

**THE DRAFT SUMMARY OF THE MEETING OF THE  
REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE  
July 3, 2014**

**1. Summary of the June 5, 2014 Meeting of the Hampton Roads Regional Environmental Committee**

The Summary of the June 5, 2014 Meeting of the Hampton Roads Regional Environmental Committee was approved as distributed.

**2. Public Comments**

There were no public comments.

**3. Legislative Priority Development Discussion**

Ms. Whitney Katchmark, HRPDC, led a discussion by the Committee on developing regional legislative priorities for the next General Assembly session. The Commission is interested in developing stronger regional positions on regulations and legislation and in starting the regional legislative agenda process earlier. Ms. Katchmark proposed establishing a subcommittee that will look at proposals in depth and then report back to the Committee. Potential issues to consider include stormwater regulations (and associated issues, such as training for developers and contractors), funding for the Stormwater Local Assistance Fund, issues related to the Chesapeake Bay TMDL (such as tree canopy legislation/requirements and septic tank issues), and sea level rise. The Commission will be approving its legislative agenda by the November HRPDC meeting at the latest.

Ms. Katchmark asked for volunteers from the Committee to serve on the subcommittee. Mr. Joe DuRant (Newport News), Mr. Brian Swets (Portsmouth), Mr. Clay Bernick (Virginia Beach), and Ms. Barbara Brumbaugh (Chesapeake) volunteered.

The Committee voted to create a legislative subcommittee to develop legislative proposals for the Committee to consider.

**4. Sea Level Rise Update**

Mr. Ben McFarlane, HRPDC, briefed the Committee on efforts related to recurrent flooding and sea level rise. Senator Tim Kaine hosted a congressional roundtable at Old Dominion University on June 30 that also was attended by Representatives Rigell, Scott, and Wittman. The conference included two panels of federal and local stakeholders responding to questions from the Congressmen. ODU is also coordinating an intergovernmental pilot project that will facilitate planning for sea level rise between different levels of government and different agencies. The HRPDC Special Committee on Recurrent Flooding and Sea Level Rise met on June 20. The group discussed committee

guidelines and structure and identified several areas of interest that they would like to discuss for potential regional policies.

## **5. Chesapeake Bay Program Update**

Ms. Jenny Tribo, HRPDC, updated the Committee on developments with the Chesapeake Bay Program. The HRPDC staff has been going through BMP panel reports and putting together short summaries and fact sheets, including fact sheets on retrofits and performance management.

Several Urban BMPs have been approved: stormwater retrofits, stream restoration, state performance standards for new development and redevelopment, urban nutrient management, enhanced erosion and sediment controls, urban filter strips, and urban tree canopy. Several BMP panels have made progress on their reports. Shoreline Management Control should be an approved BMP after August. The Illicit Discharge Elimination report is expected to be approved by the Urban Stormwater Work Group in July. Panels on floating treatment wetlands and street sweeping are also moving forward, but should take at least two to three more months.

BMP priorities are set by the states. Under consideration are impervious disconnection, outfall stabilization, new bioretention designs, and MS4 minimum management measures. These will be considered in July when the urban stormwater and land use work group meet together. A survey of Chesapeake Bay stormwater professionals indicated a preference for new bioretention designs, while there is not a lot of literature to support a panel on MS4 minimum management measures. In addition to the current BMP panels, a number of others, such as coastal buffer zones, no discharge zones, and soil amendments, are currently in the queue.

The Chesapeake Bay Program is also proceeding with land use/land cover data. The CPB has hired a consultant to collect GIS data directly from localities, so localities should submit any new data they have. Recommendations for final land use/land cover categories will be selected at the joint USWG and LUWG meeting on July 15<sup>th</sup>. In addition, the statewide effort to develop statewide land cover data based on VBMP aerial imagery is proceeding, with an interagency technical group expected to meet in late July.

Also, beginning in FY15 Virginia Tech will be heading a consortium of universities to facilitate all CBP expert panels as part of a new cooperative agreement.

Ms. Tribo asked if the Committee had any feedback on the prioritized versus non-prioritized BMPs. Virginia's official representative did not have any strong opinions.

Mr. Bernick suggested looking at overpasses and bridge approaches in addition to outfalls, as well as oyster and phragmites harvesting. Ms. Tribo stated that CBP released a report on oyster restoration and that aquaculture has been approved. Phragmites harvesting has not yet made its way to the Bay Program, but coastal wetlands

restoration is one of the BMPs in the queue. VIMS is also studying oysters and denitrification.

Ms. Tribo asked for suggestions on research priorities to address knowledge gaps. Mr. Bill Johnston, Virginia Beach, commented that traditional approaches are not affordable and that other options are needed. Ms. Shereen Hughes, Wetlands Watch, suggested that coastal buffer zones narrower than 35 feet should be considered. Ms. Ellen Roberts, Poquoson, suggested looking at dry pond conversions.

