

Memorandum

TO: Hart-Miller Island Citizens Oversight Committee

FROM: Rebecca Kreatschman – MES

DATE: April 9, 2020

SUBJECT: Next meeting – May 19, 2020

The next meeting of the Hart-Miller Island Citizens Oversight Committee (HMI COC) is **tentatively scheduled to be held ON SITE on Tuesday, May 19, 2020**. The boat pick up time will be 5:00 pm at the Maryland Environmental Service's (MES) land base at 2024A Riverview Rd in Essex, MD. Please arrive a few minutes early, as the boat will leave promptly at 5:00 pm. The Maryland Department of Transportation Maryland Port Administration (MDOT MPA) will provide dinner. All attendees must confirm their attendance as well as number of guests and mode of transportation to Margie Hamby at (410) 385-4419.

Attached for your review is a copy of the minutes from the January 21, 2020 meeting.

**HART-MILLER ISLAND
CITIZENS OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MEETING
6:30 PM
January 21, 2020**

ATTENDEES:

Paul Brylske	Seventh District
Larry Lee	Essex-Middle River CC
Sam Weaver	Sports Fishermen
Holly Miller	MDOT MPA
Amanda Peñafiel	MDOT MPA
Dave Bibo	MDOT MPA
Dave Blazer	MDOT MPA
Paul Shepherd	DNR
Lien Vu	MES
Lincoln Tracy	MES
Rebecca Kreatschman	MES
Alexa Smarr	University of Maryland Extension

ACTION ITEMS

- MDOT MPA will provide an update on the North Cell Habitat Design at the next meeting.
- Mr. Brylske will provide an update on the HMI Friends Group meeting.
- Mr. Blazer will work with Sea Grant to explore research funding opportunities for HMI.

1. OPENING REMARKS

Paul Brylske-Chairman

- Mr. Brylske asked the HMI COC members for approval of the meeting minutes from the November 19, 2019 HMI COC meeting. All members approved.

2. HMI FRIENDS GROUP DISCUSSION

- A meeting was held on January 16, 2020 at 6:30 pm at Our Lady of Mount Carmel High School in Essex to discuss the HMI Friends Group. Charlie Conklin (Gunpowder Valley Conservancy), HMI COC members Sam Weaver, Fran Taylor and Larry Lee, Rick Decker (Friends of Maryland State Parks), Fran Flanagan, and others attended.
- A vision statement and mission statement were adopted and an advisory board was established. The group also discussed how to move forward from a COC to an HMI Friends Group.
- The next meeting is scheduled for March 19, 2020. The group plans to discuss the future of the HMI Friends Group and its relationship with MES, MDOT MPA, and DNR, as well as how to integrate the current HMI COC with the Friends Group. Mr. Bibo offered the HMI COC reserved meeting place and time at 2200 Broening Highway for the Friends Group to utilize for future meetings when the HMI COC would not meet.
- Mr. Weaver stated the meeting went well and reinforced the importance of the relationship between the Friends Group and the HMI COC Committee.

Alexa Smarr-University of Maryland Extension

- Ms. Smarr offered a PowerPoint presentation to members. Ms. Smarr is the Community Horticulture Educator for Baltimore County for the University of Maryland Extension. The University of Maryland Extension is under the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Maryland (UMD).
- The University of Maryland Extension is a system of UMD that helps disperse information and make university resources available to residents. UMD Extension offers many programs including Master Gardener, 4-H, Family and Consumer Sciences, Food Supplement Nutrition Education, and Sea Grant. The programs are divided into four areas: Agriculture, Environment and Natural Resources, Family and Consumer Sciences, and 4-H Youth Development. The Environment and Natural Resources Program includes the Home and Garden Information Center, Master Gardener program, Master Naturalist program, Climate Change Programming, Sustainable Energy Technologies, Forest and Wildlife Management, Well Water and Septic Education, Sea Grant, and Maryland Aquaculture.
- The Master Gardener program is a group of volunteer educators that help share information to residents. Volunteers receive a 40-60-hour training course and then begin holding classes for the public. Master Gardeners will maintain public garden spaces for educational purposes. Master Gardeners currently maintain a garden at the Baltimore County Agricultural Center and two therapeutic gardens in the County and will hold classes at these locations. The Master Gardener Program offers landscape certification to residents whereby if they receive 36 points, they qualify for a Bay Wise Certification. In addition, Master Gardeners provide outreach support by tabling at events and include activities like watershed models and monarch butterfly demonstrations. Finally,

they provide consultations to residents or sites to help solve basic gardening issues in an area but may not have the specialized training to solve more complex problems.

