



**Sustainable Monocacy Commission**  
Thursday, January 25, 2024, at 6:30 p.m.  
Winchester Room, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor of Winchester Hall  
12 E. Church Street, Frederick, MD

## **MINUTES**

Members present: Gary Magnuson (Chair), Andrew Celmer (Vice-Chair), Matt Moran, Chuck Eirkson, Bill Allen, County Council President Brad Young

Members present virtually: Kim Stewart

County Staff: Kimberly Gaines, Karin Flom, Andrew Stine

Meeting Attendees: Natalie Castro, Chaberton Energy; Ryan Boswell, Chaberton Energy

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The Sustainable Monocacy Commission's January meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, January 25, 2024.

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

The first item on the agenda was a discussion of the November 30, 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 November 2023 as written. Bill Allen made a motion for approval that was seconded by Matt Moran. Unanimous approval.

The Strategic Outreach Report was next on the agenda. Gary Magnuson stated that the video promoting the Monocacy River had been released. The video will air on FCGTV Channel 19, is posted on the Commission's website, and will be shared on County social media. An updated version of the informational brochure about the river was also presented. Members noted that the contrast enhancements and edits to the "river" graphic on the front improved legibility. Gary asked members to think about potential options for distribution of brochures, such as the Frederick Visitors Center, relevant shops, and public access points.

Next on the agenda was a review of a five-megawatt (MW) solar project known as Chaberton Solar Wild Turkey at 12949 Old Frederick Road, Rocky Ridge, MD for consistency with the 2019 Monocacy Scenic River Management Plan (the "Plan"). Staff presented the staff report which reviewed the project's Environmental Review Document (ERD) for consistency with the Plan and recommended that the proposal was consistent. Members of the Commission followed up the presentation with comments and questions for representatives from Chaberton Energy. Bill Allen stated that, as the Farm Bureau

Representative to the Commission, he was glad to see the solar located on marginal farmland. He noted farmers are concerned about solar taking prime farmland out of production.

Members discussed how they would like the applicant to consider increasing the buffer area between existing streams and wetlands and the station and to provide forest mitigation plantings (near the river or on site) even if they are not required to do so under applicable regulations. Following discussion, Gary called for a motion to recommend that the Chaberton Solar Wild Turkey project is consistent or neutral regarding the 2019 Monocacy Scenic River Management Plan in a letter to the Maryland Public Service Commission, with the following recommendations noted:

- Increase the buffer between the solar station and the identified perennial stream (an unnamed tributary to Creagers Ranch) and associated wetlands.
- If the Applicant pursues afforestation forest banking credits, the credits should be secured in a forest bank that is adjacent to the Monocacy River or a tributary.
- If the Applicant is subject to or voluntarily complies with the County's FRO, afforestation plantings should occur on site.

Bill Allen made a motion that was seconded by Matt Moran with unanimous approval.

The Commission moved on to the next item on the agenda, Monocacy River tributary naming opportunities. Gary presented the results of research he has conducted with the U.S. Board of Geographic Names and its approval process regarding the naming of creeks and tributaries. He also briefly discussed a contest held by the former River Board in 2015 that resulted in the naming of three tributaries in Frederick County. Members of the Commission did inquire about the potential purpose of a new naming effort and indicated that, if it is undertaken, care should be exercised to reflect the place-based context of names and that there be measures instituted to prevent flippant submittals.

The next item on the New Business agenda was a Closed Session discussion in accordance with the Maryland Annotated Code, General Provisions Article §3-305(b)(1)(i). The Closed Session began at approximately 7:12 PM and was held in the same location as the Open Session (Winchester Room, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor of Winchester Hall, 12 E. Church Street, Frederick, MD 21701) The topic of the Closed Session was "the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of an appointee, employee, or official over whom it has jurisdiction." Chair Gary Magnuson called for a motion to enter a Closed Session that was made by Chuck Eirkson and seconded by Bill Allen, with unanimous approval. Members present in the closed session were Gary Magnuson (Chair), Andy Celmer (Vice Chair), Chuck Eirkson, Matt Moran, Kimberly Stewart, Bill Allen, and FCC President Young, with Frederick County Staff Members Kimberly Gaines, Karin Flom, and Andrew Stine also being present. On the topic of discussion, the Commission unanimously approved a motion to recommend appointment of an individual to the Commission "[o]wner of property adjacent to the Monocacy River" to the County Executive for consideration and appointment to the Frederick County Council, with no present Members opposed or abstaining. Following discussion, Chair Gary Magnuson requested a motion to leave the Closed Session that was made by Andrew Celmer and seconded by Chuck Eirkson with unanimous approval. The Commission reentered Open Session at 7:17 PM.