## **6. Coastal Zone Program Grants Discussion**

Mr. McFarlane briefed the Committee on several proposals for Coastal Zone Management PDC competitive grants. HRPDC is eligible to submit up to two proposals requesting a total of \$40,000 in federal grant funds. Eligible categories include water quality, coastal resiliency, working waterfronts, habitat restoration, and public access. Five proposals for competitive grants were received from the Committee.

- 1) Isle of Wight County proposed restoring a pier and landing at Carrollton Nike Park for public access, fishing, and crabbing. The total amount of federal funds requested was \$28,000.
- 2) Portsmouth proposed supporting a survey and analysis of individual household flooding adaptation strategies. The total amount of federal funds requested was \$20,000.
- 3) Virginia Beach proposed conducting a sea level rise community outreach and inreach program. The total amount of federal funds requested was \$25,000.
- 4) HRPDC staff proposed developing a GIS methodology to identify and rank potential sites for wetlands mitigation and restoration. The total amount of federal funds requested was \$20,000.
- 5) Wetlands Watch proposed supporting blue-green infrastructure workforce development. The total amount of federal funds requested was not specified.

The Committee selected the pier and landing restoration project and a consolidated sea level rise project supporting both Portsmouth and Virginia Beach as its preferred proposals. HRPDC staff will work with the localities to finalize and submit the applications by the July 11 deadline.

## **7. Envision Hampton Roads Update**

Ms. Jai McBride, HRPDC, provided an update to the Committee on the Envision Hampton Roads regional strategic planning process. The first step in that process has been to identify regional values. To do so nearly thirty qualitative listening sessions were held between January and April 2014 with a variety of stakeholders and over 450 total participants. Following these sessions a telephone survey was conducted between April 4 and 17 with over 1,200 interviews across all sixteen cities and counties in the region. Regional values identified included:

- What and who we are
- Strong communities and a comfortable place to live
- Diversity of people
- Diversity of landscape and communities
- Water and the natural environment
- The military
- History

Regional aspirations included making the region better, being bold and forward-thinking, being proactive in addressing challenges and opportunities, embracing change, regional thinking, and protecting the region's natural resources. Specific issues to address included: transportation, public education, job and the creative economy, and replacing "brain drain" with "brain gain." The survey and meetings suggest an opportunity for regional collaboration in general and a more specific opportunity for HRPDC to be a leader in addressing regional issues.

The next step for the process is to develop a regional vision. The next stakeholders meeting will be at HRPDC on July 15 from 2pm to 4pm.

Mr. David Kuzma, Newport News, asked about the sample size of the survey and if it was statistically valid. Ms. Julia Hillegass stated that the survey was conducted by CNU with over 1,200 interviews, with a margin of error of +/-5%. The region was broken into four quadrants, with two on the Peninsula and two on the Southside.

## **8. DEQ Long Range Planning Pilot**

Ms. Katchmark briefed the Committee on the Department of Environmental Quality's proposal to work with the HRPDC on a long range environmental planning pilot project, along with similar efforts in the New River Valley and Northern Virginia. The Commission voted to move forward with the pilot at its June meeting. This effort stems from a recent push at DEQ to do more long-range planning and a desire to do so by building on local and regional efforts instead of conducting a top-down statewide effort. HRPDC staff will keep the Committee informed and expects DEQ to meet with the Committee during the next year.

## **9. Status Reports**

Mr. McFarlane announced that HRPDC is helping coordinate a three-day workshop with NOAA and several regional partners on Climate Adaptation for Coastal Communities. The training will be held at Newport News Waterworks from July 29 to July 31.

Mr. Johnston stated that permit activity for development projects has been relatively quiet since the new stormwater regulations went into effect on July 1. Most developers got their permits before July 1.

Ms. Brumbaugh stated that she has been answering many questions about the new requirements.

Mr. John Harman, VDOT, stated that VDOT has gotten its new construction general permit and is still addressing permit questions.

Ms. Roberts stated that she has seen similar activity as has been happening in Virginia Beach.

Ms. Meg Pittenger, Portsmouth, reported that FEMA will be holding a flood mapping open house on July 9.

DEQ staff offered thanks to all the localities for putting their programs together.

Mr. Bernick stated that Virginia Beach's emergency management coordinator recently retired. The city is wrapping up its North Landing River Watershed Plan and working with neighboring communities, including Chesapeake and Currituck County. The final plan is expected to be adopted in September or October.

Mr. Chris Moore, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, reminded the Committee that Stantec will be offering MS4 training for locality staff.

## **10. Other Matters**

The next meeting of the Regional Environmental Committee is scheduled for August 7, 2014 at the HRPDC office in Chesapeake, Virginia. Materials will be sent in advance for review.