

FINAL
SUMMARY OF THE PORT OF BALTIMORE
HARBOR SAFETY AND COORDINATION COMMITTEE MEETING
September 13, 2023 10:00 AM
Association of Maryland Pilots
3720 Dillon Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21224

Attendees:

Association of Maryland Pilots (MD Pilots): Captain Eric Nielsen
Gahagan Bryant Associates (GBA): Jake Derolf
Maryland Department of Natural Resources: Matthew Baldwin, John Gallagher
Maryland Environmental Service (MES): Stephanie Peters
Maryland Port Administration (MPA): Ryan Barry, David Bibo, Holly Miller
Maryland Transportation Authority (MDTA): Hua Sheng He, Bob McKenzie
McAllister Towing: Bob Dempsey
Moran Towing Corporation: Jonathan Steinberg
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) National Ocean Service: Jay Dawsey
NOAA Office of Coast Survey (OCS): Ryan Wartick
NOAA Physical Oceanographic Real-Time System (PORTS): Chris DiVeglio
Ports America Chesapeake: Aaron Brockmeyer
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Baltimore District: Kevin Fenyak, Eric Lindheimer, Rachel Kierzewski, Andrew Payson, Jeff Peacock
USACE, Philadelphia District: Michael Hart
USCG, Regional Exam Center-Baltimore: Scott Taylor
USCG, Sector Maryland–National Capital Region (MD-NCR): Doug Bullock, Caren Damon, Fred Dolbow, Michael Klopp, Morgan Merritt, Joshua Motta, Kate Newkirk, David O’Connell, Baxter Smoak
US Wind: Ben Cooper (via phone)
Vane Brothers: John Shkor

Action Items

Philadelphia District – USACE

P2 – Consideration of Arnold Point emergency anchorage/turning basin. *Ongoing. No update.*

Baltimore District – USACE

B6 – Deepen one of the Harbor anchorages to 50 feet. *Long-term request – The Seagirt Loop Feasibility Study, which is a three-year, \$3M joint venture between USACE and MPA, to deepen the Seagirt Loop channels started in October 2020 and is also looking at deepening one of the Anchorages to 50 feet. An economic study conducted as part of the Seagirt Loop Feasibility Study did not support a 50-foot-deep anchorage in Baltimore Harbor.*

USCG Sector Maryland–National Capital Region

C5 – Construct upper reach York Spit Channel range lights to be positioned below York River Channel. *On hold due to 50' Widening Study; completion of lights scheduled for 2020. No update.*

C6 – Evaluate traffic separation scheme (TSS) at Smith Point. *Ongoing – Removal of the TSS was published in the Federal Register on August 15, 2023, Docket Number USCG-2023-0330, and is open for Public Comment through November 20, 2023. Changes to the buoy in conjunction with the TSS removal has also been listed in the Local Notice to Mariners (LNM).*

C26 – Rebuild Craighill Channel Range lights. *Ongoing – Based on award date, construction anticipated to start summer 2024.*

C27 – Investigate possibility of replacing Curtis Bay Range with light(s) near the far end of the range line at Sollers Point. *Ongoing – PEL design has been finalized and project has entered the procurement process. Preliminary installation timelines will be available once the light is purchased.*

MPA

M6 – Evaluate the possibility of dredging in two (2) areas around the Seagirt Marine Terminal to address areas of concern identified by the MD Pilots as pinch points: an area around 3SW Buoy turning into Seagirt and widening an area off Buoy 1C in Colgate Creek. Priority would be area off Buoy 1C in Colgate Creek. *Ongoing – USCG moved Buoy 3 as part of the Seagirt Berth 3 Dredging project. MPA is widening Colgate Creek in two phases. The first phase of dredging occurred in June-August 2021. USCG relocated Buoy 1C during the first phase of dredging and returned to its post-dredging position on March 30, 2022.*

General Action Items

- MPA, NOAA, USACE, and the Pilots will coordinate to identify locations where the NOAA electronic navigational chart (ENC) does not accurately reflect channel conditions and to determine how to resolve the inaccuracies, and then NOAA will update the ENC with accurate information. *Ongoing.*

Statements for the Record

1.0 Greetings and Introductions

David Bibo, MPA

- Mr. Bibo welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order.
- Attendees present and those available by phone introduced themselves and stated whom they represent.

