



Sustainable Monocacy Commission
Thursday, October 26, 2023, at 6:30 p.m.
Basement Conference Room
30 North Market Street, Frederick, MD

MINUTES

Members present: Gary Magnuson (Chair), Andrew Celmer (Vice-Chair) Lonnie Ropp, Matt Moran, Chuck Eirkson, Bill Allen, Kim Stewart

County Staff: Deborah Carpenter, Karin Flom, Andrew Stine

The Sustainable Monocacy Commission's October meeting was called to order at 6:35 p.m. on Thursday, October 26, 2023.

Chair Gary Magnuson opened the meeting with a roll call and recognition that a quorum was present. Deborah Carpenter, AICP, Director of the Frederick County Division of Planning and Permitting, was introduced to the Commission as part of the roll call.

The first item on the agenda was a discussion of the September 28, 2023, draft meeting minutes. With no corrections noted by the Members of the Commission, Gary called for a motion to approve the draft meeting minutes for September 2023 as written. Andrew Celmer made a motion for approval that was seconded by Kim Stewart. Unanimous approval.

The Outreach Committee's report was next on the agenda. Following adoption of language for a brochure and video about the Monocacy River at the September meeting, staff prepared and distributed draft copies of two brochures to members of the Commission. Matt Moran requested that the contrast of the cover graphics be enhanced with a darker blue background and that a bolder line be used for the river graphic. It was also recommended that the text be emboldened for legibility. Lonnie Ropp suggested the inclusion of a statement on the brochure containing the access point map that a copy of the map is included inside. In addition, Chuck Eirkson and Andrew Celmer requested that the panels be swapped on the map version so the SMC logo is on the front. The Commission also favored the adoption of both brochure formats for release following the requested graphical updates. On a final note, the Commission inquired about the inclusion of a QR code for the 2023 report in the brochures.

In addition to the discussion of the brochures, the Commission also briefly revisited the topic of video production utilizing the brochure language. Staff indicated that discussions with Frederick County Video Services had commenced regarding video production, and that Video Services had inquired about a contact for a kayaking group that could assist in the capture of footage of kayaking on the Monocacy

River. Matt Moran stated that he had some personally produced videos that he would be able to share with staff for incorporation, and Kim Stewart indicated that she had been informed of the necessary steps to authorize a voiceover request from a contact with the CBS Networks.

The compilation of a recipient list for an email regarding distributing the 2023 report was the next item on the agenda. Gary distributed a list of email addresses that he had compiled and asked that members provide any additional email addresses for inclusion on the list to him or staff. Matt Moran indicated that Green Team Leaders for Frederick County Schools should be included. There was discussion of sharing the link to the report with potential partners in other jurisdictions within the Monocacy River watershed and with recreational outfitters. Gary indicated that he felt organizations within Frederick County should be the primary focus at this time.

The Commission then moved on to the Unfinished Business section of the agenda. Staff indicated that data for all inspection points had been recently received, and the inspection data chart and attachments would be updated and completed soon. Gary also stated that Matt Moran has agreed to be the lead in preparing a summary of the inspection data and a cover letter to be shared with the Frederick County Division of Parks and Recreation and other entities with jurisdiction over access points as appropriate. Gary also mentioned that he has contacted the City of Frederick's Parks and Recreation Department staff regarding the City's state-approved Waterway Improvement Grant application. The state grant was for improvements to the Riverside public access point. The grant application may provide examples of estimates for public access point improvements, and these estimates may provide some insight into costs associated with various aspects of access point improvements. It was also determined that these numbers might be helpful in crafting language to support access point improvements as part of future budget and CIP processes.

The next item on the agenda was a brief discussion of priority budget items. Gary shared that, while the funding of access points improvements is important, the Commission's current top priority is the establishment of a dedicated position for nutrient plan management at Frederick County. Gary and Bill also provided a brief update regarding the state's Nutrient Management Task Force as well as a brief discussion of the recently announced establishment of the Frederick County Office of Agriculture.

The next item on the agenda was a discussion of recruitment for the vacant Commission seat for a property owner along the Monocacy River. Kim Stewart inquired about the potential to advertise the seat on Livable Frederick social media, and staff will consider potential social media releases. Additionally, staff provided a summary of a review of the state and local enabling legislation for the Commission. As part of the summary, it was identified that it should be possible to remove the registered voter requirement for Commission membership but not the residency requirement. Staff also shared that, due to the legislative underpinnings of the Commission at the state level (as per the Scenic and Wild Rivers Act), it was confirmed that a minimum of two Commission seats must be held for property owners "contiguous" to the Monocacy River. The Commission directed staff to draft potential changes to the enabling legislation that allow for the following:

- The inclusion of a Commission seat for a student with full membership rights on the Commission.

- The removal of the requirement that Commission members be registered voters in Frederick County (to facilitate student membership).
- The addition of a Commission seat for full member residing contiguous to a tributary to the Monocacy River (named or unnamed, if deemed allowable by the County Attorney's Office).
- The replacement of the word "adjacent" with the word "contiguous," as appropriate, to make local legislation in accordance with state legislation.

These changes are to be presented to the Commission at the November meeting for a vote. If approved, a request will be submitted to the Office of the County Executive for consideration of legislation by the County Council. It was noted that Council President Young agreed to review and sponsor legislation that would include student membership and other desired provisions proposed by the Commission during the September 2023 meeting.

The final action item on the agenda was a discussion of a November 5, 2023, riverbank cleanup event that will be held in conjunction with Wild Earth Rescue at Pinecliff Park at 2:00 PM. Gary will share details regarding the intended scope of work that is being developed in concert with the Frederick County Division of Parks and Recreation, and he encouraged Commission Members to attend if possible.

The Commission briefly discussed several subjects as part of the opportunity for member and/or public comment. The first topic was the need to reschedule the November 2023 meeting, due to the Thanksgiving holiday. Members elected to hold the November meeting on the 30th of that month and, in recognition of the holidays, to cancel the December 2023 meeting. The second topic was notifications regarding large projects or initiatives that could affect the Monocacy River/Watershed. Lonnie Ropp indicated that she can assist in the identification of legislative proposals and/or news posted by MDE, and Deborah Carpenter stated that staff were a resource for legislation and land development projects at the County level. The topic of data centers was raised, specifically, and staff stated that they will share links via email to the Data Centers Work Group with the Members. Staff also recommended that interested Members view the County Council meeting recording for October 17, 2023, to learn more about data center potable water use and wastewater disposal.

As a closing action, Chair Gary Magnuson summarized those items and actions discussed throughout the meeting as well as action items for Commission members.

With no additional business, the Chair Gary Magnuson called for a motion of adjournment. The motion was made by Bill Allen and seconded by Chuck Eirkson, with unanimous approval. The October 2023 meeting of the Sustainable Monocacy Commission concluded at 7:42 p.m.