

Anacostia Watershed Citizens Advisory Committee
Meeting Summary
Tuesday, May 12th, 2009
-DRAFT-

Meeting Attendance:

Members and Associates

Brent Bolin (Prince George's County)
Mary Barber (District of Columbia)
Bill Duncan (Prince George's County)
Jim Fary (Montgomery County)
Bill Matuszeski (District of Columbia)
Harriette Phelps (Prince George's County)
Dan Smith (Prince George's County)
Mike Smith (Montgomery County)

Guests/Interested Parties

Dana Minerva (Executive Director, Anacostia Watershed Restoration Partnership)
Rhonda Kranz (Montgomery County)

COG Support Staff:

Aubin Maynard

Absent Members and Associates

Elizabeth Arnold (Prince George's County)
Susan Barnett (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)
Dale Manty (Prince George's County)
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)
Irv Sheffey (District of Columbia)

I. Welcome and Introductions

Chair Mary Barber (District of Columbia) 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.

Mr. Jim Fary (Montgomery County) indicated that Mr. Doug Marshal from Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection will give a presentation on stormwater retrofits planned in the Breewood Tributary at the Long Branch Community Center.

A brief discussion ensued regarding the Anacostia Restoration Plan (ARP), with various members agreeing that they were worried that the Army Corps of Engineers would soon suddenly request input, with only short notice. Chair Barber assured the group that she would speak with Corps representatives to convey AWCAC members' concerns.

Action/Outcome: Chair Barber will speak with Plan Development team (PDT) representatives about getting a clear timeline of public participation related to the ARP.

II. Approval of 3/12/09 Meeting Summary

Action/Outcome: The 3/12/09 meeting summary was approved unanimously, on the condition of a few minor edits.

III. Executive Report

Ms. Dana Minerva (Executive Director, Anacostia Watershed Restoration Partnership) began by reviewing the recent release of the MDE stormwater regulations. She indicated that they were very weak related to redevelopment, but somewhat strict with new development.

Ms. Minerva indicated several other activities she had attended since the last AWCAC meeting. First, at AWS' spring celebration, Councilmember Tom Dernoga (Prince George's County) announced that the MS4 stormwater permit is a top issue for the coming year (he has also been involved with strengthening enforcement in the Kontera development). Ms. Minerva described how at a meeting earlier in the day, related to the Kontera issue, Council Member Andrea Harrison asked developers what they were doing about impervious surfaces, why they are not using more pervious pavers, and stated that the Council is tired of dealing with flooding and sedimentation issues. Ms. Minerva was impressed by Council Member Harrison's knowledge of the issue, and suggested that it due in part to the good outreach efforts of various AWCAC members.

As Ms. Minerva continued, she noted that it was good that Kontera is considered new development as they would have to follow new stormwater guidelines. Unfortunately, the developers feel that they are not required to follow new Prince George's County buffer standards because they are were 'grandfathered in.'

A brief discussion followed:

- Mr. Fary wondered if the Kontera development would go forward with the economy being so weak.
- Ms. Minerva responded that every indication is that it was on track to be built.
- Mr. Bill Duncan (Prince George's County) wondered if Kontera's preliminary site plan was finished, as it would set out the stormwater control plan. Mr. Duncan wondered how the new stormwater regulations could actually apply if the site plan was finished prior to the standards being set.
- Ms. Minerva indicated that a question had been specifically asked at the meeting and that Kontera representatives said they were required to follow the new standards. She went on to suggest that AWCAC and subwatershed groups push MDE to pressure Prince George's County to strongly enforce the new guidelines.
- Ms. Minerva warned all groups about working directly with developers, especially CRRIC. Working directly with the developers can give them credibility (e.g., if they sponsor clean-ups), which they can use with the media and elected officials to say they are working with local groups. She suggested groups move slowly and think about what the other side gains through the activity.

IV. Communication and Outreach Strategy

Ms. Minerva recently completed the draft Communication and Outreach Strategy (handout), and she indicated that it was a summary of much of what the group had talked about before. She requested that AWCAC members look over the document and get back to her with any questions or comments.

