

CAC Members Present: Meg Bradshaw, Chanté Coleman, John Dawes, Andrew Der, Bill Dickinson, Matt Ehrhart (CAC Chair), Charles Herrick, Ann Jurczyk, Anna Killius, Julie Lawson, Pat Levin, David Lillard, Mike Lovegreen, Joe Maroon, Bill Matuszeski, Jorge Ribas, and CAC Staff Jessica Blackburn and Adam Bray

Speakers/Guests Present: Lamont Atkins, Jeanne Braha, Jim Edward, Rachel Felver, Kate Fritz, Bernadette Harvey, Arlen Herrell, Lorena Kowalewski, Grace Manubay, Bob Murphy, John O'Neill, Emily Rice, Queen Richardson, Matt Robinson, Jennifer Starr and Kathy Stecker,

Meeting presentations and materials are located at:

https://www.chesapeakebay.net/what/event/citizens_advisory_committee_quarterly_meeting_november_2019

Thursday, Nov 21, 2019

The CAC Chair Matt Ehrhart called the meeting to order at 11:03 AM. He gave an overview of the agenda and introduced the goals of the meeting – 1) to receive updates on DC's Environmental Education and Workforce Development and, 2) provide requested feedback to the CBP Communications Workgroup.

CAC Feedback Requested on Beyond Environmental Benefits Toolkit – Rachel Felver, Communications Director, Chesapeake Bay Program

To gain feedback from CAC, Rachel Felver shared the progress towards creating the [Community and Economic Benefits of Conservation Success](#) toolkit. While still in progress, there are currently five examples on the website of conservation practices that show community and economic benefits in addition to environmental benefits. Rachel said they are working to get seventy of these success stories uploaded into a database that integrates with a new data dashboard and the Chesapeake Assessment Scenario Tool (CAST).

Discussion: CAC asked about the intended audience of this tool. Rachel cited town planning commissions, state agencies and nonprofits as the primary audience, and said they are focused on using general language so it could eventually be a resource for anyone. CAC recommended legislators as another additional audience. Members asked about the diversity of the highlighted practices and she explained how there is geographical diversity and a broad mix from both Ag and Urban sectors. CAC recommended that instead of having Agricultural and Urban practices together, they could be split them into two resources and feature voices that each community trusts. Rachel said they are still looking to incorporate new stories and encouraged CAC members to share them with her. CAC discussed the best ways to get the word out once it is completed and encouraged the Bay Program to use short videos to promote it. CAC members also raised the importance of showing benefits quantified and the challenges of training people to know how to quantify benefits.

DC's Tree Canopy – John O'Neill, Urban Forester Ward 8

John O'Neill delivered a presentation about how DC enforces the city's municipal tree laws. The Urban Forestry Division consists of 20 arborists and is housed under the District Department of Transportation (DDOT). They cover the 61 square miles of DC and approximately 150,000 street trees. DC's goal is to plant 8,000 trees per year in order to achieve 40% tree canopy by 2032. To reach the goal, the Urban Forest Preservation Act (passed in 2002) and a 2016 amendment impose fees for removal of trees and fines for the illegal removal of trees. John walked CAC through various case studies of how these laws are enforced and how the city is successfully using LIDAR to measure tree height and determine fines for illegal removal.

Discussion: CAC asked about the money generated and how it is used. John explained that if people pay the fees or settle outside of court, the money goes to the Tree Fund. If the case goes to court, the money goes to the city's general fund. Members learned that DC is one of the earliest and only cities to adopt this kind of tree ordinance. There are public programs to help people take down hazardous trees but no programs that would help residents take care of trees who cannot afford to. CAC recommended this as a potentially helpful program to put in place. CAC asked if the law recognizes different types of trees or whether the law values trees more if they are part of a forest buffer. John explained other than three trees (Norway maple, Tree of Heaven and Mulberry), the rule does not have any distinction.

