

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

Ms. Whitney Katchmark opened the meeting by congratulating Mr. Clay Bernick (VB) on his upcoming retirement. She presented him with a Resolution of Appreciation and thanked him for his nearly 40 years of service to the Hampton Roads region. The Committee wished him well.

**1. Summary of the June 2, 2016 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. Norfolk Zoning Ordinance Update**

The City of Norfolk Planning Department is working with their consultants to rewrite their Zoning Ordinance. Mr. Jeremy Sharp from the Norfolk Planning Department presented an overview.

The City's current Zoning ordinance was adopted in 1992, and the Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 2013, calls for an update to the ordinance. The City hired consultants in 2014 and expects to adopt the new ordinance sometime next year. Norfolk is striving to use the new ordinance to help make the City more resilient, especially in light of the challenges associated with sea level rise and extensive flood zones.

The City has developed Vision 2100, which is a strategy for addressing Norfolk's future by changing the focus from the challenges of sea level rise to the opportunities that are and will be available. For example, they are orienting the City's new development in areas that support long-term development while at the same time managing the lands that are at risk so that they can remain viable for as long as possible.

Mr. Sharp presented some of the ideas that have been considered for the new ordinance. For protecting people and buildings in vulnerable areas, the possibilities include:

- Adopting tighter standards for locating critical facilities in flood-prone areas,
- Encouraging the use of green infrastructure,
- Tailoring nonconformity standards to encourage safe rebuilding,
- Exploring the adoption of no-adverse floodplain development regulations, and
- Safeguarding vulnerable areas from incompatible development.

The City is looking to streamline the processes for development in safe growth areas by removing obstacles such as excessive off-street parking requirements or restrictions on mixed-use buildings. The City is considering two new overlay zoning districts – the Coastal Resilience Overlay and the Neighborhood Resilience Zoning Overlay. These

districts would take into account many of the strategies detailed in the Vision 2100 “green” planning areas.

Mr. Sharp encouraged interested Committee members to refer to the following project websites:

- [www.zonenorfolk.com](http://www.zonenorfolk.com)
- [www.norfolk.gov/vision2100](http://www.norfolk.gov/vision2100)

Mr. Bernick asked if the public has been participating in the rewrite process, and Mr. Sharp said that few residents have attended their outreach meetings. However, there is a great interest in the Vision 2100 plan and how the City intends to manage flooding.

Mr. Heide asked for clarification on the idea of transferring development rights with a specific density requirement. Mr. Sharp provided an example of how the City could create a market. New development downtown could be limited to five stories to fall within a density cap. If someone owns property in Willoughby, where they are unable to build, they could sell their unused density to a downtown developer. This concept is a tough sell, as Norfolk has never done it before.

Ms. Shereen Hughes asked if the development community is involved with the rewrite of the new ordinance. The City has been working with a Zoning Advisory Committee, which includes some developers.

Ms. Katchmark asked if the Planning Commission is supportive of the changes. Mr. Sharp said that many of the changes have been staff-led, and they are working to build support from City Council.

Ms. Surita asked if they intend to provide incentives for developers to use green infrastructure. Mr. Sharp said they were looking at density bonuses and reductions in required parking spaces as possible incentives. Ms. Hughes suggested streamlined paperwork as another incentive.

#### **4. Chesapeake Bay Landscape Professional (CBLP) Update**

Ms. Shereen Hughes, Wetlands Watch, presented an update on the CBLP certification pilot program. The CBLP is a Bay-wide voluntary two-level credentialing program. The goal is to develop a network of consistently trained landscape professionals qualified to design, install, and maintain small-scale BMPs. The primary target audience for the certification is landscape designers and contractors with degrees or certificates in horticulture, landscape planning, and landscape construction. It is also appropriate for landscape architects, engineers, and environmental scientists.

The program is focused on the following types of BMPs:

- Rain barrels and cisterns
- Rain gardens and bio swales
- Native plant landscaping
- Tree and buffer planting
- Urban nutrient/turf management

- Invasive plant management
- Permeable hardscapes
- Impervious cover removal
- Downspout disconnection
- Green roofs

Two levels of certification will be offered. The Level 1 credential is designed to build common understanding across landscape sectors. The focus is on the design, installation, and maintenance of sustainable landscapes. Level 2 is an advanced design and installation credential aimed towards professionals who already have experience in design or installation of sustainable landscapes.

The Level 1 process and components are as follows:

- Pre-Workshop webinars (optional)
- Classroom-style workshop (optional)
- Self-study of written material
- In the field maintenance practicum (required)
- Application form and fee
- Exam

The Level 2 process and components are as follows:

- Level 1 credential or equivalent demonstrated experience is a prerequisite
- Multi-day intensive seminar (includes a field component and a skills assessment)
- Application form and fee

The Level 1 pilot plan scheduled to run from September to December of this year in Hampton Roads and the DC area simultaneously. A Level 2 pilot is planned in the DC area and is scheduled for December 2016 and January 2017. The goal is to have at least 75 certified landscape professionals at the conclusion of the pilot program. The certified CBLPs will evaluate the process and program components.

