



Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)

Citizen's Cafe Meeting Summary

April 25, 2024

6:00 – 8:00 pm

Meeting Summary

Meeting summary content captured by Zoom's Ai Companion feature

Quick Recap:

Katie Morgan from the NOAA Marine Debris Program discussed the global issue of plastic pollution and its impact on the environment, as well as the initiatives being taken to address it. Lisa Swanger shared an overview of the Center's Inland Bays Litter Prevention and Removal Project aimed at reducing the impacts of marine debris. The group discussed concerns about the role lawn mowing is playing with plastic transportation and the need to educate the public about the effects of litter. The meeting also touched on the Center's FY25 work plan (proposed changes to ongoing projects, and the cancellation of certain plans due to feasibility issues). Next steps:

- Katie will provide updates on the status of trash TMDLs and any potential future TMDLs.
- Need to assess the end markets for recycling and work towards finding new markets for plastic recycling.
- Lisa will set a deadline for CAC members to provide feedback on the FY25 work plan
- CAC members interested in volunteering at the Hispanic Fest on September 15th will contact Lisa to express their interest and confirm availability.

Detailed Summary

Meeting called to order by: Richard Watson

CAC members present (4): Dennis Bartow, Mary Kunst, Tia Ouyang, Frank Piorko

Center staff present (3): Christophe Tulou, Lisa Swanger, Jackie Knoll

Public members present (8): John F, Nancy Jordan, Holly Dempsey, John and Nancy Buono, Taylor Yates, Trudy Thompson, Jodi McLaughlin

Guest Storytelling—Katie Morgan, NOAA Marine Debris Program

Katie Morgan was the featured speaker at the Citizen's Advisory Committee meeting held by the Center for Inland Bays. She provided an overview of marine debris and plastic pollution, highlighting the various sources, types, and impacts on the environment. Katie emphasized the global production and waste of plastic, the United States' contribution to global waste leakage, and the significant harm caused to wildlife and habitats. She introduced the NOAA Marine Debris Program, a federal initiative to address marine debris across the U.S., and discussed the Mid-Atlantic Marine Debris Action Plan, a



strategic framework for organizations in the region to address marine debris. Katie also highlighted the achievements of local, state, and federal agencies, as well as private sector groups, in addressing plastic pollution and marine debris in the mid-Atlantic region.

Addressing Plastic Pollution and Recycling Challenges: Katie led discussions on the federal government's initiatives to address plastic pollution, including the recent laws passed in Delaware and ongoing efforts in the region. The group also discussed the challenges and potential solutions in the recycling industry, including the reintroduction of bottle deposit programs and the use of a mascot to raise awareness about litter and waste reduction. There were concerns raised about the current state of recycling in their area, with rumors about plastic waste being directed to landfills due to a lack of market demand. Katie acknowledged these challenges and emphasized the industry's efforts to address them.

Center Storytelling—Lisa Swanger, Delaware Center for the Inland Bays

Lisa shared an overview of the Center's Inland Bays Litter Prevention and Removal Project aimed at preventing and removing marine debris, which has already yielded positive results despite some challenges faced. The project, involving the removal of derelict crab pots, has seen successful community engagement and volunteer recruitment. She touched on the enhancement of the Inland Bays community cleanup, shifting from the historic single-day water-based cleanup to one large community cleanup and multiple land-based activities. Lisa also highlighted the success of a year-long youth education program focused on marine debris and estuaries, which paved the way to enhance the approach of other youth education programs.

Citizens' Input

Balancing Road Maintenance and Environmental Protection: An attendee raised a concern about the impact of grass mowing on the transport of plastics into water, suggesting the need for a possible outreach campaign to coordinate clean-up before mowing. Katie shared a similar experience from a clean-up event she attended in D.C. The group discussed the challenges of finding a balance between maintaining roads and highways and protecting the environment. Jodi suggested a business idea of having someone come and collect garbage cans to prevent them from being left out and have trash unintentionally blow out of them.

The conversation also touched on the issue of Canada geese and the potential for converting meadows to different uses due to cost concerns.



Addressing Litter and Trash in Waterways: Lisa and John discussed the negative effects of litter and trash on local waterways, with a specific focus on cigarette litter. They underscored the importance of educating the public about the impact of these items on the environment, emphasizing that even small items can contribute to water pollution. Attendees also shared their personal efforts to reduce litter and suggested strategies. The group agreed on the need to focus on educating younger generations to address this ongoing problem.

CAC Discussion & CIB Updates

CAC meeting minutes-February 15, 2024—approved

FY 25 Work Plan: Lisa led the discussion on the FY 25 work plan, highlighting proposed new projects and changes to ongoing ones, with a focus on the community pilot program and the environmental monitoring program. She also announced the cancellation of the ecological restoration plan due to feasibility issues and the completion of the oyster gardening program due to capacity challenges. Lisa reminded the team about the approaching deadline for the FY 25 work plan and encouraged all members to provide their feedback.

Upcoming Events: Lisa informed CAC members about upcoming events, such as the 2024 Water Family Fest & Native Plant Sale (5/4/24) and the Hispanic Festival (9/15/24), and invited volunteers to participate.