



## CALVERT COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

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### Calvert County Environmental Commission July 25, 2022—Meeting Minutes

Attendance: Jim Levin (Chair), Amanda Knobloch (Vice Chair), Kevin Britt, Dave Hardy, Andy Rogers, Mike Rooney, Neil Smith; Staff: Amalia Pleake-Tamm; Member of the public: Heather Kerr

- I. Mr. Levin called the meeting to order at 6:04pm and took roll to demonstrate a quorum.
- II. [July 25 agenda](#): No changes were suggested; Dr. Rogers moved to approve; Dr. Knobloch seconded; it was approved by all with Mr. Hardy abstaining.
- III. Bob Boxwell of Cove Point Heritage Trust (CPHT) gave an overview of their activities. Mr. Boxwell has been the head of the nonprofit land trust for 19 years. The trust is located on Allen Creek, nearly 200 a. (originally 50 a.) spread between three separate areas, each with their own forest stewardship plan. The trust is endowed annually by the owners of the Cove Point LNG facility (currently Berkshire Hathaway with Dominion still involved). CPHT involves two trustees from the LNG facility ownership, two from the Maryland Conservation Counsel, two from the Sierra Club, and a community member. CPHT's mission is to preserve and protect ecologically sensitive sites in Southern MD through land conservation, scientific research, and environmental education.  
  
CPHT has supported over 25 years of research at Cove Point Beach. Research is primarily at Cove Point Marsh beach and involves horseshoe crab monitoring; rare, threatened and endangered plants; and bluebird trail monitoring. The trust works with local schools, scout troops, Master Gardeners. Tri-county partners include: Patuxent Tidewater Land Trust (re: Hemlock Preserve), American Chestnut Land Trust, and St. Mary's River Watershed Association (re: interns and student mentorship). The CPHT is one of the founding members of the Sustainable Calvert Network and the newly formed Southern Maryland Conservation Alliance. CPHT was sponsoring a nontidal water quality testing but that program is not currently operational. Ms. Pleake-Tamm mentioned the *tidal* water quality testing was underway and there was interest to restart the nontidal testing. Dr. Rogers asked about sponsorship for environmental projects in the Chesapeake Ranch Estates; Mr. Boxwell recommended a grant form so CPHT can consider whether the project furthers their mission. Mr. Levin asked whether the size and shape of the freshwater marsh has changed much over the last decade. Mr. Boxwell replied that for a long period, it was more water than marsh; it's holding on but the greater concern is the beach erosion. However, the protection devices are doing their job.
- IV. Approval of [February](#), [April](#), and [May](#) minutes: Mr. Hardy moved to approve the minutes en masse; Dr. Rogers seconded; it was unanimously approved.
- V. Mr. Levin noted that the Environmental Commission did not meet in June as there was no quorum, and that Ms. Pleake-Tamm will be recording minutes.
- VI. Old Business: Strategic Initiative [radon](#):
  - a. Ms. Pleake-Tamm is still trying to contact AE Labs to purchase radon kits at the MDE-contracted price of \$3 a kit rather than the marketed price of around \$11 a kit. She will continue trying to reach them and will ask about analytical and reporting costs.
  - b. Mr. Levin asked Mr. Smith if he could check into making kits available to new homeowners. Mr. Smith will look into getting SMAR, AACAR and GCAR (realtor associations) involved. Mr. Smith has contacted them and will follow up. There is concern that radon notification isn't required by the law (unlike lead notification). Materials passed out by realtors are regulated by the state since realtors aren't radon experts. Mr. Smith will follow up and also suggested reaching out to home inspectors.

VII. Old Business: Strategic Initiative [water quality](#):

- a. Mr. Britt will be leading this initiative and will work with Mr. Levin to determine the focus.

VIII. Old Business: [Pump for the Bay](#):

Mr. Levin asked members to distribute brochures around their community; brochures are available at Ms. Pleake-Tamm's office. Ms. Pleake-Tamm asked for progress on contacting septic haulers; Dr. Rogers objected to the word "assignment" and Mr. Levin and Ms. Pleake-Tamm both apologized and clarified that it was a request and not mandatory. Dr. Rogers emailed his three septic haulers but he did request a script for making calls. Ms. Pleake-Tamm gave an update that she's working with the Communications department to develop a short educational video on pumping out septic tanks. Mr. Levin will draft a newspaper article and Ms. Pleake-Tamm will send it through Communications for approval. Dr. Rogers mentioned that Charles County gives a 5% or 10% discount on septic tank pumping and this is advertised on their county's website.

