

Memorandum

TO: Hart-Miller Island Citizens Oversight Committee

FROM: Rebecca Kreatschman – MES

DATE: March 8, 2018

SUBJECT: Next meeting – Tuesday, March 20, 2018

The next meeting of the Hart-Miller Island Citizens Oversight Committee (HMI COC) will be held on Tuesday, March 20, 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 (MDOT 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 January 16, 2018 meeting.

**HART-MILLER ISLAND
CITIZENS OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MEETING
6:30 PM
January 16, 2018**

ATTENDEES:

Paul Brylske	Seventh District
Fran Taylor	NPPCCC
Larry Lee	Essex-Middle River CC
Craig Doyle	Pleasure Boaters
Sam Weaver	BRRC
Karen Wynn	Sixth District
Dave Bibo	MDOT MPA
Chris Correale	MDOT MPA
Holly Miller	MDOT MPA
Katrina Jones	MDOT MPA
Lincoln Tracy	MES
Amanda Peñafiel	MES
Rebecca Kreatschman	MES
Bruce Michael	DNR
Allen Robertson	Bowleys Quarters Community Association and Gunpowder Valley Conservancy
James Truszkowski	Wells-McComas Community Improvement Association
Patrick McGough	BSA, Sea Scouts, BCSC, BRRC
George L. Good Jr.	Baltimore County Sailing Center
David Riter	Baltimore County-EPS
Rosemary Shkor	Millers Island Edgemere Business Association
John Shkor	Millers Island Edgemere Business Association
Charles Wolinski	Sparrows Point High School
Kathy Paul	Bowleys Quarters Community Association
Alverna A.J. Durham, Jr.	Straughan Environmental, Inc.
Amy Menzer	Dundalk Renaissance Corporation
Amanda McCulloch	Our Lady of Mount Carmel School

ACTION ITEMS

- Mr. Brylske and Mr. Taylor will recruit volunteers to become a part of a management committee that will help create a friends group for Hart-Miller Island (HMI).
- The management committee will meet with the Friends of Maryland State Parks to create a friends group for HMI and a 501C3.

1. OPENING REMARKS

Paul Brylske-Chairman

- Mr. Brylske asked the HMI COC members for approval of the meeting minutes from the September 19, 2017 HMI COC meeting. All members approved.

2. Friends Group Discussion

- Mr. Brylske explained the concept of a HMI friends group and how it will help develop ideas to best use HMI as a recreational and educational site. The Friends of Maryland State Parks' mission statement and vision (Attachment 1) was passed around to members and read aloud by Mr. Michael. Mr. Brylske asked Mr. Michael to comment more on the Friends of Maryland State Park and what a friends group at HMI would entail. Mr. Michael explained that HMI has been successful so far and would be a unique opportunity for citizens to be involved and support the development of HMI in the future.
- Mr. Brylske asked Mr. Michael how many state parks are in Maryland, and how many of those have friends groups. Mr. Michael explained that there are many state parks in Maryland and many have an established friends group.
- Mr. Brylske explained he would like to have a formal recommendation to hold a vote to create a friends group for HMI.
 - Mr. Brylske asked for ideas from the group of what they would want to see at HMI in the future. Mr. Robertson commented that he would like extended hours so people can enjoy the facilities, when the sun is not at its peak and temperatures are not as high. He explained that birders are most active at dawn and dusk and could benefit from the extended hours. He also recommended mosquito protection for the campsites. He suggested adding cabins to the camping area and installing solar panels to provide electricity, which can be used as an education tool to teach about solar energy. Improved campsites could attract more visitors. He also suggested planting vegetation that could soak up the rainwater (like a rain garden) to cut down on long term monitoring. Capturing rainwater and using it during drought conditions could also be an option. Lastly, he explained that grants could be utilized to help fund these projects. Mr. Good commented about how he brings kids ranging in ages 5-18 out to HMI often for sailing lessons. A Junior Regatta takes place between Rocky Point and HMI. Last year, 12 states were represented and 200-300 sailors participated. In addition, USA the Junior Olympic Sailing Festival - Chesapeake Bay Open is hosted by the Baltimore County Sailing Center and takes place between Rocky Point and HMI, but most participants are from Maryland or surrounding areas. In September, an Around the Island race takes place around HMI. High school sailors also come out to sail around HMI in the spring and fall. The Sea Scouts utilize the area as well and ask to camp at the HMI State park. Mr. Good stated that the campsites need maintenance. When visitors from other states sail to HMI, they often comment on how great the area is for sailing, especially small boat sailing.
 - Mr. Wolinski explained he incorporates state parks into his curriculum at Sparrows Point High School. Sparrows Point High School's Environmental Science Magnet Program once took field trips to HMI, but risk management issues came up, ending the field trips. Risk management

