwater surcharge, and she said the county was doing a great job trying to find the money to implement the MS4. A county consultant is considering the surcharge and other options as funding sources, even extending the surcharge to commercial properties.
8. Ms. Minerva concluded by reminding AWCAC member it is their job to help inform local officials about the ARP and asking them how to fund the projects.

V. Stormwater Workshop and Outreach

Ms. Susan Barnet described a workshop that she and the Beaverdam Creek Watershed Watch Group held a stormwater workshop in Greenbelt. The impetus for the event was two fold. First, Ms. Barnet was inspired by the advocacy workshop held at COG, and really began to understand that stormwater is a driving restoration issue. Next Mr. Bruce Gilmore (AWS, and American Rivers) offered to explain state stormwater laws. The event ended up attracting about 50 people and included speakers from the Greenbelt Planning Department. Ms. Barnet felt that the event was an overall success and generated a lot of interest. She said that she would be happy to talk to other groups about setting up such an event. She ended by talking about a program, brought up at the workshop, in Anne Arundel County training watershed experts (<http://www.arlingtonecho.org/restoration-projects/watershed-stewards-academy.html>). The program incorporates rigorous coursework with a final project. The program seems perfect for learning the multiple issues within our watersheds. Unfortunately, only one or two people outside the county are allowed to join every year. From this workshop she had been in contact with other subwatershed group members considering pushing for a stormwater internship program and or tour of stormwater projects and problems in the area. A brief discussion followed:

- Mr. Duncan indicated that they had drafted a petition and had over 100 people sign it at the greenbelt Labor Day festival. However, Mr. Duncan was unclear where to send it. Additionally, he indicated he was concerned that no talking points existed for the Stormwater initiative. He did not know how to convince elected officials that pushing for 2+” control was better than 1.5”. He requested real life example of

redevelopments capturing 2+ inches storms, because he just didn't know if it was actually possible.

- Ms. Minerva responded that Ms. Diane Cameron was composing a paper that would have strong examples of successful projects. She believes its possible for some projects, but the option of off-site control will need to be included.
- Mr. Duncan requested the information from Ms. Cameron be shared with AWCAC members.
- Vice-Chair Mary Barber suggested Bruce Gilmore could compose such talking points.
- Vice-Chair Brent Bolin and Mr. Duncan agreed to work together to draft a letter to go with the petition to the City of Greenbelt officials within the next few days, since the city council would meet soon.
- Mr. Irv Sheffey indicated that after their initial meeting following the June Advocacy workshop, DC representatives have not met. However ECC and Sierra Club sponsored a boat tour for about twenty individuals. A second trip would be made with leaders from east of the river in DC. Councilwoman Yvette Alexander (Ward 8) may also attend.

VI. Anacostia Signs on Maryland Roadways

Chair Smith related that the AWRP Communication Strategy states that people do not know the river. Chair Smith felt that road signs on stream crossings would help get the message out. He previously spoke with someone at the Maryland State Highway Administration who was amiable to the idea. Chair Smith asked if AWCAC members had any objections for pushing the SC for a standardized logo that could be used on the signs. No members voiced any objections.

VII. FY10 AWCAC Goals/Events

Chair Smith reiterated that in the last meeting members wanted to continue pushing for stronger stormwater regulations and assisting with the ARP. Membership and outreach issues were also identified. A short discussion followed.

- Mr. Duncan inquired when using storm drain markers as an outreach opportunity, if relevant neighborhood associations should be approached prior to marking events.
- Mr. Sheffey indicated that in his experience the leaders of these associations are very tied to them, and egos can sometimes get in the way. So, approaching them early can help avoid stepping on any toes, and possibly be more effective in that locality.

- Vice-Chair Barber indicated she would focus on expanding AWCAC membership. Chair Smith and Vice-Chair Bolin offered to work in a membership subcommittee to assist Vice-Chair Barber's efforts.
- Ms. Harriett Phelps (Prince George's County) handed out a flier created to inform the public about toxics in the Anacostia River. Ms. Phelps indicated she was unhappy with the action being taken on the issue, and felt new data was being overlooked. Ms. Phelps requested that AWCAC help get the word out.
- Mr. Sheffy suggested that Ms. Phelps “shop the data to the media.”
- Mr. Dan Smith (Prince George's County) suggested that if the reports and data were shared directly with AWCAC members, they could help.

***Action/Outcome: Vice-Chair Barber, Chair Smith, and Vice-Chair Bolin focus on expanding AWCAC membership through a membership subcommittee.**

VIII. Draft Montgomery County Water Resources Plan (WRP) Policies and Recommendations.

Mr. Mark Symborski (MCDEP) thanked AWCAC member for having him back again to talk about Montgomery County's progress on the WRP. He provided a handout of the policies and recommendations of the report. Overall the plan has the aim to integrate three main areas into all aspects of long-term planning in Montgomery County: 1) Drinking water adequacy, 2) waste disposal (sewage waste) and 3) attainment of water quality requirements. He then went on to describe each of the recommendations. Mr. Symborski indicated that the recommendations had been kept general because they are to guide decisions in many different departments. A brief discussion followed.

- Vice-Chair Barber wondered why the planning horizon for the WRP was only to 2020. It seems like the plan does not consider important aspects like ecosystem services and climate change.
- Ms. Minerva indicated that the growth projections for MC indicate that infill will be tremendous, and wondered in the WRP included background information that could be used to further quantify and examine future solutions to the growth issue.
- Mr. Symborski replied that most of the information was still being reviewed by the County Council and not yet available for public comment .

IX. Anacostia Restoration Plan Update:

Mr. Aubin Maynard (COG) indicated that the USACE's contractors had finished most of the project inventories for the 13 subwatershed, and a meeting was held where subwatershed group representatives received project information to review and comment upon. A second public meeting would be held on September 19th to get additional comment.

- Mr. Duncan indicated that there might be low turnout because many subwatershed groups do not see the point in spending a Saturday going over written comments they already submitted.

X. Old/New Business

- Mr. Maynard indicated that Mr. Dale Manty is hoping to put together a historical/artistic map of the Anacostia River watershed. He's requesting both map and funding ideas for AWCAC members.
- Mr. Gabe Horchler (Prince George's County) indicated that Bladensburg is becoming more popular as a rowing location for rowing clubs. Unfortunately, it is hazardous as there are many snags and other obstacles in the waterway. Unlike in the DC portion of the river, he felt the USACE does not clean and remove such snags. Mr. Horchler hoped that AWCAC could put pressure on someone to address this issue.
- Mr. Sheffey suggesting advocating to boat clubs first, and possibly inviting someone to speak at the next AWCAC meeting.