

Anacostia Watershed Citizens Advisory Committee
Meeting Summary
Tuesday, March 9th, 2010

- DRAFT -

Meeting Attendance:

Members and Associates

Brent Bolin (Prince George's County)
Mary Barber (District of Columbia)
Cary Coppock (Prince George's County)
Bill Duncan (Prince George's County)
Jim Fary (Montgomery County)
Gabe Horchler (Prince George's County)
Dan Smith (Prince George's County)
Mike Smith (Montgomery County)
Irv Sheffey (District of Columbia)

Guests/Interested Parties

Carrie Decker (DNR)
Dana Minerva (Executive Director, Anacostia Watershed Restoration Partnership)
Jackie Ward (District of Columbia)

COG Support Staff:

Aubin Maynard

Absent Members and Associates

Andy Fellows (Clean Water Action)
Dale Manty (Prince George's County)
Bill Matuszeski (District of Columbia)
Ed Murtagh (Montgomery County)

Harriette Phelps (Prince George's County)
Lutz Rastaetter (Prince George's County)

I. Welcome and Introductions

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

II. Watershed Assistance Collaborative Program

Ms. Carrie Decker (Maryland DNR) provided a brief explanation of funding opportunities available in the State of Maryland. The Watershed Assistance Collaborative (WAC) is geared toward communities interested in undertaking comprehensive watershed restoration projects with the aim to connect local communities to the financial and technical resources they need to undertake comprehensive watershed restoration projects in Maryland. The Collaborative offers the tools, resources, and outreach needed to undertake nonpoint source pollution implementation and restoration efforts.

- The WAC provides technical and funding assistance to local governments and communities for planning and design related to watershed implementation activities. The Chesapeake Bay Trust and Maryland Department of Natural Resources target watershed planning, assessment, site design (small watershed action plans), forestry, agriculture, wetland, stormwater and other urban design practices.
- Targeted outreach and training is provided to current and future applicants of the State's Local Implementation Grant & Chesapeake Bay Trust's grant programs. The Environmental Finance Center (UMD) provides guidance to enhance partnerships, financing strategies, and general grant proposal development.
- The University of Maryland SeaGrant Extension and Maryland Department of Natural Resources are employing two Specialists to work with Counties, State, Federal, and others to improve project management and oversee restoration efforts related to the State's Local Implementation in key areas of the state. The Specialists also work within the communities to foster enhanced coordination, outreach, and ensure project evaluation and success.

A second grant was also highlighted. The State's Local Implementation Grant (LIG) was established in response to the 2010 Trust Fund to provide implementation dollars directly to Maryland's local governments. Through this initiative, best practices of the State will be leveraged, internal resources tapped and human capital shared, to demonstrate what State and local partnerships can accomplish. Responding to questions, Ms. Decker indicated that basically any type of restoration project can be funded by the WAC. Additional information and samples of successful grants can be found on their website:

<http://www.dnr.state.md.us/bay/czm/2010tfs.html>.

III. Approval of 1-12-10 Meeting Summary

Action/Outcome: The 1-12-10 meeting summary was approved unanimously.

IV. AWCAC Business/AWSC Update

Ms. Dana Minerva (Anacostia Watershed Restoration Partnership) was excited to announce that the Anacostia Restoration Plan (ARP) would be released on April 19th. She requested that

all AWCAC members attend, and everyone should invite additional people. It would be good if there were at least 200 people present.

Chair Smith indicated there would be a Capitol Riverfront BID Anacostia Summit on May 18th in DC. This event is aimed at the educating the business community, but stream groups are encouraged to attend and have informational booths (see <http://www.capitolriverfront.org/>). The DNR is also considering a fall ARP implementation workshop.

At the last AWMC meeting, DNR representatives were asked to develop a sign Friendly version of the new logo to put on Anacostia Specific road signs and SHA representatives indicated their continued willingness to put up the signs.

Chair Smith explained that AWCAC should draft a letter of support for the ARP and request that it be fully funded, as Mr. Frank Dawson (AWSC Chair) indicated he may request such a letter. Chair Smith also suggested a letter be sent to WSSC requesting they lend some lobbying support of stronger Stormwater controls, whether it's direct support or simply information. A short discussion followed:

- Mr. Cary Coppock suggested the letter be worded in such a way to highlight that the river will get worse unless the plan is implemented.
- Mr. Dan Smith (Prince George's County) pointed out that the ARP does not meet the existing TMDLs or fully restore the Anacostia, so the ARP is only part of the solution.

