

Memorandum

TO: Hart-Miller Island Citizens Oversight Committee

FROM: Rebecca Kreatschman – MES

DATE: October 19, 2017

SUBJECT: Next meeting – Tuesday, November 21, 2017

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The next meeting of the Hart-Miller Island Citizens Oversight Committee (HMI COC) will be held on Tuesday, November 21, 2017 at 6:30 pm at 2200 Broening Highway. Please use the door on the side of the building and the conference room will be on the left. Parking is available adjacent to the building and also across the highway. The Maryland Department of Transportation Maryland Port Administration (MPA) will provide dinner at 6:00 pm. The agenda for the next meeting will be provided the week prior to the meeting date. **Please call Ms. Margie Hamby at (410) 385-4419 if you cannot make this meeting.**

Attached for your review is a copy of the minutes from the September 19, 2017 meeting.

**HART-MILLER ISLAND  
CITIZENS OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MEETING**

**5:00 PM**

**September 19, 2017**

**ATTENDEES:**

Paul Brylske	Seventh District
Fran Taylor	NPPCCC
David Patro	Greater Dundalk Community Council
Sam Weaver	BRRC
Karen Wynn	Sixth District
Dave Bibo	MDOT MPA
Holly Miller	MDOT MPA
Kristen Weiss Fidler	MDOT MPA
Lincoln Tracy	MES
Amanda Peñafiel	MES
Rebecca Kreatschman	MES
Bruce Michael	DNR
Bob Iman	DNR
Darcy Herman	Gunpowder Valley Conservancy
Charlie Conklin	Gunpowder Valley Conservancy
Peg Perry	Gunpowder Valley Conservancy
Kevin Lawrence	Sixth District, Representing Senator Salling
Allen Robertson	Bowley's Quarters Community Association

## **ACTION ITEMS**

- HMI COC members will invite groups with interest or knowledge about starting a friends group, to a HMI COC meeting to brainstorm and discuss a friends group for HMI.
- MPA and Gunpowder Valley Conservancy (GVC) will provide feedback from their meeting about North Cell development and will discuss potential collaboration using the National Fish Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) grant.
- Other grant opportunities will be discussed.

### **1. OPENING REMARKS**

#### **Paul Brylske – Chairman**

- Mr. Brylske asked the HMI COC members for approval of the meeting minutes from the July 17, 2017 HMI COC meeting. All members approved.

### **2. NORTH CELL UPDATE**

#### **Lincoln Tracy, Amanda Peñafiel – MES**

- The North Cell's elevation has increased by 1.7 feet since the last meeting. The current elevation in the cell is 39 feet. At the July HMI COC meeting the elevation was 37.3 feet.
- The HMI operations crew is focusing on continuing to excavate the North Cell deep pool. Construction of the deep pool is going better than expected with a current depth of approximately 6-8 feet. When completed, the deep pool will have an elevation of 25 feet and a depth of 20 feet in the pond.
- Mr. Bibo asked for a general overview of how the South Cell relates to the plans for the North Cell. Mr. Tracy explained that DNR requested a low maintenance plan for HMI once it is turned over to be used as a park. In order to maintain the South Cell elevation, Century Engineering developed plans for a North Cell Deep Pool. Water that accumulates in the North Cell will drain into the deep pool and will feed into the South Cell through a spillway from the North Cell into the South Cell. The South Cell will also be modified to have a deeper pool to serve as a refuge for fish to migrate to in extreme drought conditions. The pump system that was used previously to rehydrate the South Cell after drawdown will be removed upon completion of the design.
- Century also assessed the crane pier behind the Operations building in order to restore it for possible future use by DNR once MES operations crew leaves.
- Mr. Patro asked where and how the fish got to HMI. Mr. Tracy explained that it is possible the fish entered through the pumps, by birds, as larvae in dredged material, and small fish through the piping system during intake. Ms. Peñafiel stated that the South Cell was stocked previously with gambusia to assist with mosquito control. As a part of the monitoring associated with the South Cell Restoration Project, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) surveyed the pond and found mummichogs, bass, sunfish, perch and banded killifish. Although unplanned in the North Cell, the fish population serves as food for other animals and mosquito control.
- At the beginning of May 2017, Vegetation Test Strips were established on the west side of the North Cell. Each test strip is 5 foot wide by 300 foot long and split into three sections 0-100 feet, 100-200 feet, 200-300 feet. The test strips are in both limed and unlimed areas of the cell. Each test strip is

