

Anacostia Watershed Citizens Advisory Committee
Meeting Summary
Tuesday, March 10th, 2009
- DRAFT -

Meeting Attendance:

Members and Associates

Mary Barber (District of Columbia)
Dennis Chestnut (District of Columbia)
Jim Collier (District of Columbia)
Bill Duncan (Prince George's County)
Jim Fary (Montgomery County)
Andy Fellows (Prince George's County)
Gabe Horchler (Prince George's County)
Dan Smith (Prince George's County)
Mike Smith (Montgomery County)

Guests/Interested Parties

Jim Connolly (Anacostia Watershed Society)
Dana Minerva (Executive Director, Anacostia Watershed Restoration Partnership)

COG Support Staff:

John Galli
Ted Graham
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)
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)
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 started at 7:00 pm. All present were asked to introduce themselves to the group and to share any updates.

- Mr. Jim Fary (Montgomery County) briefly describe a meeting with Montgomery County Executive Isiah Leggett. Mr. Fary said due in part to over thirty movies depicting ICC violations of Montgomery county standards posted on youtube.com, Mr. Isiah Leggett and Mr. Royce Hanson are writing a letter to EPA asking for greater compliance with Montgomery County's Special Protection Area (SPA) standards.
- Vice-Chair Dan Smith (Prince George's County) suggested AWCAC write a letter to Mr. Doug Gansler (State Attorney General) requesting SHA meet those standards.

II. Approval of 1-13-09 Meeting Summary

The meeting summary for January 13th, 2009 was approved unanimously.

III. Executive Director's Report

Ms. Dana Minerva (Executive Director, Anacostia Watershed Restoration Partnership) gave an update on the status of MDE's stormwater regulations. She indicated that the regulations had been released, and she considered them a "defeat." While stronger than previous regulations, she said they are still quite weak. She indicated that there is little likelihood the new regulations can be effectively challenged or changed.

Ms. Minerva suggested that AWCAC now focus on Prince George's County road codes and upcoming MS4 permit renewal in October 2009. She noted that representatives from Prince George's County DPW&T amenable to strengthening stormwater requirements in the County's road codes. Ms. Minerva indicated that AWCAC should target the Prince George's County Council on these issues. A brief discussion followed:

- Mr. Fary suggested that AWCAC push to require quantified verification of MS4 requirements.
- Dr. Ted Graham (COG) indicated that COG will be presenting a workshop on March 26th focused on redevelopment LID (R-LID). He had enlisted the help of Ms. Diane Cameron (Maryland Stormwater Partners), Ms. Minerva and COG staff to put on this workshop to strengthen ties with the development community. Dr. Graham intended one outcome to be a list of recommendations related to R-LID for agencies and developers. He invited all AWCAC members to attend the workshop.
- Ms. Minerva said that Mr. 'Chuck' Fox is set to be EPA's senior adviser to the Chesapeake Bay Program and the Anacostia River. Ms. Minerva explained that she had previously worked under Mr. Fox. What the position means to the Anacostia River and Partnership is still unclear, but she will find out.

Action/Outcome: Ms. Minerva will report back to AWCAC with further details on what Mr. Fox's new position entails.

IV. Update on Restoration Plan

Chair Barber gave a brief update on the Restoration Plan. She explained that the PDT has made progress with the other subwatersheds. The contractor hired by the USACE to work on the subwatersheds (i.e., Louis Berger and Associates) has recently released draft restoration project information for both Indian Creek and Upper Beaverdam Creek, with draft inventories expected by March 16th. She said that the PDT had received comments on the interim report and would actually be meeting with representatives from NRDC to discuss their concerns. Ms. Minerva had some detailed comments about the interim report, and even wrote a short ‘white paper’ describing how to include programmatic approaches. Chair Barber said she really felt the team was trying to keep the public in the loop, and indicated Friends of Sligo Creek (FOSC) also wanted to give additional input.

The following is a summary of the ensuing discussion.

- Vice-Chair Mike Smith (Montgomery County) said that FOSC members suggested more time to discuss the projects and to give printed copies of the report before the meeting with the PDT. He felt that FOSC leadership could not reach out to their members because of the short time between receiving the list of projects and the meeting. In addition, he suggested that the PDT be careful with the title of future meetings. The first public meeting was labeled “Anacostia Watershed Restoration Plan”, while the meeting mostly focused on Sligo Creek. More people would have attended if they knew the focus was Sligo Creek. Vice-Chair Mike Smith finished by explaining how FOSC members are pushing MCDEP to construct the Breewood project identified in the Plan.
- Vice-Chair Dan Smith indicated that he was afraid that Friends of Lower Beaverdam Creek (FOLBC) members would get a “meeting next week” email, limiting member input, and that the PDT would miss an important opportunity to have people really involved. He suggested that a Plan schedule be given to subwatershed groups.
- Mr. Galli (COG) responded that the PDT would make every effort to get information to the subwatershed groups in a timely manner, but he also reminded everyone the PDT are finishing a three year project in two years.