Vice Chair Brent Bolin indicated AWS had worked with The Conservation Fund and Friends of the John Smith Chesapeake Trail to create the Anacostia River Water Trail Guide. In addition, they are pushing for the Anacostia to be designated in the official Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail (<http://www.nps.gov/cajo/index.htm>). Vice Chair Bolin requested that AWCAC write a letter in support of this designation and additional outreach activities related to the trail.

Action/Outcome:

- **Chair Smith, Mr. Dan Smith and Mr. Coppock will draft a letter of support for full funding of the ARP.**
- **Chair Smith will draft a letter to WSSC requesting they lobby for stormwater controls given the damage it is doing to their property.**
- **Vice Chair Bolin will draft a letter of support for the designation of the Anacostia River a part of the official Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail.**

V. Executive Director Update

Ms. Minerva outlined recent activities regarding the hotspots and other toxic issues in the tidal portion of the Anacostia River. The EPA is revisiting the toxic issue and is in negotiation with the District of Columbia representatives about several sites in DC. EPA has outlined the statuses of known toxic sites at Washington Gas Light, Pepco Benning Road, and Kenilworth Landfill and is weighing options on how to proceed. Ms. Minerva indicated that designating these sites under RICRA may be an option. None-the-less, EPA seems ready to move on this and is reviewing legal options. A brief discussion followed.

- Mr. Jim Fary (Prince George's County) explained that no matter how the issue proceeds, the group should expect lengthy legal battles before anything actually is cleaned up.
- Ms. Minerva inquired if AWCAC members wanted to push the hotspot issue further, as the 'white paper' seemed to be a strong starting point. Without enforceable requirements, those sites may never be cleaned up.
- Ms. Jackie Ward indicated lots of people are still fishing in the lower Anacostia and would like to see the toxic issue better published in some areas. The DC Environmental Health Network will be meeting the week of March 15th, and hopefully discuss this topic. One approach would be more bilingual warning signs.
- Ms. Dana Minerva indicated the need for more data on fishermen in the tidal Anacostia, and Vice Chair Bolin suggested AWCAC, AWS or some other group conduct a survey.

A brief discussion about dumping salt laden snow occurred, with most members feeling that placing the snow somewhere within the CSO would be the best solution. Mr. Bolin indicated he had been in three TV interviews related to the salt issue.

VI. Legislative Update

Vice Chair Bolin provided an update of several legislative bills being considered in Maryland. Most of the 'Anacostia Legislature' is supporting a required stormwater fee in each county. Although there as there is an estimated 20 billion dollar backlog for stormwater-related infrastructure, it will still be difficult to pass.

Unfortunately, developers are trying to push through two bills that will basically kill the 2007 stormwater act. Furthermore, the previous week the legislature forced a sudden compromise deal which increased wavers to redevelopment and delayed implementation.

Chair Smith suggested that the votes of the Anacostia delegation be tracked. Mr. Kerry suggested that something like the League of Conservation Voters' score cards be set up, and members present agreed

VII. Friends of Lower Beaverdam Creek Update

Mr. Dan Smith provided a brief summary of the location and characteristic of Lower Beaverdam creek. He explained that the subwatershed is heavily impacted by transportation and Cabin Branch is possibly the most polluted. Mr. Horchler added that group's efforts are focused in the town of Cheverly conducting trash cleanups, monthly trail maintenance, and invasive removal activities.

Responding to questions, Mr. Smith explained that while the group is strong in the policy, activities have been focused solely in Cheverly. In addition, even though the group try to connect with other groups (e.g. AWS, ECC), the Friends of Lower Beaverdam Creek are unable to work throughout the watershed and view themselves as a 'test group' which could be used as a model for the rest of the watershed. AWCAC could assist with recruitment and setting up other groups in the watershed.

VIII. Advocacy III workshop

Mr. Irv Sheffey (District of Columbia) explained that as discussed at the January AWCAC meeting, preliminary planning for an Advocacy III workshop has begun. The workshop could take place at the historic Thurgood Marshall Academy in the District of Columbia. Content for the workshop would not be DC centric, and could focus on the ARP and 'where we are going from here.' Other topic could be: MS4s, what works (advocacy techniques) and other training, or a candidate's forum. Vice Chair Barber and Chair Smith agreed to work with Mr. Sheffey on workshop-related topics. A brief discussion followed.

- Ms. Minerva explained it would be helpful to link the workshop to the upcoming elections, for example, through a panel discussion or even debate.
- Ms. Ward suggested that while it's good to work with the politicians, education of citizenry is lacking. With all the issues that face Ward 7/8 residents, part of the workshop should be devoted to 'why should they care.' The event should be about education first.

ACTION/OUTCOME: Vice Chair Barber and Chair Smith will meet with Mr. Sheffey to brainstorm about a possible Advocacy III workshop.