2.0 Approval of Summary for Record

David Bibo, MPA

- Mr. Bibo asked for a motion to accept the June 2023 meeting summary. The motion was put

forth and the summary was accepted.

3.0 Salvage and Marine Firefighting Subcommittee

Fred Dolbow, USCG

- Mr. Dolbow stated that tabletop was held on August 14, with up to 100 participants. The event was well received. The area contingency and full-scale prep exercise was held 2 days later for port recovery; lessons learned from both will be distributed.
- The Captain of the Port recovery plan is being updated; Mr. Dolbow will be reaching out to committee members for statistics as necessary.
- USCG website home port contains information for port partners such as heavy weather plans, salvage plans, recovery plans, area contingency plan. Those seeking access to the site should contact Mr. Dolbow.

4.0 U.S. Coast Guard Updates

David O’Connell, USCG MD-NCR

Kate Newkirk, USCG MD-NCR

Joshua Motta, USCG MD-NCR

Doug Bullock, USCG MD-NCR

- Captain O’Connell noted this has been a busy search and rescue season. He noted his appreciation for the coordination that occurred with partners on the Bay Bridge air gap sensor and several dead ship tows. USCG is working on the transit plan, which will hopefully be distributed in the next few weeks. Captain O’Connell was happy with the participation in the marine salvage and firefighting exercises, especially with the uptick in marine fire incidents as of late. Captain O’Connell introduced his new Deputy, Caren Damon.
- Ms. Newkirk introduced Doug Bullock, marine transportation specialist. She noted that the Bay Bridge Paddle is coming up 9/23/23. She thanked those who assisted with the dead ship movement of the Denebola; another movement is upcoming with the ship John W. Brown.
- Mr. Motta and Mr. Bullock provided Aids to Navigation and Waterways Management updates per the briefing sheet in **Appendix A**.
- The 2024 AtoN planning meeting may be scheduled for March.
- Air gap sensor on the Key Bridge still awaits the delivery of equipment. The platform has been installed. It is unknown if snoopers trucks will be needed at this time. Mr. Smoak stated that USCG has been coordinating with MDTA, who understands the impacts to the channel; if the work finishes early, MDTA will coordinate with USCG to remove the notice to mariners and reopen traffic to the full advertised vertical clearance.
- Mr. Bibo inquired about the status of the Bay Bridge redecking project; Mr. Smoak responded that the work is planned to occur outside the main channel and therefore not impact vertical clearance; however, in-water speed zones around the eastern portions of the bridge have been put in place by MDNR.

5.0 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Philadelphia District Updates

Mike Hart, USACE Philadelphia

- Mr. Hart stated that Philadelphia District advertised the FFY 2023 maintenance dredging project at the end of August; bids are due September 21. Notice to Proceed is anticipated in October. Dredging of the upper Chesapeake Bay could begin in November with an estimated

volume of 500,000 cubic yards. A lot of shoaling occurred at Worton Point so this will likely be the majority of the dredging work, which will be placed at the Pearce Creek dredged material containment facility (DMCF).

- St. George’s Bridge work will continue for approximately another year. There are no air gap restrictions or channel restrictions associated with this work. There is still the potential for a barge to be tied up to the one of the piers in the Canal, possibly impacting channel clearance.
- A construction contract award for work on the Reedy Point Bridge is anticipated; no air gap restriction is anticipated but this won’t be known for sure until the contractor’s work plan is received.
- Mr. Bibo asked if any issues were occurring at Pearce Creek DMCF regarding noise complaints in the neighborhood. Mr. Hart explained there have been a few, mostly regarding truck back up alarms that were too close to homes. Houses closest to the water did have complaints about dredging-related noise for a longer duration than usual. The upcoming project is anticipated to have a more typical duration.

