

Calvert County Environmental Commission
Meeting Minutes – February 28, 2022

Members Present: Jim Levin (Chair), Amanda Knobloch (Vice Chair), Dave Hardy, Carys Mitchelmore, Andy Rogers, Mike Rooney, Autumn Philips-Lewis

Members Absent: Neil Smith, Chad Leo

Staff: Carolyn Sunderland, *Host* & Jesse Clark, *Moderator*

Guests: Autumn Philips-Lewis, Land Manager at the American Chestnut Land Trust, Owner of ecological services company, EcoHaven, LLC, and has a Master’s Degree in Applied Ecology and Conservation Biology. She is certified as a Chesapeake Bay Landscape Professional, pesticide applicator, and a wilderness advanced first aid provider. She also serves as chair of the Calvert County Forestry Board.

- I. **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 6:03 pm.
- II. **Roll Call for Quorum:** Jim Levin facilitated a roll call for quorum purposes. Seven members were present, achieving a quorum for the meeting.
- III. **Approval of Agenda:** Dave Hardy motioned to approve the agenda. Andy Rogers seconded the motion, and the motion passed, with the editorial of a grammatical correction.
- IV. **Guest Speaker Program:** Autumn Philips-Lewis discussed with the Environmental Commission different control methods for Common Invasive Species in Calvert County. She went over different common invasive species, native vs. non-native species, non-native vs. non-native invasive plants, and different control methods. Autumn answered questions the Environmental Commission had regarding the presentation.
- V. **Old Business:**
 - a. Annual Report – Jim:
 - i. Autumn suggested to take “Most” out of the “Managing the Most Common Invasive Species in Calvert County”
 - ii. Jim checked the member attendance for 2021, he said he would send it to Carolyn once it was completed.
 - iii. Autumn Philips-Lewis motioned to approve the 2021 Annual Report, with the amended changes. Andy Rogers seconded, the motion passed.
 - b. Website Progress Update – Amanda & Jesse:
 - i. Amanda – No update

- ii. Jesse – Paul handed me 11 pages of comments and suggestions of changes to the county website under the Environmental Commission sections, asked Jesse to look over all the changes and see what could reasonably be done, what could not, what would be easy or difficult to make.
 - Everything highlighted in green with a check are changes that have been made and updated.
 - Committee suggested more pictures: If anyone has any examples/suggestions of what that means, that would be appreciated.
- iii. Amanda – *That was a comment to the Environmental Commission in general, we need to get more pictures to put up. Not necessarily something that you guys need to do.*
- iv. Jesse –
 - For the Bios section: Need bios for Dave, Neil, Chad, and Mike. Can these members send me a word document of their bios, then I can upload it to the website and link it straight to the Environmental Commission page?
 - Can someone recommend a series of questions or bullet points and what to link those to? – I will go ahead and add them. (*Amanda – The Education Outreach Subcommittee will come together in the next month and we will put together something for you and we will send that to you*).
 - For the FAQs section: I have updated this, but I am still messing with it, I should have it done by the next meeting. (*Jim – If you have any questions or need any information, feel free to contact me*).
 - It was asked to reformat with sections and subsections: This website does not easily allow for that. It basically acts as a directory and takes you to a folder. I could do it, but I would need to delete all of what is there, build a new one, and link each document individually.
 - For the Annual Reports section: I need the 2019, 2020, 2021 Annual Reports, where can those be found? (*Carolyn believes that she has the 2019 and 2020 Annual Reports – 2021 needs to be presented to BOCC still.*)
 - For the Guest Speaker Presentations: Someone wanted this page reorganized to newest to oldest, that is not something I can change, it organizes them automatically. (*Jim: Can we at least add the presentations beyond June 2020? - Jesse: Yes.*)
 - For the Pump for the Bay: The brochure is out of date. I also wanted to change the contact from Will Hager to DeCarlo Brown, but DeCarlo is no longer here; it would have then transferred to Paul, but he has since left as well. So, who is the point of contact

from this point on? (*Carolyn: If the Environmental Commission is okay with it, we can put myself as the point of contact.*)

- For the “Visit Us At” section: Environmental Commission should be aware of what events they are attending compared to what is listed on the website.

c. Strategic Initiatives Discussion – Jim:

i. Should we have one, or at least two strategic initiatives for a finite period of time (i.e. calendar year of 2022, 15-month period, etc.) where we really press technical info and public awareness on these issues?