pointed out the boats that were used for the field trips were unsafe for the students to use unless they were US Coast Guard certified boats. Mr. Brylske suggested that this could be an issue that the HMI Friends Group would take on. Mr. Wolinski also commented about the issues with the camp sites on HMI. Since the sites are reserved on a first come first serve basis, it makes it difficult to plan in advance to camp there, since spots are not guaranteed. Mr. Wolinski suggested an online reservation system to help with this problem.

3. NORTH CELL UPDATE

Lincoln Tracy– MES

- The North Cell pond elevation is 35.8 feet which is approximately 35 million gallons of water.
- The HMI operations crew has not been out to the island since January 2, 2018 due to ice in Back River and the Chesapeake Bay. The crew boat was moved to Tidewater Yacht Service, when the water started to freeze. When the ice became too thick, access to the island was cut off. The crew anticipated the cold snap and was able to winterize the building.
- Liming of the sediments has been on hold until the North Cell is completely dewatered. Trench liming has been effective. The trench was lengthened and now includes Spillway 007 and stretches to station 140.
- The operations crew is still excavating the deep pool and has reached an elevation of 25 feet which makes the pit about 10 feet deep.
- The operations crew will begin construction on a connector ramp from the lower cross dike to the foot path on the eastern side.
- A new tractor was delivered.

Amanda Peñafiel-MES

- There have been 11 days of discharge since the September meeting. A total of 11.53 million gallons of water was discharge from the North Cell
- MES completed spraying and controlling for invasive species for the 2017 season in November. Ground spraying was conducted for *Phragmites*, Mile-a-minute, Thistle and Pokeweed. An aerial application for *Phragmites* was completed on October 17, 2017. An estimated 486 acres in the South and North Cells were sprayed. Invasive control will resume in spring 2018. MES has started the paper work and permitting process for a controlled burn of *Phragmites* in 2018. In addition to the South Cell, it is possible that the North Cell will also be burned.
- Year 1 of monitoring the North Cell Vegetation Test Strips was completed in November 2017. Test strips were planted in unlimed and limed areas and included eight annual and eight perennial grass species and seven woody vegetation species. The Vegetation Working Group met at the end of November to discuss observations and results.
- Preliminary results for the woody vegetation results include:
 - Groundsel, Black Chokeberry and Persimmon had a high survival rate and would be species to consider for plantings in the future.
 - Atlantic White Cedar and Eastern Red Cedar also had an overall high survival rate and could be considered for future plantings. However due to observations of the cedars showing signs of stress, more monitoring would have to be done in order to see if they continue to survive after one growing season.
 - Northern Bayberry would grow better in limed, less acidic sediment conditions.
 - Highbush Blueberry would not be good species to consider unless they are planted in areas that provide more shade and coverage.
- Preliminary results for the grasses include:

- Grasses in the Alkaligrass and Creeping Red Fescue test strips grew in abundance. Although species were noted within the test strips of the limed side, it was difficult to identify if they were the intended species seeded in the strip. In addition, some of the noted species only grew in small clumps and were not abundant. As a result, more monitoring would be needed to see if the species would continue to grow in bigger patches and would need to have other features such as its inflorescence to be positively identified.
- Conclusions and findings include:
 - Protection against browsing may be considered for plantings.
 - Invasive species such as *Phragmites* would need to be aggressively controlled in order to ensure the survivability of planted species.
 - Some of the native volunteer species identified could be considered for planting including Fall Panicgrass which grew in abundance throughout the test strips.
 - More monitoring is necessary to conclude if tilling or liming independently effect establishment and growth of plant species.
 - Another factor that most likely played a role in establishment of seeded species in the test strips was the salinity. High salinity in the germination zone could have been a factor with failure of some of the seeded species to establish. High survival rate of woody vegetation is a good indication that salinity is not a problem deeper in the soil.
 - There is a lot of variation in soil conditions including salinity and moisture. More soil data is needed in order assess sediment conditions and help determine success and failures of planted species.
- Moving forward, MES will continue to monitor the Test Strips for an additional growing season. Annual species will be reseeded and spring and fall plantings will be conducted. Sediment sampling will be conducted in order to assess successes and failures. MES will work on a Year 1 monitoring report and submit it to the Vegetation Working Group for review.