6.0 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District Updates

Eric Lindheimer, USACE Baltimore
Kevin Fenyak, USACE Baltimore
Rachel Kierzewski, USACE Baltimore

- Mr. Lindheimer noted that his detail ends in September and that Mr. Graham McCallister is anticipated to return in October. He introduced Mr. Fenyak, who is the project manager for the FY24 Baltimore Harbor and Maryland Approach Dredging project as well as Ms. Kierzewski, who is the project manager for the Virginia Approach Dredging project.
- Mr. Lindheimer, Mr. Fenyak, and Ms. Kierzewski provided information per the presentation provided in **Appendix B**.
- Captain Nielsen asked for the status of an anchor that was lost in Anchorage No. 2. Mr. Payson stated that another piece of debris was located in Anchorage No. 2, but it is not the anchor under discussion since the debris was present in the May 2023 survey of that area. The debris is approximately 20 feet long and protrudes from the bottom about 1.5 feet in places. The missing anchor was not located in the USACE survey or by divers, so it may be buried. Captain Nielsen asked if the debris could be identified and cleared since Anchorage No. 2 is used even though it is shallow. Mr. Payson noted that it is unclear who owns what is in the anchorage since it is not a channel but is federally designated by the USCG. USACE will remove the debris, if need be, but will have to obtain contract divers. USCG is also assisting in resolving this issue.
- Removal of debris in the channel is the responsibility of USACE, but notification to USCG should also be made so a broadcast notice to mariners can be issued.

7.0 NOAA/NOS/NWS Updates

Ryan Wartick, NOAA/OCS
Chris DiVeglio, NOAA/PORTS

- Mr. Wartick provided information per the presentation provided in **Appendix C**.
- The surveys provided by the offshore wind companies are being provided to NOAA and are included in the electronic navigation chart (ENC) gridding process. Often, the survey contractors used by the offshore wind companies are the same ones that NOAA contracts to complete surveys, so the data quality is such that the surveys are usable for NOAA charting.

- Tangier Sound will be surveyed next year.
- Those seeking step-by-step instructions for using the NOAA Custom Chart Viewer can search online for instruction videos created by NOAA.
- Custom charts cannot be downloaded into an ArcGIS format, but the PDF file can be georeferenced. The entire ENC suite can be loaded into ArcGIS, however.
- Once a chart goes into “last edition” status, it will be cancelled 6 months later.
- As raster charts are cancelled, they will no longer be corrected in the previous fashion. ENC and NOAA Custom Charts are updated weekly (on Thursdays). The date shown on the ENC and NOAA Custom Chart will be the date the chart was created; the chart will be valid for six months. There is currently no notification process when a chart is updated; however, the update page (shown on slide 11) does contain an archive of all updates. Buoy information is also included in updates.
- Mr. DiVeglio and Mr. Dawsey provided updates per the presentation in **Appendix D and the handouts in Appendix E.**
- Rappahannock Shoal current station has been transmitting information on an hourly basis rather than every 6 minutes; this will be switched out one for one that provides information on an hourly basis to be consistent with other stations.
- The second Key Bridge air gap sensor has been installed but does not yet have power. After this committee’s last meeting, stakeholders were notified via an updated air gap notice letter that the Key Bridge air gap data is showing more clearance due to raising the navigation lights there. Committee members desiring a copy of the letter (which contains more details) should reach out to Mr. DiVeglio directly.
- A snoopers is not envisioned to be necessary for installing the second Bay Bridge air gap sensor so long as the platform is already installed; Mr. DiVeglio will confirm and get back to Captain Nielsen.
- Mr. DiVeglio noted that the NOAA High Tide Flooding Outlook is based on astronomical information and does not incorporate impacts of storm activity.

8.0 Maryland Department of Natural Resources Updates John Gallagher, MDNR

- Mr. Gallagher introduced Matthew Baldwin, who replaced Matt Negley as the Abandoned Boat and Debris Coordinator.
- Mr. Gallagher stated that in the last two weeks, two sunken small boats were pulled out of the Inner Harbor, a boat was pulled out of Rock Hole Creek, and a boat was pulled out of Brickhouse Creek off the South River.
- The tide station on the Bill Burton Bridge in Cambridge must be removed. It is proposed that fishing piers will be built on both sides of the river, so the station could be reinstalled on one of those.
- The Port Partners ice conference is tentatively scheduled for the week of November 13.

