



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

MINUTES

Members present: Gary Magnuson (Chair), Lonnie Ropp, Matt Moran, Chuck Eirkson, Bill Allen, Kim Stewart, Drew Ferrier, FCC President Brad Young, Alderwoman Katie Nash

County Staff: Karin Flom, Andrew Stine

The Sustainable Monocacy Commission's November meeting was called to order at 6:34 p.m. on Thursday, November 30, 2023.

Chair Gary Magnuson opened the meeting with a roll call and recognition that a quorum was present.

The first item on the agenda was a discussion of the October 23, 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 October 2023 as written. Bill Allen made a motion for approval that was seconded by Chuck Eirkson. Unanimous approval.

The Outreach Committee's report was next on the agenda. The Commission briefly discussed revised drafts of the brochures developed to promote the 2023 Monocacy River Report. Matt Moran suggested staff explore an offset of the river graphic on the cover of the brochures so that it appeared more like the banks of a river, and staff indicated that this graphic revision would be explored. Chuck Eirkson inquired about reproduction of the brochures for distribution, and staff indicated the brochures were formatted so they could be regularly printed in-house and/or shared with other agencies electronically (i.e., Division of Parks and Recreation) for reproduction and distribution. The Commission also discussed the status of the Monocacy River video. Gary stated that Frederick County staff will be providing the voiceover to ensure that the video can be produced in a timely manner, and staff indicated that this work is tentatively scheduled to occur during the first full week of December 2023. Matt Moran also provided video footage to staff for inclusion in the video. Staff added that Frederick County Video Services hopes to compile the video during the months of December 2023 and January 2024. FCC President Young and other Members inquired about the possibility of Spanish language versions of the brochure and video, and staff indicated that this topic would be investigated.

The next item on the agenda was a brief discussion of the email distribution of the 2023 Monocacy River Report. Gary stated that approximately 92 email addresses had been compiled, and staff stated that the

draft language and email addresses had been forwarded to FCC President Young's office for electronic distribution earlier that same day.

The Commission moved on to new business, and a discussion of plastics in the Monocacy River Watershed. Gary mentioned the soon-to-be-enacted plastic bag ban in the City of Frederick, and Dr. Drew Ferrier provided an overview of the impacts of plastics in waterways, including the Monocacy River and the downstream waters, including the Chesapeake Bay. Drew also indicated that, while studies are still ongoing, plastic bag bans coupled with a cost on alternative bags (paper, cloth, etc.) tend to be the most effective method for reducing the utilization of single-use bags. Gary, Drew, and Matt intend to continue to explore this topic in cooperation with the Sierra Club of Maryland and to provide the Commission with additional information at a future meeting.

The Commission then moved on to unfinished business, beginning with a discussion of the Monocacy River Access Point Inspection and subsequent outreach related to the inspection. Gary stated that the inspection summary was complete and a draft letter to the appropriate agencies that maintain the access points had been prepared. It was noted that the summary did not make direct recommendations. Therefore the intent of the letter is to request a meeting, discuss the status of the access points, and then communicate Commission recommendations. Four separate recipients have been identified that maintain the access points in Frederick County (Frederick County Division of Parks and Recreation, City of Frederick Department of Parks and Recreation, Maryland Department of Natural Resources, and US National Parks Service), and Gary will be contacting each to request a meeting.

Next, the Commission discussed priorities for the FY 2024-2025 Budget Cycle. Gary provided a summary of a recent meeting with Shannon Moore and Don Dorsey with Frederick County's Division of Energy & Environment (DEE) in which DEE staff indicated that they felt comfortable with the most recent budget allocation to their programs. Bill Allen provided an update on the status of the Maryland State Task Force for nutrient management plan implementation and reiterated the Commission's desire for a funded position at the County level. Kim Stewart felt that many local farmers would feel more comfortable working with a Frederick County representative than a state or privately operated plan preparation agent. FCC President Young stated that the initial step for creating such a position would be the preparation of a job description within the Office of Agriculture that would be forwarded to the County Executive for review as part of the budget process. Gary indicated that Commission Members will follow-up with Katie Stevens, Director of Workforce Development and Agriculture Business.

The next item on the agenda was a vote on amendments to the Sustainable Monocacy Commission's ordinance that would remove the registered voter requirement and add two seats (one for a student member and one for a person who owns property contiguous to a Monocacy River tributary). Kim Stewart made a motion to adopt the draft legislation with the condition that the number of seats be revised on the draft from eleven (11) to thirteen (13). The motion was seconded by Matt Moran with unanimous approval.

The Commission briefly discussed the topic of a mailing to all owners of property contiguous to the Monocacy River. Staff indicated that the list had been compiled, but an analysis of cost related to the mailing was still under way. Staff will provide an update on this topic at a future meeting.

For the final item of unfinished business, Gary provided an update of the Fall 2023 Monocacy River Clean-Up that occurred on November 5, 2023, in Pinecliff Park. He indicated that he, Andy Celmer, and members of Wild Earth Rescue recovered an assortment of items from the river and coordinated with staff in Frederick County Public Works for disposal. Gary also updated the Commission regarding discussions with Lt. John Corbett of the City of Frederick Police Department. Lt. Corbett is an avid paddler on the Monocacy and has informed Gary of the location of a cache of tires near Clustered Spires Golf Course that might be recoverable. Gary is going to coordinate with Lt. Corbett about a potential future clean-up of these tires.

The Commission briefly discussed several subjects as part of the opportunity for member and/or public comment. Staff provided an update about a request received from ARM Engineering for a future solar electricity generating station in the north county. The substation requires a letter from the Sustainable Monocacy Commission regarding the consistency of the proposed facility with the 2019 Monocacy River Management Plan. Staff will share more information with the Commission as it is received, but it is anticipated that a presentation regarding the substation will be delivered to the Commission after the New Year. Staff recommended that Members review the plan in the coming weeks, if time allows, to assist in evaluation of the proposal. Gary also discussed research he has conducted in partnership with United States Geological Survey (USGS) staff into a 2015 effort to name several small tributaries to the Monocacy River in Frederick County. He will provide an update on this topic when he has more information, and he indicated there may be additional unnamed tributaries in the watershed that the Commission might be able to assist in naming.

As a closing action, Chair Gary Magnuson let the Commission know that Don Dorsey with DEE told him that updated assessments for the Upper Monocacy and Lower Monocacy watersheds may be forthcoming from DEE soon, and he summarized meeting follow-up actions for Commission members.

With no additional business, the November 2023 meeting of the Sustainable Monocacy Commission concluded at 7:37 p.m. by unanimous consent.