The pilot program training partners include the LID Center, UMD Extension office, Mr. Dave Hirschman, Mr. Ted Scott, George Washington University, and local government staff. Mr. Hirschman will be teaching both of the one-day review Workshops to be held in Hampton Roads this fall. Mr. Hirschman will also lead the local maintenance practicums in conjunction with local host BMP maintenance staff.

Ms. Hughes asked the following of the Committee members:

- Suggest locations for workshops and practicums
- Available staff and variety of BMPs
- Fund Mr. Hirschman (estimated costs - \$4,000 for the workshops and an additional \$4,000 for the maintenance practicums)
- Identify maintenance or environmental staff or contractors to get certified
- Use CBLPs to design, install or maintain BMPs (with supervision) to validate/qualify

Mr. Shafer asked what the fees will be for pilot program participants. Ms. Hughes has estimated \$75 for each prospective CBLP. The program should be self-financing by 2018.

Ms. Katchmark said there would be more information to come on the pilot, and the discussion can continue at the upcoming Regional Stormwater Workgroup meeting.

## **5. State Land Cover Update**

VGIN has released the completed Chesapeake Bay area land cover data. Ms. Sara Kidd provided an overview of the data, how to access it, and steps for interpreting it. The data is available online at the following site: <http://arcg.is/29h4XkV>. The types of data available for Bay Areas 1, 2, and 3 include: raster, vector, hydro areas alone, and divided into tiles. A report that includes a classification summary by county is also available.

Ms. Kidd merged the raster tiles and clipped it to the HRPDC boundary and the Chesapeake Bay boundary. She developed land use reports by locality with and without federal property. Some of the calculated areas may differ slightly from VGIN numbers because the boundary files are different. The processed data will be available on the FTP site. Ms. Kidd will send an email with additional information.

Ms. Kidd opened the ArcGIS online website and walked through how to access the data. She distributed a hand-out with the land use classifications, use limitations, and contact information for Worldview Solutions, Inc. and VGIN.

She also presented an update on the locality review process for the Phase 6 land use. Each locality will have the opportunity to review the land use on a rolling basis as the Bay Program incorporates the new land cover. The Bay Program is giving each locality 4 weeks to review the Phase 6 land use, MS4 boundaries, and sewer service areas. The data should be finalized by September 2016 and available for distribution in November 2016.

Ms. Liz Scheessele asked why open space was not included as a category in the new land cover data. Open space is more of a land use description. It relates to how the land cover data compares to the land uses used in the Phase 6 Bay model. Open space is more of a land use description.

Mr. Justin Shafer asked if VGIN remains firm that they do not want input from the local governments. Ms. Kidd said that QA was completed on random locations and resulted in a confidence of 85-95%, which is typical on such large datasets. Mr. Shafer said he understood, but it was still unfortunate that NO has to accept data that is not as accurate as what they have locally.

## **6. Coastal Zone Program Update**

Mr. Ben McFarlane provided an update on matters related to the CZM program. The following is a list of upcoming events:

- NOAA is providing a training course, "Introducing Green Infrastructure for Coastal Resilience" on Wednesday, August 24, 2016 at the CBF Brock Center in

Virginia Beach. Education credits will be available for Certified Planners and certified floodplain managers.

- The Coastal Partners Workshop will be held in Richmond on November 16 and 17, 2016.
- The Hampton Roads Adaptation Forum will highlight new sea level rise science and will be held at the ODU Peninsula Higher Learning Center on July 27, 2016.

Mr. McFarlane will provide additional information regarding these events via email.

The draft Mid-Atlantic Regional Ocean Action Plan is available for review, and the 60-day comment period closes on September 6, 2016. A webinar will be held on July 11, 2016, and a public listening session will be held at the Virginia Aquarium on July 12, 2016. Mr. McFarlane will distribute the plan to the Committee.

## 7. **Status Reports**

- A. **Windsor** – Mr. Carney anticipates that their new Comprehensive Plan will be adopted on July 12, 2016.
- B. **VB** – Mr. Bernick announced that Mr. Doug Smith, Assistant City Manager, is leaving the City, and they will be looking for a replacement.
- C. **HRSD** – Mr. Henifin announced that the third extensometer in the areas was installed at the Nansemond Treatment Plant.

The next meeting of the Regional Environmental Committee will be held on August 4, 2016 in the Regional Boardroom at the HRPDC in Chesapeake, VA.