

**Critical Area Commission  
Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays**

**May 29, 2024**

**Project Implementation Subcommittee Minutes**

**Subcommittee Members in Attendance:** *Conway (Chair), Roberson (Co-Chair), Bradford, Grant, R. Hance, Kiernan, McCarthy, Morgan, Palma, Patel, Roche*

*Guests: Brent Jett, Chris Endryas, Ezgi Kurdoglu, Joseph Perry, Kelly Duffy, Michelina Benitez, Naomi Howell, Sophie Allan, LeeAnne Chandler*

**Item 1. Approval of April minutes.**

Commissioner Grant motioned to approve the minutes from the April Project Implementation Subcommittee meeting. Commissioner Roberson seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

**Item 2. Information Only**

**Department of Natural Resources – Point Lookout State Park Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade (St. Mary’s County)**

Presented by Jon Coplin

The Department of Natural Resources – Maryland Park Service (DNR MPS) and Maryland Environmental Service (MES) are proposing upgrades to the existing wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) at Point Lookout State Park to manage large fluctuations in flows while meeting nutrient removal requirements. This project is being brought to the Project Implementation Subcommittee for information only to discuss the upgrades in detail and provide feedback to DNR MPS and MES.

**Discussion:** Following the presentation, Project Subcommittee Chair Conway opened the floor for discussion. He started by asking if there was any expectation of leakage. Ms. Kurdoglu responded that there have been upgrades to the collection and distribution system to address any kind of leakage. No leakage is expected. There will be a temporary treatment system during the replacement so there would not be any disruption in operation.

Commissioner R. Hance asked if there had been consideration for a living shoreline on the southeast end of the site, and Ms. Chandler responded no. Much of the peninsula is already protected, and the plant is in one of the highest areas within the park. The worst areas are being prioritized, keeping coastal resilience in mind. The DNR Resiliency Officer is looking at Point Lookout holistically, trying to come up with a ‘toolkit’ of ways to implement the overall response to coastal flooding/storm events. Commissioner Hance said that she had heard of solar panels potentially being added, and Ms. Kurdoglu responded that there will be solar panels on the new building that’s being constructed, and that there would also be two EV charging stations.

Commissioner Conway asked about the expected sea level rise in 2070 and the potential for this site to be inundated. Considering that, would it not be better to consider a different site? Ms. Chandler responded that the areas adjacent to the park boundary are almost all privately owned, so at the moment this is the best option.

Ms. Charbonneau thanked Ms. Chandler for the update, and said that it would be helpful if the official submittal included more information about overall long-term resiliency plans for the park, so that it can be included in the staff report when it comes before the whole Commission.

**Item 3. Information Only.**

**Town of Ocean City – Eagle’s Landing Public Golf Course Improvements  
(Worcester County)**

Presented by Kate Durant.

The Town of Ocean City is proposing to grade and fill a number of tees and fairways at the Eagle’s Landing Golf Course for the purpose of reducing vulnerability to flooding and sea level rise and improve playability. The course is located adjacent to Sinepuxent Bay and is highly vulnerable to sea level rise and wetland migration. The Town is seeking feedback on the project as a whole.

**Discussion:** Commissioner Conway thanked Ms. Durant for her presentation. He then opened the floor for feedback and discussion. Commissioner Roberson asked about the relocation of the golf cart paths and whether the current paths would be abandoned. Mr. Brent Jett responded that the pathways will be removed, then land will be elevated and the paths will be replaced. The golf course area will actually shrink a bit to accommodate elevation increase. Commissioner Roberson asked if there had been any consideration given to moving the play areas out of the vulnerable area, and Mr. Jett replied that FAA restrictions on land use adjacent to airport property preclude moving the holes. Commissioner Roberson asked if they had considered reducing the number of holes, and Mr. Jett responded that they would stand the chance of losing 2/3 of their business if they did that. Commissioner Roberson asked about the elevation change – from ~3 feet above sea level now to 4.5 feet. Commissioner Roberson asked if there was a risk from dredged material from the SWM pond being used, since herbicides and pesticides can concentrate in these ponds. Are there any plans to test the material? Mr. Joe Perry responded that the pond was a natural wetland, and nothing was added to it, so there shouldn’t be any concentration of herbicides or pesticides. Commissioner Roberson asked if the pond was just for SWM for the golf course, and Mr. Jet replied yes, for holes 7-9, but they’re planning on expanding the pond.

Commissioner Hance requested that the next time the project comes before the subcommittee, there be a description of the materials being used for the pathways and how they will be replaced. Mr. Jett replied that the path is 8 feet wide, concrete, and will be replaced in kind. They have made an attempt to move the paths away from wetland

edge as much as possible. The golf carts are all electric, so oil/gas runoff will not be an issue. Commissioner Hance asked if it is possible to reduce the number of trees being removed, which would reduce the mitigation required. Mr. Jett stated that 0.57 acres of golf cart were being removed, and replaced with 0.59 acres – will mitigation be on the difference or on the full 0.59? Ms. Durant responded that mitigation is on the full 0.59 at 3:1, but that 0.57 can be removed from that:  $\sim 1.77$  acres of mitigation, minus 0.57 for impervious removal = 1.2 acres of required mitigation. Mr. Perry further stated that when the current golf course area is filled to elevate the land to 4.5' above sea level, the root crowns of the trees will be covered and there is no chance of survival. The trees are an asset so we definitely want to keep as many as possible, but due to saltwater intrusion and dredge material coverage, not many trees can be saved. Commissioner Conway commented that he shared the concern for the trees, but acknowledged that it was unlikely many could be saved. He asked roughly how old the trees are, and Mr. Jett replied that most of the trees were there when the course opened, so likely less than 50 years old. Commissioner Conway remarked that saltwater intrusion should definitely be considered now. Ms. Charbonneau asked if sea level predictions and saltwater intrusion had been incorporated into the proposed planting plan. Mr. Jett responded yes, that they're big proponents of 'right plant, right place.' Ms. Charbonneau suggested he could work with Ms. Durant and Ms. Claudia Jones to review the list of appropriate species.

Commissioner Hance said she had an additional thought on placement of mitigation, wondering whether there was somewhere around the parking area or existing disturbed land that could accommodate plantings? Mr. Jett said they had looked at the clubhouse and the parking lot, but also said that the flyover area for the adjacent airport needs to be considered, in terms of vegetation height.

Commissioner Conway then asked if relocating some of the trees was a possibility. Trees that are large enough to still be an asset, but not so large that they can't be moved. This could also help with the mitigation requirements. Mr. Jett said they would look into it.

Finally, Ms. Charbonneau stated that this project is a very important one in terms of how we move forward with incorporating Coastal resiliency considerations into our Critical Area program, and thanked everyone for taking the time to review the project.