- Ms. Smarr explained the Master Naturalists, under the Environmental and Natural Resources program. The Master Naturalist program is paired with a site. Volunteers apply for training at a Host Site and then provide service to the Host Site. Master Naturalists can help with a wide variety of projects including environmental restoration, trail maintenance, education, public awareness campaigns, and field research. Ms. Smarr added that equal access to the project location is also important to be considered a Host Site for Master Naturalists, and HMI could pose an issue because of limited transportation access.
- Mr. Bibo suggested having the Master Gardener program involved with a project on HMI, as they are at Poplar Island. The Master Gardeners work with Poplar Island to maintain the Murden Memorial Garden. In addition, they assisted United States Fish and Wildlife Service to plant a new pollinator garden on Earth Day 2019. The Master Gardeners could potentially establish a memorial garden at HMI as well around the HMI COC Memorial. Ms. Smarr emphasized the requirement of including education in projects for the Master Gardeners. Each county's Master Gardener program can vary, but volunteers assist by helping plan or install a project but may not be used as a maintenance group. Mr. Tracy believes there is a strong education opportunity for projects at HMI that could involve the Master Gardeners. Mr. Brylske suggested involving a high school aged group. Ms. Smarr explained that youth groups fall under the 4-H groups and could be a possibility for involvement at HMI.
- Mr. Blazer will work with Sea Grant to explore research funding opportunities for HMI. Mr. Blazer is on the External Advisory Board for the Maryland Sea Grant and the group meets twice a year to discuss funding priorities. Ms. Smarr suggested contacting The Director of Maryland Sea Grant Fredrika Moser.
- Mr. Brylske suggested working with the University of Maryland Extension to explore research opportunities in the North Cell of HMI for faculties or students at the University. Ms. Smarr offered to connect with professors and graduate students on campus and share the opportunity to those interested. Ms. Peñafiel added that MES has contracted with the University of Maryland systems through University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science (UMCES) and Wye Research and Education Center (WREC) for vegetation studies in the North Cell.

3. NORTH CELL UPDATES

Operations-Lincoln Tracy-MES

- MES Operations is continuing maintenance on the dikes, trails, trenches, and roads. MES Operations is continuing efforts to lime the perimeter trenches in the North Cell for discharge. In November, Spillways 008 and 009 were open for 6 days and discharged 19.07 million gallons (MG). In December, Spillways 008 and 009 were open for 4 days and discharged 11.78 million gallons (MG). To date in January, Spillway 009 was opened for 4 days. Spillway 008 showed elevated levels of nickel and will not open in January. Due to elevated levels of ammonia and nickel, there was no discharge from Spillway 007 since the last meeting. However, exposure of sediments increased when pond elevation dropped below 37.5 feet and showed a negative impact on water quality with increased concentrations of metals. As the North Cell design progresses, pond elevation will be held at or above 37.5 feet to prevent future exposure of sediments.
- Mr. Brylske asked why the ammonia and metals were elevated. Mr. Tracy explained it is likely due to decreased pond elevation last summer which exposed sediments. Sampling within the North Cell Pond showed most locations with pH levels within permit limits.

- The current water surface elevation is 37.8 feet, which is equivalent to 114 million gallons in the North Cell. Water elevation within the cell increased by 0.2 foot since the last meeting due to precipitation.

North Cell Habitat Development- Amanda Peñafiel–MDOT MPA

- Ms. Peñafiel presented the updated North Cell Habitat Design revised concept (attached). DNR sent a response to MDOT MPA supporting the revised concept and requested if possible that more transitional area be added to the design as it is developed. Century Engineering will move forward with developing cost estimates and a project schedule for the design. MDOT MPA and DNR will meet in late January to discuss developing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to include the North Cell Habitat Design, South Cell Public Access, future infrastructure, and roles and responsibilities moving forward. Mr. Brylske asked if members would have the opportunity to influence the MOU regarding access. Ms. Miller explained that the purpose of the MOU is to define the roles of MDOT MPA, MES and DNR for HMI.

