



Sustainable Monocacy Commission
Thursday, June 22, 2023, at 6:30 p.m.
Winchester Hall, 3rd Floor Meeting Room
12 East Church Street, Frederick, MD

MINUTES

Members present: Gary Magnuson (Chair), Lonnie Ropp, Chuck Eirkson, Matt Moran, Kimberly Stewart, Alderwoman Katie Nash

County Staff: Kimberly Gaines, Karin Flom, Andrew Stine

The Sustainable Monocacy Commission's June 22, 2023, meeting was called to order at 6:34 p.m. on June 22, 2023.

Chair Gary Magnuson opened the meeting with member introductions, a call of the membership rolls, and recognition that a quorum was present.

The next item on the agenda was a review of the May 25, 2023, meeting minutes. With no corrections noted by the Members present, Gary called for a motion to approve the May 25, 2023, meeting minutes as presented. Chuck Eirkson made a motion for approval that was seconded by Matt Moran. Unanimous approval.

The Outreach Committee's report was next on the agenda. Kim Stewart identified several potential organizations that could be contacted regarding distribution of the 2023 Monocacy Scenic River Report that included The University of Maryland's Extension Office, the Frederick County Chapter of 4H, the Frederick Bird Club, and the C & O Canal Association. Kim also identified these organizations as being potential partners in the development of a video segment related to the Monocacy River. Chuck Eirkson suggested that copies of the 2023 report might also be provided to the Frederick Visitor Center. Matt Moran suggested inclusion of the Monocacy Battlefield Visitors Center. Kim Stewart will coordinate with Gary Magnuson regarding potential additional outreach partners identified at previous meetings, such as the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science's Open House at Hood College, and will prepare an outreach message. The possible development of a Monocacy River/Watershed brochure, modeled after one by the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, was also raised.

Gary Magnuson then raised two additional aspects of outreach. He provided a brief recap of the June 3, 2023, River Clean-Up event and indicated that another event is scheduled for July 8, 2023. Gary also proposed the booking of a space for Frederick's "In the Streets" event on September 9, 2023. County staff indicated that they can assist in securing a space for the event. Lonnie, Matt, Gary, and Chuck (if

available) indicated an interest in staffing the space for the event to help in raising public awareness of the Monocacy River/Watershed and distributing the 2023 report.

The Commission then moved on to Unfinished Business section of the agenda.

The first item discussed was coordination with Frederick County Video Services and the scripting of an outreach video. Staff indicated that a good starting point may be the drafting of one or more outlines that can be provided to Video Services as a starting point for planning a video or videos. Kim Stewart will prepare one or more outlines for review by the Commission in coordination with Matt Moran.

The Commission then discussed the reappointment of members from the May 25, 2023, meeting. Staff confirmed that appointments to the Commission are for term of four years.

The Commission then revisited the June 3, 2023, clean-up, as per the agenda. Gary stated that both he and Bill Allen participated along with, approximately, 15 residents. The Frederick County Division of Highway Operations provided supplies for the event, and the City of Frederick's Department of Parks and Recreation removed the collected refuse. Gary also addressed the issue of tires, shared articles regarding tire removal forwarded by Vice-Chair Andy Celmer, and, also, indicated that he is investigating potential additional avenues for removing tires from the river with the Maryland Department of the Environment. Gary also reiterated the date of the next clean-up event on July 8, 2023. Staff is to check with the Frederick County Bureau of Recreation and Parks regarding waiver requirements for participants in the activity at County facilities. Staff also will check on where signs were installed which posted the fines for illegal dumping.

The Commission then held a brief discussion of possible avenues for sharing real-time data regarding the elevation of surface waters within the Monocacy and potential avenues for sharing that data. Matt Moran shared the fact that he regularly tracks river elevation data as a property owner adjacent to the waterway and indicated that he would forward information regarding an app that facilitates tracking to Chair Gary Magnuson.

