



PATUXENT RIVER COMMISSION

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John Hartline, *Chairman*

Christopher Perry, *Vice Chairman*

We, the Patuxent River Commission, envision a Patuxent River ecosystem as vital and productive in 2050 as it was in the 1950s. We therefore commit to be stewards and advocates for the Patuxent River and to lead and inspire actions to protect, enhance, and restore living resources and the natural, cultural, economic, and recreational values of the Patuxent River and its watershed.

☀ Please call Jason Dubow at MDP 410-767-3370 if you have any questions or comments.

MEETING SUMMARY

January 10, 2024

HYBRID MEETING

Maryland Department of Agriculture

Annapolis, Maryland

4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Members: John Hartline, Chair; Chris Perry, Vice-Chair; Frank Allen, Stacy Clements, Rachael Dean, John Denniston, Luis Dieguez, Devon Dodson, Mary Dolan, Jason Dubow, Lynda Eisenberg, Margaret Everson, Solange Filoso, Kim Finch, Jennifer Greiner, Morgan Hall, Bill Hubbard, Scott Knoche, Michael Leszcz, Ron Marney, Erik Michelsen, Diep Nguyen-van Houtte, Byron Petrauskas, Paula Proctor, Alison Santoro, Steve Shofar, Joanna Smith, Mark Symborski, John Tarr, Malcolm Taylor, Fred Tutman, Jason Van Kirk, Tiffany Wright

Staff: Jason Dubow, Debbie Herr Cornwell, Adam Snyder

Attendees: Judith Wagner, Barbara Sollner-Webb

Welcome – Secretary Atticks, MDA

Secretary Atticks welcomed the Commission and provided an update on invasive species (Lantern Fly and Blue Catfish), improvements to the Nutrient Management Plan process and continued positive reports on oysters.

Announcements, Introduction of New Member and Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the November meeting were approved. New member, Lynda Eisenberg representing Howard County was introduced. Rachel Dean noted oysters in the Patuxent River have had a good spat set and have expanded their presence.

Jennifer Greiner reported on an amendment of the Bowie-Mitchellville Section Map and county-owned properties north of the MARC rail station to rezone from Neighborhood Activity Center/Reserved Open Space to Reserved Open Space. A second joint Public Hearing is scheduled for 2/13/24 at 6 pm. John Hartline noted a large condominium in Benedict is being considered which would require a sewer extension. Fred Tutman noted that the project would not be consistent with the Charles County Comprehensive Plan.

Updated from Long Range Workgroup

Debbie Herr Cornwell provided an update on the December 15 meeting of the Long-Range Workgroup that focused on Long Term Action #3 of the Annual Action Plan – establishing one new wetland park in each county. The next meeting is Friday, January 12 at 1 pm.

Status of MAGLEV – MDE application review

Jason Dubow provided an update from MDE. The Water Quality Certification Application was withdrawn by the applicant. MDE had provided notice to the applicant that they would be denying the application based on the information provided.

Updates on Chesapeake Terrace Rubble Landfill and MDE Sewage Overflow Database

Jason Dubow provided the update from MDE. They are in the process of working through comments submitted on the landfill. Also, MDE indicated that the sewage spill database is currently being reviewed by management and will likely be ready for publishing within three months.

2024 Annual Action Plan – Vote

Based on feedback from the November meeting, the revised Annual Action Plan was presented for final review. One additional change was requested: change Long Term Action Item #3 to reflect the wetland parks would be established by 2027 – removing the “5 years”. The Commission approved the 2024 Annual Action Plan with the noted change.

Update on 2024 Legislative Session

Jason Dubow noted the Legislative Session opened earlier in the day of the meeting and reviewed the bills that had been submitted prior to the beginning of the Session. Jason will create a weekly ‘environmental list’ of bills and advise Chair Hartline of any public hearings that are scheduled before the next Commission meeting in February.

PRC Outreach Discussion

John Denniston and Margaret Everson led a discussion on building relationships with other organizations within the watershed. This could include the PRC serving as a ‘clearinghouse’ and could expand grant opportunities.

Margaret shared examples of other coalitions such as the Great Lakes Coalition and the Coalition for the Delaware River Watershed. A coalition would have a unified, collaborative vision and be guided by six pillars: collaboration, funding initiatives, science-based decisions, multi-faceted projects, public awareness and outreach, and policy support.

Questions discussed by the Commission:

- How to provide or should the PRC provide that platform?
- Should there be a standing item on the agenda for Commission members to provide potential groups that could be included?
- Does the PRC legislation limit actions?
- What can the Commission do?
- Should the groups be vetted? Should it be limited to groups that align with the PRC Action Plan?

Several organizations were suggested at the meeting: Friends of Patuxent, Piscataway Cony Tribe, Southern Maryland Conservation Alliance, and Southern Maryland Coalition.

The Commission discussed inviting the groups to a meeting and asking them to present on their organization. The discussion will continue at future meeting(s).

Open Floor

There are two Commission vacancies: developer and farmer. Vice Chair Perry suggested David Michael. Jason recommended Mr. Michael submit his interest via the Governor's Appointments online portal.