seeded with a different species that is known to be salt and pH tolerant. Currently there are eight perennial grass species and eight annual grass species planted. Along with the test strips, seven different woody vegetation species were also planted adjacent to the test strips in limed and unlimed areas. The Vegetation Test Strips and woody vegetation will be monitored monthly throughout the 2017 growing season and will help determine what vegetation to move forward with planting in the North Cell. So far, the only species that is present in the test strips is the alkali grass growing in the limed test strip. The woody vegetation planted is doing well and all species have a high survival rate in both limed and unlimed areas. Signs of stress, such as brown leaves, have been noted on some of the high tide blueberries and bayberries on both sides. The presence of invasive and volunteer species including *Phragmites* has been noted and invasive species are being removed to control spread.

- The North Cell Vegetation Working Group is scheduled to meet in early October.

### 3. SOUTH CELL HOLDING POND ALGAE

#### **Amanda Peñafiel – MES**

- A preserved algal sample was sent to DNR in June 2017 for the South Cell Holding Pond. The sample indicated there was a bloom of *Aphanizomenon favaloroi*, a species known to produce a neurotoxin (saxitoxin). The characteristic of this bloom is the water turns brown, whereas in other cyanobacteria algal species the water turns a bright green. As a result the sample was preserved for algal identification at a later date rather than analyzed immediately. New algal samples were collected August 2, 2017 from the South Cell holding pond, Spillway 003 in the South Cell, and at the personnel pier. Analyses showed that *Aphanizomenon favaloroi* was still present in the South Cell holding pond but with a slightly lower cell count than the June sample. Co-occurring with *Aphanizomenon favaloroi* was *Pseudanabaena limnctica*, another species with the potential to produce microcystin, a type of hepatotoxin, a toxic chemical substance that affects the liver, producer. No detection of either species was found at the pier or Spillway 003. The South Cell holding pond sample collected on August 2, 2017 was sent to Greenwater Lab for analysis of the following cyanotoxins: saxitoxin, anatoxin, cylindrospermopsin, and microcystin. No toxins were detected. MES will continue to conduct monthly algae monitoring. If these blooms reappear, another sample will be submitted to Greenwater for toxin analysis. The DNR Park staff was notified.
- Mr. Brylske asked what risks there would be to people and wildlife if the algae were toxic. Ms. Peñafiel answered they can have harmful effects on ecosystems by reducing dissolved oxygen levels, which can lead to anoxic conditions and result in depressions in other algae species that could be beneficial to the water. Certain algal species can negatively affect local wildlife. Mr. Brylske asked what precautions would be taken if toxins were found. Ms. Peñafiel answered that there would be no discharging. The algal bloom was only found in the South Cell holding pond, which is separated from the South Cell and would not be discharged.
- Mr. Robertson asked if the South Cell pond could be diluted with North Cell water to bring down the high cell counts. Ms. Peñafiel answered no, because the discharge permit does not allow North Cell water to be discharged into the South Cell.

