



*Center for the Inland Bays
39375 Inlet Road, Rehoboth Beach, DE 19971*

Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) Minutes (DRAFT)

Citizen's Cafe Agenda

DATE & TIME: *THU: April 28, 2022, 6:00 – 8:00pm*

Meeting called to order by: Frank Piorko for Claire Simmers, CAC Chair

Attendees:

CAC (3): Rick Chamberlin; Frank Piorko; Dennis Bartow

CIB (4): Lisa Swanger; Caitlin Chaney; Susie Ball (Board Chair); Dr. Marianne Walch

Public (9): Including Mike Smith – Coastal Point

CAC not present: Claire Simmers, Gary Cannon, John Grandy, Jalyn Powell, Amanda Pappas, Cheryl Rehrig, Pete Keenan, Richard Watson.

Theme: Land-use practices, flooding, and reforestation

AGENDA

6:00-6:05 Gathering – Welcome

Lisa Swanger from CIB welcomed everyone. She informed the CAC that she would be out on maternity leave and all wished Lisa well. She let folks know that Caitlin Chaney the recently hired Communications Specialist would be taking over some duties in her absence. Lisa also announced other changes in the Center leadership, most notably Chris Bason retiring and Anna Fagan as Acting Executive Director.

Frank Piorko called the meeting to order and introduced Danielle Swallow, Coastal Hazard Specialist from the University of Delaware Sea Grant Program. Danielle presented on flooding, coastal resiliency, and land use. The following are bullet points from her discussion.

6:05-6:35 Citizen Storytelling

Danielle Swallow – Delaware Sea Grant

- Delaware floods. It has the lowest mean elevation of all U.S. states.
- Floodplains have incredible benefits to manage floods.
- Flooding is the #1 hazard in the state of Delaware.
- Flooding is due to Coastal Storms, Record Rainfalls, High Tide Flooding, Sea Level Rise (SLR) which exacerbates the other factors.
- Tides are 14-16 inches higher over the past 100 years. NOAA predicts an additional 15 inches additional SLR by 2050.
- Hazard mitigation experts define Risk as the intersection of Hazard (Flooding), Vulnerability and Exposure.
- Building resilience in land use decisions is critical. Maintaining natural floodplains, adopting a “no adverse impact” approach to land use and no building in the floodplain.

- Planners need to factor in “future conditions in plans and models.

Questions from the audience included:

Are federal agencies building in future conditions into their models? (perhaps but not enough). Does Sussex County have standards? (yes but follow the minimum FEMA requirements). What happened to the inundation maps? (they are still being used but could be updated).

Dr. Marianne Walch was introduced next and discussed the Changes to Land Use in the Inland Bays as identified in the next State of the Bays (2021-22) Report. The following are bullet points from her discussion.

6:35-7:05 CIB Storytelling

Marianne Walch – Science & Restoration Coordinator, Delaware Center for the Inland Bays.

- Changes to land use in the watershed have been dramatic in the past 30 years.
- Factors include land development and human population growth.
- Ten-year population in the watershed grew by 13%.
- Land use data from 1992-2017 show that ag lands acres are down, forest lands acres are down and developed lands have increased dramatically. The next land use - land cover data is due this year. It is expected that those trends will continue dramatically.
- Salt marshes in the Bays are a critical indicator of land use changes and show a decreasing trend in acres of salt marsh and a steady increase in salt marsh degradation.

What is the CIB doing about the land use concerns and trends?

The new 2021 Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan (CCMP) has 70 actions included to continue to improve the health of the Bay. They include:

- Land Conservation – A relatively new initiative for CIB, but one that involves a lot of partners dedicated to preserving and conservation land.
- CIB is concentrating on a land restoration effort in Piney Neck area.

It was asked if perhaps Michelle Schmidt the CIB Watershed Coordinator could come and speak to CAC about land protection in the watershed.

Dr. Walch also spoke about the Center’s efforts around buffer prioritization, living shorelines and runoff reduction of stormwater in the more urbanized areas of the watershed.

Questions from the CAC and public included impacts to groundwater and if wetland trading was an efficient mechanism for protection. A short conversation continued.

7:05-7:15 Citizen’s Input

Some members of the public voiced concerns generally about the development in Sussex County and flooding in Oak Orchard specifically.

7:15-8:00 CAC Storytelling – Administrative discussions

a. Approval of minutes: February 17, 2022. Rick Chamberlin was the only CAC member at the meeting present at the February 17 meeting and motioned to have the minutes entered into the record.

b. Center Updates: Lisa Swanger – Outreach and Education Coordinator

- Staffing updates (Chris and Anna). Dr. Susie Ball (Board Chair) added context to the discussion regarding a search committee formed and a search firm being hired. Dr. Ball also included an update from Dr. Walch. Marianne announced that she is also transitioning from her full-time position as Science and Restoration Coordinator soon.
- Native Plant Sale and DNREC Water Fun Fest May 14, 2022.
- Citizen Science Training is concluding on several key areas.
- The State of the Bays five-year report on the health of the Bays is due out this summer.

c. Discussion and Updates

a. Update on Oyster Hatchery – Rick Chamberlin

- Rick provided an update on the Oyster Hatchery including funding and support from the Delaware General Assembly.
- Program is to be sponsored and housed by UD, with the University supported staff to run the hatchery.

Update on DEI meeting – Amanda, Jaylyn, Lisa

- Requested by Lisa to defer to the next meeting

Update on Tree Canopy and Climate Change resolutions - Frank & Lisa

- Frank Piorko discussed the progress of the Sussex County Buffers and Wetlands Ordinance to be critical to the timing of any action taken on the Tree Canopy Resolution. Frank advocated for the CAC volunteers to research other tree protection strategies that are in place regionally until the science data is updated. This could be done with guidance from the Center Board without any direct CIB staff involvement for now. (CIB Board decision).
- Regarding the Climate Change Resolution, Frank Piorko also communicated the conversation that he had with CAC Chair Claire Summers preceding the meeting. Frank indicated that the Climate Change arena is a busy one with many agencies and players and is an increasing field of importance for the Center. While there could be some research that CAC volunteers could do in assessing the various programs underway, Dr. Ball requested that there be sufficient time for the new Director and the County to have this conversation before any significant involvement of Center staff was anticipated. Frank answered that this point was also included in the conversation that he had with the CAC Chair.

CAC Membership Recruitment – Frank

Frank reported that he and Claire had the conversation with Lisa and had discussed previously about continuing to recruit for CAC from a diverse watershed population. The actions that have occurred from the Board approved resolutions need to continue for CAC members to feel engaged.

Frank and Lisa thanked all that attended and the speakers.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:12.

CAC 2022 Meeting Schedule:

CAC - 6PM - 8:00PM
Thursday, February 17, 2022; Thursday, April 28, 2022; Thursday, August 4, 2022; Thursday, October 27, 2022

Respectfully submitted

Frank M. Piorko

May 5, 2022