Microplastics in the Water – Matt Robinson, DOEE & Bob Murphy, Tetra Tech

Matt Robinson and Bob Murphy, the co-authors of the STAC workshop report entitled, [Microplastics in the Chesapeake Bay and its Watershed: State of the Knowledge, Data Gaps and Relationship to Management Goals](#) provided CAC with an overview of the report. They described the definition of microplastics and how plastics are an emerging global problem. It is estimated that by 2050 there will be more microplastics in the ocean than fish and that 95% of all seabirds will have ingested some form of plastic. They have also found evidence that microplastics are more likely to accumulate in SAV (Submerged Aquatic Vegetation) beds. To raise awareness about this issue, the CBP's SAV Workgroup applied for Scientific & Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) funding to hold a workshop in 2019 about microplastics in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. The workshop goals were to 1) Assess the state of the knowledge on microplastics pollution in the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries, 2) Assess possible effects of microplastics on various habitats and associated living resources, 3) Identify existing policy and management tools being used to address plastic pollution in the watershed and beyond, and their effectiveness, and 4) Identify research gaps moving forward, and develop recommendations for future studies or new tools. The Workshop was formatted around conducting an Ecological Risk Assessment (ERA). They concluded that the most urgent need is to identify assessment endpoints that represent areas of environmental and human health concern and to characterize the severity of those risks.

Discussion: CAC asked if this problem is unique to the Chesapeake Bay. They learned that plastics are a problem everywhere and other watershed groups are focusing on it too. Members discussed how microplastics are impacting the nutrient process cycling, accumulating in sediment, and bonding with organic material. They discussed Waste Water Treatment Plant filtration processes and how plastics are distributed when biosolids are dumped on Ag lands. They also learned that plastics are more concentrated near Urban areas but are found almost everywhere. Ann Jurczyk wondering whether CAC should ask for an ERA study bill to be introduced in the Virginia legislature that the Chesapeake Bay Commission could champion. Jess suggested that the focus of microplastics needs to be broadened to incorporate human health and DEI in the Ecological Risk Assessment. The presenters agreed and shared that humans are ingesting about 5 grams of plastic per month.

CAC Members enjoyed an educational walking tour of nearby Rock Creek Restoration led by Rock Creek Conservancy Executive Director, Jeanne Braha.

Panel Discussion – DC Environmental Education and Workforce Development

Grace Manubay, Environmental Literacy Coordinator, DC Office of the State Superintendent of Education; Arlen Herrell, Associate Director, DC Infrastructure Academy, DC Department of Employment Services; Bernadette Harvey, Owner, BConstrux; Queen Richardson, Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay

CAC's Vice Chair, Julie Lawson, moderated the panel. In their opening statements, Grace Manubay described the importance and challenges of Environmental Education in K-12 schools. Because of limited resources, the DC Environment Plan focuses on collaboration and looks for ways to integrate the environment into what is already being taught. An example of this is incorporating the environment as part of student wellness in DC's

Healthy Schools Act. She described how several programs relate to Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (MWEE) including an overnight program for 5th graders and communities of practice for teachers. Arlen Herrell runs the DC Infrastructure Academy (DCIA) which coordinates, trains, screens and recruits DC residents to fulfill the needs of the infrastructure industry. It was modeled after a similar program in Chicago. Their key partners are Pepco, Washington Gas and DC Water and their goal is for the program to lead to high paying careers that will help lift DC residents into the middle class. The program provides paid, free trainings that are available to all DC residents over 18, including those who have been incarcerated. The first Pepco graduating class had 22 people and all of them received multiple job offers. Bernadette Harvey started her construction company specializing in stormwater management because there was a need for jobs. She explained how the construction industry is good because it is incarceration friendly and does not require a college degree. Her company has hired some of the graduates from DCIA. Queen Richardson described her experience being a part of the Youth Center's River Corps program where she completed five months of training in stormwater management and environmental restoration. The program, funded by the DC Department of Energy & Environment (DC DOEE), allowed Queen to learn skills in green infrastructure by inspecting rain gardens and removing invasive species. This experience helped her find a job at the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay.

Discussion: Julie asked the panelists whether youth graduating from high school were environmentally aware. The panelists explained how that is difficult thing to measure but explained that much of DC's population lacks the luxury to be environmentally aware because they are struggling to find employment and support their families. But Arlen added that within DCIA, the environmentally-friendly employment options are some of the most popular. Julie also asked what it looks like to take on workers in these programs. Bernadette said she tries to get to know the applicants in order to make realistic decisions that will work for everyone. Arlen added that it is important to be holistic and give people everything they need to be successful like paying people to go to trainings and providing work readiness programs. Grace said that it is important to have mental health and social services available for children in schools to help them succeed in the future.