### 4. DNR UPDATES

## **Bob Iman – DNR**

- Visitor numbers to the park and South Cell Public Access have increased. DNR is also tracking visitors who have returned.
- DNR staff participated in water rescue and emergency narcotic overdose training using Narcan.
- DNR conducted maintenance around the DNR building, beach, and South Cell park including:
  - Painting and repairing decking with waterproofing;
  - Installing new faucets in bathrooms;
  - Replacing exhaust fan;
  - Placing water fowl season signs around the park area;
  - Grading beach area;
  - Replacing small tires on tractor.
- A missing person was found on HMI wearing a PFD after his boat was found.
- A drowning occurred in late August.
- There were several reports of missing kayaks.
- DNR staff assisted with a boat tow to Bill's Boats.
- Drinking water samples were collected by DNR staff.
- A long term contractual assistant was hired and started August 9, 2017.
- DNR hosted multiple events for the public during July and August including:
  - Two Family Fun Days on July 8, 2017 and August 28, 2017;
  - Monarch Butterfly Hunt in August;
  - Treasure Scavenger Hunt on the beach in August;
  - Solar Eclipse Viewing on August 12, 2-17.
- South Cell public access will be available through the end of September.
- Staff will winterize the park area during September through October.
- Mr. Iman and Ms. Peñafiel presented to Bowley's Quarters improvement association about HMI and the South Cell on September 14, 2017.
- Ms. Wynn mentioned that Back River Restoration Committee brought out a venturing crew to HMI and they camped for a weekend. They also brought out a senior hiking group. There is an article in Upper Bay Boating magazine's September issue about the venturing crew at HMI.

## **5. FRIENDS GROUP DISCUSSION**

- Mr. Brylske introduced the topic of a HMI Friends Group and explained that a friends group would lend support to HMI while recreation development is conducted. A friends group would help fundraise for the park as well as lobby for park improvements and amenities.
- Mr. Taylor asked Mr. Iman how to start a friends group. Mr. Iman explained that the friends group for North Point State Park reached out to DNR about starting a group. Mr. Taylor suggested using contacts from DNR or local elected officials to start the HMI Friends Group. Mr. Conklin suggested reaching out to Jerusalem Mill. Mr. Brylske suggested inviting people in the community to the next HMI COC meeting to discuss the friends group and possible interest.

- Ms. Perry asked Mr. Brylske what he expects from different groups who would be interested in participating in a HMI Friends Group. Mr. Brylske answered the sharing of ideas and opportunity to brainstorm new ideas for how to use HMI for educational and recreational purposes. Ms. Perry suggested using the Gunpowder Valley Conservancy (GVC) grant funding for some habitat restoration on HMI.
- Ms. Perry asked if there was a deadline for the design phase in the North Cell. Mr. Bibo answered no, not until the water is in compliance with the permit and can be discharged. Ms. Fidler mentioned the general design plan for the North Cell by Century Engineering and suggested collaborating with the GVC to help along the process. Mr. Tracy explained the design plan is focused on using the North Cell rain water to keep the South Cell water levels sustained, not necessarily focused on habitat development and landscaping. The planting and habitat planning aspects still need to be incorporated. Mr. Robertson suggested implementing restoration projects in small areas, using a few acres at a time. Mr. Robertson explained that would allow multiple projects to happen at once and focus on areas closest to the South Cell
- Ms. Perry asked how MPA is funded. Ms. Fidler answered funding comes from the state through the Transportation Trust Fund. Ms. Perry suggested interested groups apply for the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) grant. Ms. Perry explained the grant is worth \$1 million and the habitat restoration project could qualify if multiple partners collaborate. Ms. Perry explained each partner would have a contract and a part of the funding to use on their area of land in the North Cell. Ms. Fidler invited Ms. Perry to the upcoming MPA meeting to further explore this option and the opportunity of a possible pilot project in the North Cell.
- Mr. Robertson suggested expanding to the Essex Middle River Civic Council, which has 20 community associations, to develop a broader network and reach a wider audience including Community Association Network (CAN). CAN includes Reisterstown, Owings Mills, and Glenelg (ROG) and is still within Baltimore County. Mr. Robertson suggested having a speaker attend a meeting once or twice a year.
- Mr. Patro suggested using Boy Scouts for labor when implementing beautification or clean up efforts. Mr. Patro explained they can get their hours and HMI could possibly host a Jamboree. Mr. Patro also suggested using other youth groups in the area or AmeriCorps.

Meeting adjourned- 7:45 pm