

**THE SUMMARY OF THE MEETING OF THE
REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE
JANUARY 7, 2016**

1. Summary of the December 3, 2015 Meeting of the Hampton Roads Regional Environmental Committee (REC).

There were no comments on the meeting summary.

2. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

3. HRPDC Legislative Agenda

Ms. Julia Hillegass presented an overview of the Legislative Priorities approved by the Commission. Staff prepared a two-page list, one page devoted to PDC concerns and one to TPO. Background information is available on the website for those seeking additional details.

There is a large push this year to support increased funding for K-12 public education. On December 11, 2015, more than 150 local government, school division, and business leaders representing over 70% of the Commonwealth's school-aged children met to discuss concerns regarding the state's share of funding for public education. As a result of that meeting, a letter will be sent to the Governor in support of increased funding.

There are four environmental priorities this year:

- Increased cost-share funding for Ag BMPs
- Increased SLAF in the amount of \$50M/year
- Funding to complete WWTP upgrades
- Funding mechanisms to update land cover mapping every 3 years

Ms. Hillegass will continue to watch bills this session and provide updates to the Committee. The HRPDC had planned a meeting with the local delegation to review the priorities; however, the meeting was cancelled due to a scheduling conflict. The local elected officials are aware of the priorities of the region and will stress these issues in Richmond.

Mr. Bill Johnston commented that the legislative requirements need to be limited if funding is not provided.

4. Local Innovative BMP Projects - Virginia Beach

Ms. Sue Kriebel, Water Resources Engineer, presented three Virginia Beach BMP projects that were partially funded through the Stormwater Local Assistance Fund (SLAF). All three are located in the Lynnhaven River watershed, which is part of the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

Permeable pavers were installed at Princess Anne High School, which removed 64 asphalt parking spaces. The project proved challenging because they discovered a 10-ft

clay layer that prevented the installation of an underdrain. There were no soil borings during the initial design phase. Three feet of the clay was removed and replaced with a stone and sand layer. A vertical perforated pipe, called a sand lens, was installed to transport the water through the remaining clay layer to the sand layer beneath.

Bioretention basins were installed at Pembroke Elementary School. The City had originally planned to install 5 basins; however, the principal did not approve of the location of one of the basins. The City revised the design and increased the size of the other 4 basins. The basins have been installed and plantings are going in this month.

The final project was a stream restoration on Mill Dam Creek behind an apartment complex. The stream was completely overgrown with trees on both sides. The trees were removed on one side of the stream and plantings were put in the floodplain.

Ms. Kriebel described the costs of the projects. The City was very pleased with the cost effectiveness of the stream restoration project, which came to \$5,720 per pound of TP. The bio-retention project was higher at \$18,200 per pound of TP. The permeable paver project, where they discovered the 10-ft clay layer, was expensive at \$106,200 per pound of TP. The permeable paver and bioretention projects were submitted to DEQ together, so the average of those was \$53,000 per pound of TP.

DEQ was involved in these projects from the beginning, meeting with the City for an initial meeting and quarterly conference calls. They came to the project sites once during construction. Once the landscaping is complete for both, the City will apply for reimbursement from the SLAF.

Ms. Kriebel shared a few lessons learned with the Committee. VB found bioretention to be an affordable BMP, while permeable pavers were not cost effective. She recommended expanding the preliminary design when applying for SLAF to eliminate any surprises such as the clay layer they discovered at Princess Anne High School. She also advised putting the projects out to bid to seek a better price instead of using an Annual Services Contract.

The Committee was interested and asked follow-up questions regarding public reaction and maintenance concerns.

The stream restoration project involved cutting down overgrown trees and was next to an apartment complex. Mr. Johnston explained that VB held public outreach meetings to explain the project to the residents. The SW staff also reached out to the Parks and Rec staff to leave the area natural and to practice meadow management.

Mr. Bott said that NN often has the same challenges, where residents request that open spaces are mowed for aesthetic reasons.

Mr. Bernick added that VB is working to educate residents about the advantages of maintaining brush.

VB did not need an easement for the stream restoration because they only worked on the side the City owned. Ms. Rountree asked if they still received full credit even though they only restored one side. VB answered that they did.

The City will be responsible for the maintenance on the projects, including vacuuming the permeable pavers.

5. **Chesapeake Bay Program Update**

Ms. Katchmark provided an update of Chesapeake Bay issues including new land cover data, historical BMP spreadsheets, and the local engagement process.