9.0 Maryland Transportation Authority Updates Bob McKenzie, MDTA

- Mr. McKenzie introduced Mr. Hua Sheng He as the new MDTA structures preservation program manager; he will be a co-attende in these meetings moving forward.
- Francis Scott Key Bridge: There is no contract or task order work scheduled within the next six to twelve months that will affect clearance under the bridge. There is an inspection

scheduled for the 2024 cycle, anticipated to last for one or two days. There is no planned inspection activity in the navigable waterway. The task order for the modification of Key Bridge navigation lights has been completed. The task order for the additional red margin lights has been finalized and will be assigned to MDTA construction very soon. The access agreement for the new air gap sensor was still being reviewed by MDTA procurement as of yesterday; it should be finalized and signed within the next few days.

- Chesapeake Bay Bridge: Repairs are ongoing on the westbound bridge outside of the navigation channels with no impact on commercial or recreational boat traffic. The gusset plate repairs on the eastbound suspension span will start sometime in the next two to three months pending the USCG approval or vertical clearance restriction under the main span. Repairs to the eastbound bridge main span over the navigational channel will take place within the next several months. The access plan has been submitted to USCG; it does not reduce the vertical under clearance. MDTA will continue bi-weekly notifications to USCG regarding access. For the eastbound bridge deck replacement, the stair tower has been installed on Pier 35 between the main channel and secondary channel. Installation of temporary scaffolding on the trusses between the main channel and the secondary channel is in progress. Utility relocation and replacements of the truss plates and rivets are ongoing. Bridge work within the next six to twelve months includes routine repairs in both eastbound and westbound bridges outside of the navigational channels; no impact on commercial or recreational boat traffic is expected.
- The 2024 inspection cycle will begin at the end of September/early October. Inspections and construction departments are coordinating and working out a complete schedule to provide to USCG for any work deemed necessary in the navigation channel; proper advance notice to mariners will be issued.
- Main channel closures associated with the Bay Bridge redecking are not anticipated within the next several months, but an exact time and duration are unknown at this time. Captain Nielsen remarked that the carriers using the channels will need at least a few months' notice. More information may be available at the next committee meeting.

10.0 Association of Maryland Pilots Updates

Captain Eric Nielsen, MD Pilots

- Captain Nielsen relayed a scary near-miss incident with the snooper truck on the Bay Bridge and a vessel transiting the channel in August, when the Pilots were unaware that work was occurring over the channel. Due to the incident, USCG organized a meeting where scheduled closures would occur beginning September 4. and reiterated the importance of good lines of communication. Despite the committee's recommendation of designating the air gap 170 feet (inclusive of a reasonable safety factor), bridge contractors have requested to know whenever a ship has an air draft of 150 feet. He reiterated the importance of maintaining good lines of communication.

11.0 Maryland Port Administration Updates

Dave Bibo, MPA

- Mr. Bibo stated that Bonnie Johansen (Baltimore Gas & Electric) sent out a notice regarding a meeting on Friday morning at 7:30 AM concerning the Key Crossing Initiative. The meeting is regarding upcoming helicopter activity to install spacers on the lines over the navigational channel; the work will be much less impactful than when they were originally installing the lines.
- Mr. Bibo stated that there is no update to the Tradepoint Atlantic work (contractor: Kokosing).

At Amports' Chesapeake and Atlantic Terminal, dredging is winding down. The Consol/CNX dredging project has been completed. The South Locust Point Cruise Terminal dredging for Norwegian Cruise Line is completed. USACE will bring dredged material from the Curtis Bay Channel to Cox Creek Dredged Material Containment Facility (DMCF) in the December to January timeframe.

- USCG has two upcoming dredging projects: turning basin (12,000 cubic yards) and Curtis Creek access channel (over 400,000 cubic yards). The access channel will be split into two phases because of capacity at Cox Creek DMCF. Dredging at Curtis Creek may be included in the USACE FY25 dredging schedule, if possible.

12.0 Comments/Adjourn

David Bibo, MPA

- The next meeting will be held on December 13, 2023.