- Specifics that have been mentioned in the past have been: Radon, Water Quality (including Stormwater Management), Local Flooding, and Invasive Species. Are those a good menu of items to choose from? Are there other environmental issues that we should add to this for consideration?
- Carolyn: May I make a recommendation: Maybe pick something within the Climate Change category? It is something the Planning Commission has asked staff to add to all of the master plans, and staff may recommend develop a committee to consider writing a study on Climate Change or plan on doing one.
- Jim: Local flooding is something that could go under climate change since flooding seems to be increasing lately.
- Andy: All except for Radon seem to fall under the broad category of Climate Change.
- Carolyn: Staff is thinking of creating a Climate Change strategy, falling in line with other jurisdictions, as part of the planning process. I just wanted to bring it up as an up and coming issue with incorporating it into environmental elements and aspects of the master plans.
- Jim: We proposed a little over a year ago that we start to monitor greenhouse gas emissions within the county and even determined available sources that do greenhouse gas inventories for counties and other local communities. We recommended that to Mary in the past, but it was, presumably, held until state required each county to do a greenhouse gas assessment.
- Mike: As someone who is in the Energy Industry, I would note that the state of MD is actively looking at emissions sources and they are actually targeting landfills and Waste Water Treatment Plants, as being one of the key contributors to methane. I do not know if there is been any thought on talking about greenhouse gas emissions, or how that is being assessed/evaluated in the discussion topics. Also, waste transfer stations are very high methane emitters.

- Jim: That is a very good point, however, we would have to coordinate closely to make sure we are not stepping on any projects that the county staff are already working on.
- Carys: We have had a lot of people from CBL give talks on Climate Change as an active research area at CBL; if anyone is on Solomons Island, past CBL, there is a climate map there where we have long term data sets there for sea level rising, temperature, water quality, and we mapped the trend of warming temperatures locally for over 40 decades. Dr. Laura Lapum, a colleague who works with methane, has been doing a lot of research in the bay looking at methane cycling and bubbling up from Chesapeake Bay, how much that contributes to global methane inputs, and overall issues with climate change. She would be good to bring in for a talk. At CBL, we have our own climate action plan: It covers things like flooding, fires, precipitation changes, all of the ramifications of climate change, etc.
- Carolyn: Jenny Plummer-Welker, Long-Range Planner, has asked that I tell the Environmental Commission about at least one or two short videos available to watch; they discuss septic and sewer treatment plants. It might be something you would like to incorporate. (*Jim – Can you send us the links? -- Carolyn – Yes.*)
- Jim: Now we have six strategic initiatives out there, with each meeting, the list grows. Are we in a position right now to narrow the list down? Or do you want me to email the list, think about it, and we will discuss it at the March meeting and vote on the initiatives at that time?
- Andy: Either way is fine with me, but I would like to ask: If the county is looking seriously at climate change initiatives and a broad scope of climate change, do we not exist to support the County Government? I think that if they want something like that, that we should do our best to offer it to them, or at least offer what we can on it. Otherwise, I remember one of the comments from when I first joined the committee was that the BOCC was not asking us questions, so we were doing things we thought were needed to be addressed; but here they are, asking us a question. I think we should answer it, as best as we can.
- Carolyn: I will see if I can get the portion of the Planning Commission of what they had asked staff to do and what the recommendations are going to be back to them. They asked it to be recognized in all future master plans and when we do that part of a master plan, we also put recommended goals and objectives. There might be something there that the Environmental Commission can help out with.

- Jim: Even if you can talk to the BOCC themselves on this issue and find out if this is one of their priorities, and if so, we are a body that has expertise in this area and a very broad range of environmental areas. We are happy to work with the Planning Commission, but would the BOCC like us to look at anything? If the Planning Commission can think of the Environmental Commission as a resource, then we are happy to work with them.
 - a. General Consensus: The topic will be tabled for the time being.

d. Radon Awareness Campaign Update – Jim:

- i. January was Radon Awareness month, Dr. Clifford S. Mitchell & Kiera Saleem spoke to us.
- ii. Draft Proclamation –
 - There are two alternatives for this:
 - a. Alternative one: Request the BOCC to issue this annually in January.
 - b. Alternative two: We could ask them to issue this within the next few months to increase public awareness of the radon issue, then continue to issue it annually in January.
 - What are your thoughts on requesting BOCC to issues this now or simply send it to them to consider doing this starting in January?
 - a. Dave: Are we doing any kind of promotion, giving away any radon detectors, or having any kind of contest?
 - b. Jim: We will be rolling out some things: Dr. Mitchell and Ms. Saleem have sent us some electronic versions of brochures that we can have printed out. There is also access to radon test kits; we can certainly consider doing some contests. There are more things that we can do.
 - c. Dave: In my experience of attending many BOCC meetings and observing them, proclamations go well when you are giving out something to someone. I do not remember seeing a proclamation read without some action going along with it.
 - d. Carolyn: Dave, they do proclamations for national recognition of months, and usually, for example, Jim, as the Chairman, is there to receive the proclamation. They do it all the time.
 - e. Jim: I think it is good idea still if we run some kind of contest and be able to announce a winner at a January meeting. Do we approve and agree to send a proclamation to BOCC for their consideration? Or do you want to think about it?