4. SOUTH CELL UPDATE

Amanda Peñafiel – MES

- Bob Iman and Amanda Peñafiel presented at the Bowleys Quarters Improvement Association in September about the South Cell public access. The community members who have been onsite provided a lot of good feedback regarding the South Cell public access.
- MES, MPA, MDOT MPA, and DNR met for the second-year progress meeting at the end of November. DNR's plan to hire additional seasonal staff to expand days and hours of operation were discussed. This change was due to public demand for increased hours of access that are not during the hottest times of the day.
- South Cell public access ended for the season in September. An estimated 88,000 visitors to HMI were counted which included boaters, fishermen, and swimmers around the island. Visitors to the South Cell included 152 hikers and 1,244 bicyclists for a total of 1,396 people. There were 317 returned from 2016.
- Mr. Brylske asked how the numbers from 2016 compared to 2017. Ms. Peñafiel explained there were 150 more visitors in 2016 than in 2017. This included 330 hikers and 1,211 bicyclists in 2016.
- DNR hosted a sunrise birding event on December 4, 2017.
- DNR has completed the 2016 report and the 2017 report is currently under review.
- In 2018, DNR is planning to host more programming events, create social media accounts and have more advertisements. Some possible ideas include guided bike tours and expanding the educational nature center. For the 2018 season DNR will be looking into the possibilities of a

ferry service on the weekends, concessions, stand up paddle boards, and kayaks are also possible for this year.

- A member asked if there is a possible launching spot for the ferry service. Ms. Peñafiel answered that MDOT MPA and DNR would not be responsible for the ferry service, but a local entrepreneur or marina could take the opportunity to transport visitors to and from HMI. Mr. Brylske suggested using Rocky Point because of the available space for a launching site.
- Planning is underway for a possible race event in October 2018. Local sponsors and transportation options are being considered. The trail section along the cross dike will be modified in order to ensure pedestrians and cyclists remain off the upper road and out of the North Cell.

5. DNR UPDATES

Rebecca Kreatschman on behalf of Bob Iman – DNR

- The park closed for the season at the end of September.
- Seasonal evaluations were completed and signed.
- Supplies and materials for the upcoming season were purchased including a new chainsaw, event tents, eight new bikes and other equipment. July to present fiscal year 2018 invoice was submitted.
- DNR conducted maintenance around the DNR building, beach, and South Cell park including:
 - Winterized buildings, equipment, and pulled boats for the season;
 - Bikes were cleaned and serviced;
 - Rotten siding on woman's restroom was replaced;
 - Interior of main complex and garage doors were painted and some drywall was repaired;
 - Trail signage protective covers were installed;
 - Outside water fountain was replaced;
 - HMI/Pleasure/North Point duck blind site markers were placed out. Areas were heavily used until the river iced over. The season ends on 01/27/18;
 - Flag pole was replaced;
 - HMI trails were mowed.

6. FINAL REMARKS

Dave Bibo – MDOT MPA

- There are two vacancies on the HMI COC; one for the Baltimore County Watermen and one for the Sports Fishermen. MDOT MPA is in the process of hiring a legislative liaison, who would be working to fill the vacancies on the HMI COC.
- The next meeting will be on March 20, 2018. All attendees must confirm their attendance to Margie Hamby at (410) 385-4419. The following meeting will be on May 15, 2018 and will be onsite at HMI. This is a great opportunity to visit the island.
- There was a preliminary meeting on a future Bay crossing. Mr. Good explained that MDTA is studying various sectors of the Bay for possible construction sites for a third Bay bridge. An area of high interest is right over HMI. Widening existing bridges is also an option. Mr. Michael explained that most of the Chesapeake Bay is open for consideration. Over the next two years the socioeconomic and environmental impacts of the construction will be evaluated and a site will be chosen. Mr. Brylske asked if there was a no-build option, and Mr. Michael answered that it is possible.

Meeting adjourned-7:45pm

Friends of Maryland State Parks

Our Vision

To raise the awareness and appreciation of the "quality of life" benefits associated with the preservation, protection, improvement, and expansion of our Maryland State Parks for current and future generations.

Our Mission

To develop a constituency of citizens and elected representatives and officials who believe in the advocacy and support of our Maryland State Parks.