



FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Jessica Fitzwater
County Executive

DIVISION OF PLANNING & PERMITTING

Livable Frederick Planning & Design Office

Deborah A. Carpenter, AICP, Division Director

Kimberly Gaines, Director

Sustainable Monocacy Commission March 2024 Meeting Minutes

I. Meeting Details

Meeting date and time: Thursday, March 28, 2024, at 6:30 p.m.

Meeting location: 1st Floor Conference Room, Winchester Hall, 12 E. Market Street, Frederick, MD 21701

II. Attendance

Members present: Gary Magnuson (Chair), Andy Celmer (Vice-Chair), Bill Allen, Chuck Eirkson, Drew Ferrier, Matt Moran, James Ryder

Members present virtually: Kim Stewart

Members absent: Lonnie Ropp, Alderwoman Katie Nash, County Council President Brad Young

County Staff: Karin Flom, Andrew Stine

III. Call to Order

The Sustainable Monocacy Commission's monthly meeting was called to order at 6:34 p.m. on Thursday, March 28, 2024.

Chair Gary Magnuson recognized that a quorum was present.

Bill Allen moved that the February 22, 2024, meeting minutes be approved as written, seconded by Andy Celmer. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. New Business

a. Election of Officers (Chair and Vice Chair)

Gary indicated he was willing and honored to serve again as Chair. Bill nominated Gary Magnuson as Chair, seconded by Chuck Eirkson. After the motion, there were no other nominations. The motion passed unanimously.

Gary indicated Andy Celmer would not seek reelection as Vice-Chair. Chuck nominated Matt Moran as Vice-Chair, seconded by Andy. After the motion, there were no other nominations. The motion passed unanimously.

b. Discussion of 2019 Monocacy Scenic River Management Plan recommendations

Gary stated that the purpose of this discussion was to bring forward plan recommendations in a brainstorming session and that highlighted recommendations would be discussed in more detail and prioritized for action by the Commission in future meetings.

Prior to the discussion, Gary noted that the Commission had already taken action on many of the

Management Plan recommendations, including public outreach and education, like the update of the river public access map and inspecting public river access points, and advocating for County support to assist farmers implement best management practices on their land.

During the brainstorming session, Commission members suggested the following plan recommendations: 4-7 (Andy); 8-1 and 9-3 (Chuck); 5-10 and 5-13 (Drew); 5-15, 7-7, 7-10, and 7-11 (James); 5-17 (Matt); 5-12 and 6-7 (Bill and Gary). Broadly, these plan recommendations touch on the following topics: historic preservation, improving public access points, more research into pollutants and chemicals affecting water quality, increasing incentives for riparian buffer establishment and public outreach/education for voluntary stewardship, and river and tire cleanups.

Chuck noted that some of the plan recommendations support each other. For example, purchasing riverfront property can meet preservation, conservation, and public access goals. He suggested that, as recommendations are discussed in more depth, members should identify other supporting and complementing recommendations from the plan.

Some suggestions did not have a corresponding recommendation in the plan. Members discussed topics such as the stormwater management implications of more development, the impacts of climate change, and educating property owners about septic systems “dos and don’ts.”

During this agenda item, members expressed an interest in forming a committee to explore septic system maintenance incentives and public outreach/education opportunities. Andy made a motion to create this committee, seconded by Bill. The motion passed unanimously. Kim Stewart and Matt will also participate in the committee.

Gary provided an update on the waste tires in the river channel at the City of Frederick’s Clustered Spires Golf Course during this agenda item. Gary met with city and golf course staff prior to the meeting and the selection of a removal date is still pending. Golf course staff indicated that Tuesday and Thursday mornings would be the best window for a clean-up to minimize impacts to course operations. Some concerns were expressed with finding enough volunteers for an early-morning weekday event and whether additional equipment is still needed to remove the tires.

V. Old Business

a. Nutrient Management Plan Assistance (Update)

Gary provided this update at the start of the meeting. He summarized for members that he presented a statement on behalf of the Sustainable Monocacy Commission at the March 20, 2024, Fiscal Year 2024-2025 budget meeting held by County Executive Fitzwater. The statement expressed support for either a Nutrient Management Plan writer position or a budget for contractual services for plan writing in the newly created Frederick County Office of Agriculture. The final statement was distributed to members via e-mail.

b. Monocacy Tributary Naming Contest (Discussion and Next Steps)

Gary summarized information received during the February 2024 meeting about the previous tributary naming contest and the steps involved. Gary suggested adding this to the list of potential activities for the Commission to consider when ranking the Commission’s plan implementation priorities.

c. Commission Membership Legislation and New Member Recruitment Update

Gary summarized his participation in the public hearing for Bill 24-02 at the March 19, 2024, County Council hearing. The final statement read by Gary was distributed to members via e-mail. This bill would add two members to the Sustainable Monocacy Commission. The vote will be on

the April 2, 2024, County Council agenda and the bill would be effective approximately two months later. Members discussed opportunities to recruit a student member such as student government, green teams, libraries, and farm/youth groups such as 4H, FFA, etc. Staff reminded the Commission that letters of interest and a resume may be submitted to Joyce Grossnickle at FCGBoards@FrederickCountyMD.gov.

d. Discussion of Septic System Improvement Options

This agenda item was discussed during the 2019 Monocacy Scenic River Management Plan recommendations (Item IV-b). See above.

e. River Public Access Improvements (Update)

Gary provided an update that construction is expected by mid-summer for the City of Frederick to make upgrades to the public access point the City's Riverside Park. Frederick County is waiting for a decision on a grant application to the State Waterway Improvement program to make similar improvements at the Pinecliff Park public access point.

VII. Comments and Announcements

Staff circulated a sign-up sheet for community outreach events that still needed coverage so that a members could volunteer to be the event coordinator/lead.

Gary provided dates for upcoming clean-up events. The Frederick County Division of Energy and Environment is hosting an event on April 6th in Ballenger Creek Park. Wild Earth Rescue will be hosting an event on April 20th, though the location is still to be determined. Gary has requested recommendations from the County's Division of Parks and Recreation.

Gary noted that the County Parks & Recreation Division has two older "jon boats" that Matt has volunteered to store for the Commission for use in future clean-up events.

Drew brought the planning efforts for a north county agricultural demonstration park (Kanode Farm) to the Commission's attention. He noted that this project may align with some of the Management Plan recommendations that the Commission is looking to implement.

VIII. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

IX. Adjournment

With no other business, Drew made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Matt. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.