The final item on the New Business agenda was the Mobilize Frederick Climate Summit. Gary stated that staff had facilitated the booking of a space and provided materials to set up a display at the event that will be held at Hood College on February 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024. Matt, Andy, and Chuck volunteered to participate at the event. County Council President Young stated that the Frederick County Festival of Flight in September at the airport (near the Monocacy River) might be another potential event for the Commission to attend.

The Commission then moved on to Unfinished Business portion of the agenda, beginning with a discussion of plastics in the Monocacy River Watershed. Gary stated that he and Dr. Ferrier have met with the Sierra Club and spoken with the Mayor of Frederick regarding the City's recently implemented plastic bag ban. The Sierra Club and the City are currently performing assessments of the impact of the ban, and Gary recommended that the Commission wait to take further action on this topic until those results are released in April or May of 2024. Members agreed with this course of action.

Next, Bill Allen provided updates regarding discussions with Katie Stevens in the Frederick County Office of Agriculture regarding a nutrient management plan writer position. Katie is crafting a job description for the position that would involve plan writing and other duties reflective of the seasonal nature of plan writing. FCC President Young provided dates and times for two upcoming budget forums, and Bill Allen indicated that he would attend one to speak about the need for a nutrient management plan writer at the County. Gary called for a motion by the Commission to endorse Bill as a speaker on behalf of the Commission at one of the upcoming forums. Chuck made a motion that was seconded by Kim Stewart. Andy Celmer noted that if this position was in County government, it may reduce private sector employment opportunities. Bill described that the plan writer positions were previously housed within the University of Maryland extension service. Gary Magnuson, Matt Moran, Chuck Eirkson, Bill Allen, and Kim Stewart voted to approve the motion, and Andy Celmer abstained. The motion was approved.

Following the discussion of Unfinished Business, Gary addressed a few housekeeping items. He noted the inclusion of the 2024 meeting dates in the meeting materials by Staff and asked that members alert him or staff about potential absences or scheduling conflicts when possible. Gary also discussed the progress of the legislation to expand the Commission membership which has been placed on the County Council's legislative calendar. Lastly, Gary stated that he would like to Commission to consider potential clean-up dates for 2024 and that he intends to work with Matt regarding messaging for the USGS water level monitoring data.

The Commission then moved on to Member/Public Comment. Gary stated that he has been in contact with Don Dorsey of the Division of Energy and Environment regarding updates to the Upper Monocacy and Lower Monocacy Watershed Assessments. This work should be underway soon, with the assessments to be completed later in the year. Gary intends to follow-up on this topic when updates are available. Additionally, Gary stated that the City of Frederick contacted him to follow-up on the Access Point Assessment document distributed by the Commission. Scott Geasey, Superintendent of City Parks noted that they recently received a Maryland State Waterway Improvement Grant to assist in the reconstruction of the boat ramp at Riverside Park. Gary and Superintendent Geasey discussed the potential for a dedication ceremony for the new ramp, and this is something the city will explore. Superintendent Geasey also indicated that the city is working on the establishment of a new, public park

on the banks of the Monocacy River in the vicinity of the Waterside and Worman's Mill communities on the eastern edge of the city, just north of the MD-26 bridge over the river. The city has indicated they would appreciate any ideas the Commission members might have about how to conduct outreach with property owners near the new park to reduce the potential for encroachments onto the park property. Gary asked that Commission members think about this topic for potential discussion at the next meeting. Gary also stated that he is currently awaiting responses from the Maryland Department of Natural Resources and the U. S. National Parks Service regarding their review of Commission observations and recommendations of Monocacy public access points under their jurisdiction.

With no additional business, Gary called for a motion to adjourn the meeting that was made by Bill Allen and seconded by Chuck Eirkson. With unanimous approval, the January 2024 meeting of the Sustainable Monocacy Commission concluded at 7:48 p.m.