

MINUTES

**Critical Area Commission for the
Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays
1804 West St., Suite 100
Annapolis, MD 21401**

October 1, 2025

CALL TO ORDER: Chair Erik Fisher called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

Commission Members in Attendance:

Tim Adams, Prince George's County
Derek Bland, Wicomico County
David Bradford, Worcester County Chesapeake
Steve Bunker, Charles County
Dan Burris, St. Mary's County
Mark Conway, Baltimore City
Ben Etherton, Talbot County
Jenelle Gerthoffer, Worcester County – Coastal/Town of Ocean City
Allison Gost, Department of Transportation
Anita Grant, At Large
Rosa Hance, At Large (by phone)
Debbie Herr-Cornwell, Department of Planning
Catherine McCall, Department of Natural Resources
Mira Morgan, Department of Housing and Community Development
Alisha Mulkey, Department of Agriculture
James Palma, Department of Commerce
Hitesh Patel, Somerset County
Annie Richards, Kent County
Tammy Roberson, Department of Environment
Brian Roche, Dorchester County
Lisa Rodvien, Anne Arundel County
Natalie Snider, Department of Natural Resources (for Catherine McCall)
Dave Wilson, Worcester County Coastal
Pat Young, Baltimore County

Commission Members Not in Attendance:

Earl "Buddy" Hance, Calvert County
Travis Marion, Cecil County

OPENING REMARKS

Chair Fisher called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. Dr. Nick Kelly conducted a roll call to confirm a quorum.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Roberson moved to approve the minutes from the August 20, 2025, meeting. Commissioner Adams seconded. Commissioners Bradford, McCall, and Richards abstained from voting, as they were not at the meeting. **Motion carried unanimously.**

Commissioner Bland moved to approve the minutes from the Closed Session on August 20, 2025. Commissioner Bunker seconded the motion. Commissioners Bradford, McCall, Patel, and Richards abstained, as they were not at the meeting. **Motion carried unanimously.**

ITEMS FOR VOTE/CONCURRENCE:

SUMMARY REPORT – Maryland Department of Natural Resources – Assateague State Park – Replacement Ranger Station and Parking Lot Reconfiguration

Presented by Katie Hayden. Project Committee Recommendation – Approval with Conditions.

Ms. Hayden presented in accordance with the staff report, the contents of which are incorporated into and made a part of the minutes. Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is seeking approval for the replacement of its ranger station and parking lot at Assateague State Park. DNR is requesting to replace the existing ranger station building in order to consolidate maintenance equipment and amenities that are currently housed in sheds that are scattered throughout the existing parking lot. DNR is also requesting to reconfigure the existing parking lot to improve traffic flow and provide stormwater management where none currently exist.

Following the presentation, Ms. Hayden turned the floor over to Chair Fisher, who asked for a motion from Project Committee Chair Conway. Commissioner Conway moved that the project be approved with conditions as outlined in the staff report. Commissioner R. Hance seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

SUMMARY REPORT – Town of Snow Hill – Comprehensive Review

Presented by Katie Hayden. Program Committee Recommendation – Concurrence; Approval with conditions.

Ms. Hayden presented the staff report, the contents of which are incorporated into and made part of the minutes. The Town of Snow Hill, located in Worcester County, recently completed an effort to comprehensively review their Critical Area Program as is required by State Law. Chapter 72 of the Town's Code contains provisions pertaining to the town's Critical Area Program. On July 8, 2025, the Mayor and Council of the Town of Snow Hill approved Ordinance 2025-10, which repeals and replaces Chapter 72. The Town is now requesting that the Critical Area Commission approve the comprehensive update of their Critical Area program as reflected in the Town's updated Chapter 72.

Program Committee Chair Bunker then moved on behalf of the Program Committee to concur with the Chair's determination of refinement and moved to approve the Comprehensive Review with conditions as outlined in the staff report. Chair Fisher thanked him and noted the concurrence and stated this would stand as his final decision.

POLICY: Critical Area Commission "Participation, Access, and Community Outcomes Policy, Manual, and Implementation Plan.

Presented by Charlotte Shearin.

Ms. Shearin presented in accordance with the staff report. Commissioners Hance and Roberson submitted comments by email. As requested by Commissioner Young at the previous Commission meeting, she presented a few examples of projects and how they would work with the new policy in place.

Commissioner Bunker asked for clarification of the definition of underserved communities, and Ms. Shearin clarified that it is an “or” for all three. Commissioner Bunker mentioned that Prince George’s and Charles counties have affluent majority minority communities and may not meet the definition of underserved. Charlotte said that the Commission will rely on the EJ score and percentile. Adams reminded everyone that there are underserved communities in the counties being discussed. Charlotte clarified that the EJ screening tool looks at data by census tract, but local jurisdictions can look at data that is at a smaller level (eg. Millington and Kent County).

Hearing no further questions, Chair Fisher asked for a motion to approve. Commissioner Grant so moved. Commissioner R. Hance seconded, and thanked the workgroup and staff for all their work. **Motion passed unanimously.**

LEGAL UPDATES

Presented by Assistant Attorney General Emily Vainieri.

Island Sunset, LLC (Somerset County)

The Critical Area Commission and Somerset County have filed a petition for judicial review challenging the decision by the Somerset County Board of Appeals to grant a variance to an applicant for the construction of a multi-bedroom retreat facility, decks, and sheds within the Critical Area Buffer, on property known as Frank’s Island in Deal Island. It is the Critical Area Commission’s position that the Board’s decision did not comply with the Critical Area variance standards. This case was just filed at the end of August, so nothing to report other than that at this point.

NEW BUSINESS

2026 Commission Meeting Schedule

Chair Fisher reported on the meeting schedule for 2026. There are some changes coming up, the most important of which is that the Committee meetings will be held the same day, one week before the full Commission meetings. The Project committee will continue meeting at 10:00 a.m., and Program will meet at 1:00 p.m. We will continue to have three in-person meetings. In addition, we will continue the field days, and educational sessions.

Climate Resilience and Equity Regulations workgroup – Chair Fisher announced he wants to create a workgroup of commissioners and staff, 5-7 meetings, starting in November and running through February 2026. Commissioners Grant, Richards, Gost, Roberson, Herr-Cornwell, Etherton, McCall, R. Hance, Adams, and Bland all indicated an interest in participating.

Planner trainings – Charlotte Shearin mentioned the new training programs developed for local planners, and encouraged Commissioners to go to our website to look through them.

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Chair Fisher shared the news about the passing of Judge North, the second Chair of the Critical Area Commission.

Finally, the next field day will be at Point Lookout State Park on October 29.

Meeting adjourned.



Lynette Fullerton, Commission Secretary

11/5/25

Date Approved