IX. Old Business: Action Items from May 23<sup>rd</sup>:

- a. The BOCC issued an email recruiting for new Environmental Commission members. Mr. Levin encouraged members to reach out for new members.
- b. Ms. Pleake-Tamm is continuing to update the website; most updates have been made, others are in progress. Mr. Levin recognized Mr. Hardy's work in updating the list of EV charging stations, currently numbering 14 different locations. Ms. Pleake-Tamm is working with Communications and Public Works to identify which stations are county-owned and operated. The map is being created and when done, it will be linked on the EC website.
- c. Ms. Pleake-Tamm will be preparing the minutes, as previously mentioned.
- d. Mr. Hardy and Dr. Rogers will be working on the wildlife FAQ.
- e. Mr. Levin and Ms. Pleake-Tamm met to talk about guest speakers.
- f. Ms. Pleake-Tamm has printed English and Spanish brochures. She is looking for hubs for dispersing Spanish brochures such as churches. There are 350 English brochures and 150 Spanish brochures; she encourages members to promote the raffle as there are currently only two applicants halfway through the year.

X. Old Business: [Graywater regulations](#) update:

Matt Cumers (Maryland Department of Health) spoke to the Env. Comm'n in 2020 about pending graywater regulations. Dept. of Health and MDE were jointly developing regulations for graywater (defined in the 2018 law as bath, shower, and lavatory sink water. It does not include toilet water, kitchen sink water, or laundry water.) Mr. Levin spoke with Jim George (MDE program manager); the pandemic slowed the rollout of the regulations and they're currently lacking direction. They'll probably wait until the new administration comes in before proposing a regulatory framework. The Dept. of Health is letting MDE take charge of the program. The existing administration gave negative comments on MDE's initial regulatory approach; it will be a long time before draft regulations will be proposed by the state.

XI. Subcommittees

- a. FAQs: Mr. Levin is editing a composting and yard waste burning FAQ and will begin drafting a PFAS FAQ and then send it to Mr. Rooney. Mr. Levin disaggregated a water resources FAQ and broke it into critical area, watersheds, Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries, groundwater resources, sea level rise, and stormwater runoff and management; these were reposted. Mr. Levin will respond to Dr. Rogers' comment. Ms. Pleake-Tamm recommended reviewing existing FAQs to ensure they're current. Mr. Hardy had previously mentioned residential water well shocking; Dr. Rogers concurred it would be a good fit. Mr. Levin will do a rough draft on well shocking and will pass it along to the subcommittee.
- b. Public Education/Outreach: Ms. Knobloch brought up the Calvert County Fair (Sept. 28–Oct. 2); Mr. Hardy recommended partnering with the county's recycling team and Ms. Pleake-Tamm mentioned Env. Health Division was interested in partnering. Ms. Pleake-Tamm will look into partnering and research when youth day will be.
- c. Guest speakers: The PEARL will be August's speaker, presented by Dr. Knobloch. Mr. Britt will be presenting on environmental activities at Cove Point LNG at September's meeting.
- d. Dr. Rogers motioned to move October's meeting from the 31<sup>st</sup> to the 24<sup>th</sup>, assuming it's legally allowable. Dr. Knobloch seconded; it was passed unanimously. Ms. Pleake-Tamm will verify with staff it's allowed

and if so, October's meeting date will change to the 24<sup>th</sup>.

## XII. New Business:

- a. Mr. Levin has a [draft memo](#) to ask the BOCC to amend [Resolution 16-18](#) reduce the size of the Env. Comm'n size from 11 to 9 members given the difficulty in making a quorum. Dr. Rogers was opposed to this idea a year ago but now is in favor as it is hard to recruit people. Mr. Hardy believes going down to 9 is reasonable as Env. Comm'n has trouble even staying at 9. Ms. Pleake-Tamm pointed out that 11 is one of the higher numbers of commissions. Mr. Smith wondered about other commission sizes and the amending process. Dr. Rogers moved to send the memo to the BOCC; Mr. Rooney seconded; it was approved by all except Mr. Smith who voted against.
- b. Mr. Levin recommended members join subcommittees.
- c. Ms. Pleake-Tamm gave a budget update: ~\$1600 for FY 23. This past year's budget was used to pay for banners, brochures, and encumbered for radon test kits. Ms. Pleake-Tamm is looking for the prize wheel but if that is not found, that can be purchased for replacement.
- d. General Announcements: Mr. Levin and Ms. Pleake-Tamm are certified on the [Open Meetings Act](#). Other members are free to take the [training](#) if interested.
- e. Public Comment: Heather Kerr is a county resident interested in joining the Env. Comm'n. She introduced herself as an environmental management student at the University of MD slated to graduate by the end of the year. She's currently a shop steward for the bartenders at MGM looking to pivot into her new field and believes Env. Comm'n is a good opportunity to learn more about what's happening in the county. Dr. Rogers asked about voting Ms. Kerr into the Commission. Ms. Kerr has sent in her application and it will be reviewed.

XIII. Adjournment: Dr. Rogers moved to adjourn; Mr. Rooney and Dr. Knobloch seconded; it was unanimously approved at 7:23pm.

*Meeting Minutes for the July 2022 Environmental Commission Meeting were prepared by Amalia Pleake-Tamm (EC Secretary).*