Land Cover Data - The Land Use Workgroup (LUWG) was given a link to the Phase 6 land use website to review and provide feedback of the most recent data. Though the website was not functioning properly during the REC meeting, Ms. Katchmark explained its capabilities, with classification layers that can be turned on and off and an edit feature that allows reviewers to enter comments. The data that is available now is just a trial that was released to the LUWG. The completed data set will be available for review later this year, likely in April.

Ms. Rountree asked if the data will be available in GIS layers that could be downloaded and easily compared to local data. Ms. Katchmark will research the answer and get back to her.

Ms. Katchmark asked if the Phase Is would have their MS4 service areas delineated by the spring, and only NO responded that they would.

Historical BMP Spreadsheet – HRPDC staff have been reviewing the data provided by DEQ; however, it is not in a format that is easily sorted. The spreadsheet does not include the name of the locality where the BMP is located and instead lists a code that correlates to the locality. Ms. Jenny Tribo is working to sort the data by locality so that it can be reviewed. DEQ has not provided feedback regarding which BMPs were counted and which were excluded. Ms. Katchmark will follow up with Mr. Bill Keeling and Mr. James Davis-Martin at DEQ to see if they would be willing to explain the process in person at an upcoming Water Quality Technical Workgroup meeting.

Local Engagement – Ms. Katchmark presented draft input on the Chesapeake Bay Phase III WIP Action Plan for Local Engagement. Section II of the draft Action Plan is focused on improving communications with local partners. Ms. Katchmark proposed the following comment for consideration:

- State or CBP should attempt to explain the reason why the Bay Watershed model has been updated and potential impacts in plain language. Specifically:
 - Describe who asked for a change and the reason given to justify the change.
 - Describe what changed: new data or new assumption
 - Describe conceptually how the changes will impact model outputs and provide examples with actual model outputs if possible

Section III of the draft Action Plan covers equitability and accountability, and the following comments were proposed:

- State should explain how nutrient reductions were divided across sectors and geographically. Address the justification in terms of equity, practicality or cost effectiveness.

- Local area targets are potentially in conflict with pursuing the most cost effective solution state-wide particularly for non-regulated nutrient loads. Targets aligned with defining who is responsible for a reduction will be a more effective communication strategy.

The Committee agreed with the proposed comments and offered more to consider. Ms. Brumbaugh added that the Bay Program should be clear as to when local governments can provide input to the process. Mr. Shafer suggested reaching out beyond the Executive level; while Mr. Hare added that relying on the state to disseminate information is not an effective method. Ms. Katchmark will distribute the Draft Action Plan and seek additional comments via email.

6. Coastal Zone Updates

Mr. McFarlane provided a status update on current grant projects, upcoming grants, and potential grant opportunities. Through the technical assistance grant, a training Workshop, “Introducing Green Infrastructure for Coastal Resiliency,” will be held in June or August of this year. The full-day workshop will cover green infrastructure concepts and practices that can play a critical role in making coastal communities more resilient to natural hazards. The City of Hampton SW threshold analysis project is ongoing.

HRPDC staff, along with staff from the rural PDCs, is providing support to improve the statewide inventory of working waterfronts.

Mr. McFarlane expects to receive guidance on applying for another round of public access grants within the next week or two. He will distribute it to the Committee at that time.

7. Status Reports

A. Hampton Roads Planning District Commission

Mr. McFarlane announced that the CAOs have requested a list of current flooding problem areas, and he will send out an email request for this information.

Next month’s REC meeting will continue the discussion on northern long-eared bats and also include a presentation from VMRC on the living shoreline group 2 permits.

Ms. Sunderland mentioned that the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay is holding another Workshop on the SMART tool on January 22, 2016 in Richmond.

Ms. Kidd announced that the first area of new land cover imagery has been completed by VGIN. By June, they will release the imagery for the entire Bay watershed.

B. NO – Mr. Shafer asked if any other localities request CAD/GIS layers of pipework as part of site plan review. SU responded that they do when the project is approved.

C. VB – Mr. Bernick announced that VB has a new Director of Planning and Strategic Growth, Mr. Barry Frankenfield.

- D. VDOT – Ms. Jenny Dail is the new MS4 Coordinator for the Hampton Roads region.
- E. Wetlands Watch – Ms. Stiff said WW has been working to credit living shorelines and small-scale BMPs through the CRS program. They have grant funds to help local governments improve their CRS score. They are currently working with NN and will soon be working with HA. She encouraged Committee members to contact her if they are interested.
- F. CBF – Mr. Thomas Quattlebaum is the new SLR fellow at CBF. He looks forward to working with the Committee members.

The next meeting of the REC will be held on Thursday, February 4, 2016 at 10:00am in the HRPDC Board Room, The Regional Building, 723 Woodlake Drive, Chesapeake.