V. Storm Drain Stenciling Campaign Next Steps

Vice-Chair Mike Smith described a recent meeting with COG staff, District of Columbia, Prince George’s County and Montgomery County representatives to discuss a common storm drain marking campaign. Participants reached consensus on the use of markers, versus spray-painted stencils, and decided upon a common template previously used by DDOE. The employment of a combined, multi-jurisdictional marker ordering approach was proposed. COG will be coordinating a trial of this combined purchasing over the next year. This approach is expected to significantly reduce the cost of individual markers through volume discounted pricing. In addition to the markers, a companion system for including a door hanger with stormwater information and targeting specific neighborhoods was proposed. At the meeting it was also discovered that the City of Takoma Park had numerous markers already available.

The following is a summary of the ensuing discussion.

- Mr. Galli said that all jurisdictions are on board, including Prince George’s County, and that COG was ready for a trial run to see how well it works. He indicated that they were ordering together because it was possible to reduce the cost, but subbasin markers would increase the cost substantially. Mr. Galli also said that a tracking system with maps was suggested.

- Vice-Chair Smith said that the door hangers are a crucial piece to the campaign, and should include as many subshed or Anacostia-specific facts as possible. He noted that a 2008 study by the Alice Ferguson Foundation found that people related more to local streams than the Chesapeake Bay.
- Both Chair Barber and Ms. Minerva praised all the members involved for their cooperation and willing to work together.

VI. AWS Trash Survey

Mr. Jim Collier (DC) presented, via a PowerPoint presentation, the findings of the District of Columbia Anacostia Trash Monitoring and Trash Reduction Plan funded by DDOE and AWS. Mr. Collier briefly reviewed the location and protocols of the study, specifically the quarterly monitoring of the SSO around the Anacostia River and its tributaries. He then reviewed data regarding the most common types of trash found in the river (plastic bags, food wrapping, and bottles and cans). He also compared trash levels found in the tributaries to those in the river, and over the four seasons.

Trying to condense the many recommendations for a trash TMDL, Mr. Collier listed several steps to the proposed implementation strategy:

- Legislative packages recommended such as plastic bag bill.
- Fourteen individual tributary and MS4 basin trash reduction strategies.
- Cheapest and most efficient concept was screening the inlets and weekly street sweeping using high efficiency street sweepers.
- Most environmentally friendly was water quality wetland creation for trash and TMDL pollutant removal.
- Final recommendation was a mixture, which included wetlands at four locations.
- For the DCWASA Fresh Creek Floating Trash Net System located at CSO pipe outfall #17/18, an outer boom should be installed and trash removed after every rain event.

Total capital costs including construction of wetlands and maintenance would be over 13 million dollars, but would address other pollutants covered by the TMDL. He ended by saying that a study of storm drain outfalls is now underway. A brief discussion followed:

- Responding to questions, Mr. Collier said the bag bill will generate some revenue for a time, but did not examine its cost-benefit too closely. He went on to describe the current bag bill proposed in the District of Columbia.
- Mr. Collier attributed many of the surveying techniques used to Mr. Galli of COG.
- Ms. Minerva inquired if the trash reduction plan in the District of Columbia currently had legal standing.
- Mr. Collier responded that it would if included in the next MS4 permit.
- Vice-Chair Dan Smith cautioned the group about focusing on a bottle bill. He said many of the municipalities' recycling programs will be strained due to the loss of revenue from recycling bottles and cans.

VII. Advocacy Workshop Outcomes

Mr. Andy Fellows (Prince George's County) said that forty-two people attended the Anacostia advocacy workshop held on March 7th and surveys showed that the majority of participants found the event useful. Mr. Fellows received many positive comments after the workshop, and felt there was lots of energy for a second workshop and an actual advocacy campaign. Chair Barber and Vice-Chair Dan Smith were excellent moderators, keeping presenters on schedule and teasing out their main points. A short discussion followed:

- Vice-Chair Dan Smith identified several recurring themes from the workshop: 1) groups need to take strategic and planned actions during campaigns, 2) it is critical to understand the culture of the department, organization, or agencies you are working with, and 3) subwatershed groups need to share their information with each other.
- Chair Barber added that participants expressed interest in an “Anacostia Advocacy Partnership”, or at minimum, a common listserve.
- Ms. Minerva added that Vice-Chair Mike Smith had suggested that advocacy issues must be streamlined to get them to officials and members.

VIII. Planning Upcoming Workshop

Chair Barber said that the next workshop would be a continuation of the Advocacy workshop, and requested Mr. Fellows to continue the planning committee.

A brief discussion followed:

- Mr. Fellows stated that the next meeting would be March 11th at 4 p.m. He suggested the next workshop be held in the District of Columbia, and then inquired as to when workshop funding must be used up.
- Mr. Galli said the workshop must be held before June 30th and a second grant extension is not possible.
- Ms. Minerva suggested the workshop be focused on getting Prince George's County Council support for strong MS4 stormwater requirements, and stressed that it should not be another generalized workshop.