The next item discussed by the Commission was the 2023 Potomac River Report Cards released by the Potomac Conservancy (Grade of B), and the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Studies (Grade of C+ for watershed and D+ for the waters of the Potomac). Gary indicated that he is studying the reports and is in correspondence with both organizations regarding a comparison/contrast of the results. Further information will be reported to the Commission as it becomes available.

The Commission then addressed how it might best become involved in the 2024 budget/CIP processes for Frederick County. Staff provided a brief overview of the steps and timeline and indicated that the fall of 2023 may be the optimum time to speak with agencies and attend events related to budget priorities. Chuck Eirkson indicated that the nutrient management plan writer position remains a priority for the Commission to address during budget preparation, and he asked Staff to potentially identify which agency at the County might request funding for this position. Alderwoman Nash provided a brief

overview of the City of Frederick's budget process and indicated that submittal of written correspondence to the Mayor of Frederick prior to December 31, 2023, regarding budget priorities is a good way to provide feedback on the process at the city. She also indicated that the joint delegation meetings held in September between City government, County government, and the Maryland State Delegation is a good event to attend to raise awareness of needs associated with the Monocacy River. Chair Gary Magnuson asked members of the Commission to consider potential aspects of the County's budget that might be an advocacy priority for the Commission during the budget process with the goal of compiling an estimated list of ten items for future advocacy.

On a related note, Lonnie Ropp raised the issue of legislative and policy review by the Commission. She would be comfortable assuming the role of "point person" in collecting, identifying, and sharing information related to legislation and policies that can affect the watershed.

The next item addressed was the recommendation for the Commission to make annual or bi-annual inspections of Monocacy River access points as per Recommendation 8-2 of the Monocacy Scenic River Management Plan of April 2019. Gary Magnuson distributed a sign-up sheet and inspection data form for the various access points. Member-selected Monocacy public points for inspection are to be completed, if possible, prior to the July 2023, meeting.

The Commission then moved on to the potential appointment of additional Ex-Officio members to the Commission. The present Members indicated a desire to see one or two additional student members (high school or college level) being offered the opportunity to apply for an Ex-Officio position and voted unanimously to authorize staff to request the drafting of legislation to enable such an expansion by Council President Young and his staff.

The Commission then moved onto the summer meeting schedule. It was generally agreed that meetings in July and August would be possible due to the availability of Members and that a month-long deferral might be better utilized in December as the meeting would likely fall in the midst of the holiday season.

As the final agenda item, the Commission entertained comments by members and the public.

Lonnie Ropp shared information regarding an opportunity offered by the Environmental Committee of the Rotary Club of Frederick to participate in Thursday Night Live on August 10, 2023, or August 24, 2023, as a volunteer recycling coordinator for the event. Interest in participating can be communicated to Lonnie prior to August 1, 2023.

Gary Magnuson shared an update from Heather Hutchinson, District Manager of the Catoctin and Frederick Soil Conservation Districts, regarding potential changes to the Nutrient Management Plan program and a Nutrient Management Plan summit that will be held in Annapolis on July 17 by the Maryland Department of Agriculture. A meeting may also be held by the Frederick County District, and Heather will forward more information to Gary as it becomes available.

Gary also shared a summary of an email he received from one of the participants at the June 3, 2023, clean-up event that raised additional outreach activities like the implementation of an “Adopt-a-Stream” program and/or naming of the seven unnamed tributaries within the Monocacy River watershed. The Commission may consider these at a future date.

Gary Magnuson stated that copies of the “Executive Summary, Goals, Recommendations (Only)” for the April 16, 2019, Monocacy Scenic River Management Plan were distributed with the June Meeting materials. He asked that Members review the materials prior to future meetings with the intent of identifying additional recommendations from the Management Plan that should be addressed in the future by the Commission.

Lastly, Chuck Eirkson noted, after reviewing the 2019 Management Plan, that the plan discusses the archeological resources of the river. He would like to know more about this topic and the Commission agreed. Staff noted the Livable Frederick team has an archeologist on staff and they will work to schedule him for a future presentation.

With no other business, Gary Magnuson suggested adjournment. Lonnie Ropp made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Matt seconded. Unanimous approval. The meeting was adjourned at 8:13 p.m.