Design with Dredge – HMI North Cell Pilot Project-Lien Vu–MES

- The preliminary design plans for the HMI North Cell Pilot Project have been finalized. There have been no significant changes from the plans that were presented to the COC at the last meeting. Along with the preliminary design plans, MES is finalizing Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) documents that accompany the monitoring plan. In addition, the HMI North Cell Pilot Project team is working together to develop a cost estimate for construction, survey, monitoring and landscaping work. Upon approval, construction of the mounds will begin winter/spring 2020.

4. DNR UPDATE

Paul Shepherd–DNR

- Hawk Cove campsites will be removed, and four new campsites will be installed behind the boardwalk. This area is the most popular area for campers. The Hawk Cove camp sites are typically used during the day and are subject to erosion. Picnic tables and fire rings will be installed at the end of Hawk Cove for visitors to enjoy.
- Staff will work to modernize camper registration and fee collection processes to be more user-friendly. Ranger Shepherd will research options for fee collection equipment such as an honor box or Iron Ranger to be placed at the Pleasure Island camping sites. Staff will maintain a presence in the area to interact with visitors.
- Bulletin boards were installed at Pleasure Island and HMI main camping areas. Included are payment instructions, rules, regulations, South Cell trail map, and emergency contact information.
- DNR will work with HMI Operations to install a fourth covered bench in the South Cell. There is a fifth covered bench that was purchased but it is considered an extra.
- DNR completed the HMI 2018 and 2019 end of year reports and submitted to MES.
- The Waterfront Guide article was completed by Ranger Shepherd and submitted to MES and DNR for review.
- DNR conducted maintenance around the DNR building, beach, and South Cell park including repainting the welcome sign.
- DNR boats were sent to Matapeake State Park for servicing and registration was renewed for all boats.
- Job opportunities for the 2020 park season have been posted online. Previous seasonal rangers were notified of the listings.
- HMI staff informed DNR of shotgun shells found on the road in the North and South Cells. DNR contacted Natural Resource Police. No firearms are allowed on HMI.

5. FINAL REMARKS

Dave Bibo – MDOT MPA

- MDOT MPA will submit a 2019 attendance report to the Governor’s Appointment Office. There are currently five active members including Mr. Brylske, Mr. Taylor, Mr. Weaver, Ms. Wynn, and Mr. Lee. Mr. Bibo explained the current HMI COC attendance policies requires active members to attend at least 50% of meetings each year. Mr. Bibo expressed the difficulty of filling member positions for the HMI COC. Mr. Brylske recommended recruitment for the HMI Friends Group, instead of the HMI COC.
- Mr. Bibo discussed the frequency of the HMI COC meetings and proposed decreasing in-person meetings. Instead of face-to-face meetings, email updates could be sent to the group. Mr. Bibo reviewed the HMI COC meeting schedule and agenda items for 2020. Mr. Bibo suggested meeting in May, September, and November and offered the March and July meeting dates, times and location to the Friends Group. The May 19, 2020 and September 15, 2020 meetings will be onsite at HMI. Mr. Brylske asked if it is possible to bring Friends Group members out to HMI during one of the onsite meetings. Mr. Bibo explained that it would be possible, and Mr. Weaver offered to assist in transportation using his boats.
- Mr. Blazer updated the group about Bike Your Park Day 2020 through Adventure Cycling Association. Adventure Cycling explained a local citizen organized the North Point bike and kayak to HMI in 2019. Adventure Cycling informed Mr. Blazer that registration for the 2020 event has not been opened yet and they will send him more information as it becomes available. The event will take place on September 26, 2020. Mr. Brylske suggested that the Friends Group support the event.
- Mr. Weaver announced a bull and oyster roast fundraiser hosted by the Maryland Waterways Foundation and the Coastal Conservation Association Maryland. The event will be held on February 9, 2020 from 2-6 pm at the Rosedale Gardens Banquet Hall. Mr. Weaver plans to install reef balls in areas recently cleared of debris and garbage to introduce new fish habitat. The reef balls were constructed by Sea Scout groups using molds from the Coastal Conservation Association Maryland.

Meeting adjourned-8:00pm