The panelists also discussed ways to train workers for the jobs of the future. Bernadette described the importance of ongoing trainings to keep up with evolving technologies and Arlen described how DCIA provides tech training like coding in addition to traditional construction skills. CAC members discussed the importance of having employers involved in the training programs and panelists discussed how it is sometimes challenging for employers to rethink their hiring practices in order to accept applicants with criminal records. CAC discussed programs targeting at-risk youth such as the Marion Berry Summer Youth Employment Program that employs thousands of youth in the summer months. Queen shared that the River Corps Program also has an at-risk element and has helped a lot of young people find jobs in the solar field. Matt asked what role CAC can play in this conversation. Panelists discussed the need for young people to be better exposed to environmental jobs and learn about these career paths. Members discussed ways DC's model could be replicated in other cities and in rural areas to train/certify a workforce that can maintain BMPs.

Thursday, Nov 22, 2019

The CAC Chair called to order the meeting at 8:38 AM.

Working Breakfast / Business Meeting

Mike Lovegreen motioned to adopt the Sept 2019 meeting minutes, John Dawes seconded and the minutes were adopted as submitted. The meeting then proceeded to the election of Officers. Joe Maroon offered the Chair of the Nominations Committee's election memo recommending Matt Ehrhart and Julie Lawson to continue in their roles as CACs Chair and Vice Chair. There were no additional nominations. Matt and Julie were unanimously approved. Matt gave an overview of the two recent letters sent by CAC's Executive Committee – 1) letter to Jim Edward about the Phase III WIPs, and 2) letter regarding the numeric commitments in the 2-year milestones.

Members discussed the differences between 2-year milestones and BMP verifications, the challenges of funding verification, opportunities for new technology to reduce costs, and the importance of showing the progress made to the public. CAC then discussed updates surrounding Exelon and the Conowingo Dam, the settlement and the court cases. Members then updated the group with any pertinent news happening in their respective jurisdictions.

Updates from the Chesapeake Bay Program

Jim Edward, Deputy Director, EPA Chesapeake Bay Program Office

Jim addressed [CAC's Oct 29th letter](#) and said that the EPA will submit final reviews of the Phase III WIPs to the jurisdictions by mid-December. He noted that CAC's suggestion about the visual table was helpful. He briefed CAC on the numeric 2-year milestone methodology and the EPA's response to [CAC's Oct 25th letter](#). The EPA said that if there are significant gaps in jurisdiction's WIPs they must show how they will meet them in their 2-year milestones. Each state must submit a 2-year milestone showing a degree of confidence that those practices will get on the ground. CAC felt that the EPA's response adequately addressed CAC's concerns. Jim briefed CAC members on the BMP Verification Program changes that were requested by the Water Quality GIT and shared the potential response by the Management Board. The Management Board thought that it would be too soon to change the procedures but technology can be added to the verification procedures. Jim then updated CAC that the continuing budget resolution keeps the current EPA-CBP budget in place through Dec 20th.

CAC Discussion

CAC reflected on the prior day's agenda. Members expressed concern over microplastics and the desire to learn more about the topic in future meetings. Individuals were specifically interested in knowing whether wastewater treatment plants are addressing the issue and how it is affecting drinking water. CAC discussed ways to raise the issue of microplastics at the PSC level and how to integrate microplastics into Environmental Education and MWEE through the Education workgroup. Members said the Workforce Development and Environmental Education panel sparked a lot of thoughts and discussed how CAC can get involved in encouraging certificate programs in schools and involving people who are unemployed or underemployed. Members discussed the verification process and how there needs to be a communication strategy as well as how additional technologies should be included in the protocols. For future meeting topics ideas, members requested presentations on the following: the impact of climate change in Phase III WIPs; issues of inclusion and increasing the diversity among the members on CAC; and the findings of the oyster BMP expert panel.

For action items, CAC agreed to write a letter addressing three items around BMP verification – 1) to encourage a communications strategy on the verification process that explains why verifications are important and the potential negative impact on perceived progress, 2) to support the EPA's position of not reopening the protocols at this time, and 3) to use the Chesapeake Conservancy and Commons for satellite imagery and other technologies now more available than when the protocols were first approved to help verify BMPs and to prioritize the “low hanging fruit” in order to be cost effective.

In order to push the CBP Education workgroup to incorporate microplastics education in their programs like MWEE, CAC agreed that having a member participate of the CAC Stewardship subcommittee participate in the CBP calls would be more effective than writing a letter. Before adjourning, CAC discussed meeting locations ideas in West Virginia for February's meeting. CAC staff agreed to research possible meeting locations in Berkeley Springs, Shepherdstown and Harper's Ferry.

With no further business, CAC adjourned at Noon.