- f. Andy: I think having the BOCC make a proclamation on this is a good idea. Do we want to follow up on tying it into someone getting an award or something?
- g. Jim: Yea, I think that is a good idea. We could not do that in the next few months, but we can certainly do that by next January, which would be the next Radon Awareness month.
- h. Andy: I guess I cannot think of a reason to hang onto this for the next six months.
- i. Jim: And then ask them to issue it in January.
- j. Andy: So, do you want to issue it now and then each January? To wait until January to issue it?
- k. Jim: My suggestion is now, and then each January thereafter. **(After motion passed: Carolyn: If you send it to me, I will start the vetting process for this. – Jim: I will fix this and then Carolyn, I will send this to you in a memo with the proclamation.)**
 - Andy Rogers motioned to issue a Radon Awareness month proclamation now and then in January starting in 2023, with the amended changes. Dave Hardy seconded, the motion passed.

e. FAQ Approvals Update – Jim:

- i. Review and approve two FAQs:
 - One on Household Hazardous Waste Disposal
 - One on Paint Waste Disposal
- ii. Autumn Phillips-Lewis motioned to approve the two FAQs for posting. Amanda Knobloch seconded, the motion passed.

f. Action Items Update – Jim:

- i. We do not need to run through everything since most of it has been, or will be, talked about in the sub-committee reports.
- ii. The one issue I do want to reiterate and stress to you is: Please try to recruit people. We are required to have 11 members, and we are currently short of meeting that requirement.

VI. **Sub-Committee Reports:**

a. FAQs: Jim Levin spoke on this:

- i. Jim: There are several draft FAQs currently under way:
 - Andy and Dave are drafting an FAQ on common forms of wildlife in Calvert County.
 - Dave and Jim are drafting an FAQ on alternatives to open-burning leaves.
 - a. We need a contact at DPW Solid Waste Division.

- Dave and Jim are also drafting an FAQ on handling old spray/aerosol cans.
 - ii. Jim: Andy, will you take a moment to discuss your concept of a document describing animals commonly found in the county?
 - iii. Andy: Do you mean the format I talked to you guys about?
 - iv. Jim: Yes.
 - v. Andy: It is basically a wiki format, as opposed to the FAQ format. The thing being that you essentially set up a page for each animal you want to talk about, and the page is then linked to an environment where you might find that animal. Then you would get a list of animals that might inhabit that environment and some information about the animals. It would be easier to contact me to see an example.
 - vi. Jim: Why don't you come up with a date and time that is convenient for you in a couple of weeks and we will let everyone know. We can set up a Zoom meeting and you can show people what you are talking about.
- b. Public Education and Outreach: Amanda Knobloch spoke on this:
 - i. I need to schedule a meeting – I will send an email soon to the sub-committee.
 - ii. I signed us up for an event, the Maryland Osprey and Nature Festival. It is a new event, and it will be on April 2nd at the Drum Point Club in Lusby. I will be needing help with manning our booth, but I will send out more information soon.
- c. Guest Speakers: Jim Levin spoke on this:
 - i. We did have a meeting about a week or so ago:
 - Will Hager will be talking in March about PFAS, particularly at the Navy Research Lab, Chesapeake Bay Detachment Facility, located in Chesapeake Beach. They are having some pretty serious PFAS contamination problems at this location.
 - Dr. Laura Harris will not be able to speak to us in April about the Cove Point Marsh. She will have just gotten back from Finland and will only be here briefly before returning to Finland until late in the summer. Around that time, she should be available to speak to us.
 - ii. Some other thoughts for this year are:
 - Updates on environmental activities at the Calvert Cliffs Nuclear Facility, and
 - Updates on environmental activities at the Cove Point LNG terminal.
 - iii. We have gotten some preliminary indications that they would both be willing to come and speak with us about updates on their activities. We will keep that for some point in the summer.

VII. **New Business:**

a. General Announcements:

- i. 2021 Financial Disclosure Forms:
 - These forms should be submitted to Rachel Distel by March 31st. Please fill it out and submit it as soon as you can.
- ii. Carys: I wanted to let you know that our Science for Communities Seminars start back up again on Thursday, we do this every spring and fall. It will be starting on March 29th. I put the link in our chat box; it is free to attend, and it is on Zoom, but you will need to register.
 - They will be talking about things like: World Harbor Project, Urban Ocean Initiatives, Talk on Invasive Species, Metals, Oxygen Levels in the Bay, Urban Seascaping, etc.
- iii. Amanda: I think it is exciting to see someone from Morgan to be doing one of those seminars at CBL. Also, for the Osprey Festival: If anyone has any ideas for activities, let me know; if not, we will just bring our enviro-scape and tailor it to osprey stuff.

VIII. **Public Comment:** Herb Wolff spoke: “No particular comments, but I do enjoy listening to your sessions and I will be with you over the next few months.”

IX. **Adjournment:**

- a. Andy Rogers motioned to adjourn, Mike Rooney seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.
- b. The next meeting of the Calvert County Environmental Commission will be March 28, 2022.

Meeting Minutes for the February 2022 Environmental Commission Meeting were prepared by Caitlyn Tolomei (P&Z Administrative Support Staff).