Ms. Minerva suggested that AWCAC should help the subwatershed groups organize to more efficiently affect local decision making, she specifically wished that groups would push for a strong Prince George's County MS4 permit. As Ms. Minerva presented the group a map of subwatersheds and councilmanic districts, she suggested that each subwatershed group 'adopt' a council member. The group would write, visit, call and go to meetings and events held by this member, trying to form a relationship before major watershed/political issues come up. Sending at least one member to these meetings would be very important. Ms. Minerva gave an example of sending representatives to the event held by Prince George's County Delegate Will Campos on Earth Day. All of the AWCAC members present supported the 'adopt a rep' idea.

Action/Outcome: Members will look over the Communication and Outreach Strategy and send Ms. Minerva any questions regarding content.

V. Advocacy Workshop II

Mr. Aubin Maynard (COG) gave a brief update on planning activities for the June 13th Advocacy II Workshop. Mr. Maynard explained that the workshop would take place from nine to noon in the first floor training center at COG, and indicated the event would include a panel discussing upcoming issues and breakout sessions. The sessions would break out by jurisdiction and design specific advocacy plans for upcoming issues, with a possible fourth session focusing on advocating for the use of specific technologies and/or funding.

A lengthy discussion followed:

- Vice-Chair Dan Smith (Prince George's County) thought that the 'adopt a council member' idea was excellent. He suggested that it become a specific topic or tool focused on in the breakout sessions. Copies and posters of the councilmanic district versus subwatershed groups should be available at the workshop. Vice-Chair Dan Smith also suggested that other organizers be invited to the event to get fresh ideas.
- Mr. Bill Matuszeski (District of Columbia) wondered if one of the intended outcomes of the workshop was to construct the 'adopt a councilmember' approach. He felt that it was AWCAC's job to get it built and keep it running.
- Mr. Brent Bolin (Prince George's County) suggested that the group identify specific people, prior to the workshop, to suggest the 'adopt' approach. It would also be helpful to have politicians at the workshop who were willing to put their political mask aside, someone friendly, and talk about better communication. Mr. Bolin suggested that in general an advocacy calendar including important upcoming dates would be helpful, but wondered how to keep it up-to-date.
- Mr. Duncan wondered if the focus should be inviting politicians if the workshop was to be a learning event for subwatershed group members.
- Ms. Harriette Phelps (Prince George's County) said that earlier in the day she had visited the new band-a-long trash trap on Watts Branch and learned that filters could be placed in the trap that would filter toxins. Ms. Phelps wondered how such topics could be included in the workshop.
- Vice-Chair Dan Smith said that the topic proposed by Ms. Phelps could be included in the workshop, but much more information is needed.
- Chair Barber reiterated Mr. Bolin's comment about getting specific people to the event.

During the discussion several additional people were suggested to invite to the workshop, including: Councilman Mark Erlich, Senator Raskin, Representative Carr, and Mr. Bruce Gilmore from American Rivers

VI. FY10 AWCAC Goals

A brief discussion of FY10 goals occurred:

- Vice-Chair Mike Smith (Montgomery County) suggested that AWCAC begin advocating for and planning for an Anacostia Boy Scout or Girl Scout Jamboree. Vice-Chair Mike Smith suggested that activities focus around the Anacostia River, nature, restoration, etc.
- Vice-Chair Dan Smith felt AWCAC should revisit FY09 goals and see if they had been reached. New goals could include: increased advocacy with county councils, increased AWCAC participation, or another watershed-wide workshop.
- Chair Barber stated that after she steps down from her position as Chair she would like to focus on increasing AWCAC participation and get increased meeting attendance.
- Mr. Matuszeski said that previous goals included creating new stream groups, and adding additional membership.
- Ms. Minerva explained that the major issue facing AWCAC is the lack of cooperation between jurisdictional groups. For example, people in Montgomery County do not coordinate and collaborate with subwatershed group members from Prince George's County.
- Responding to a question by Mr. Aubin Maynard (COG) the group then briefly discussed how many subwatershed members do not have a clear idea of what AWCAC is or even that it exists. Various AWCAC members present felt that additional membership outreach is needed for the upcoming year.

VII. New Chair/Vice-Chair Elections (in July)

Chair Barber indicated that the new Chair would be selected at the beginning of the July AWCAC meeting. Due to the lack of preparation, she suggested the election of Vice-Chairs be put off until the September meeting so that the bylaws could be adequately reviewed and updated. All AWCAC members present agreed unanimously.

VIII. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:30 pm.