



January 26th, 2022

Google Meet 3pm – 5pm

Gary Allen
Maryland Forestry
Foundation
Annapolis, MD 21401

Kim Finch, co-chair
MNCPPC,
Prince George's Co.
Planning Dept.
Upper Marlboro, MD
20772

Bryan Seipp, Interim
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Forest Hill, MD 21050

Elizabeth Hill
Maryland Forests
Association
Linkwood, MD 21835

Donnelle Keech
The Nature Conservancy
Cumberland, MD 21502

Bill Rees
Catonsville Tree Canopy
Committee
Catonsville, MD 21228

Steve Resh
Allegheny College of
Maryland (Retired)
Cumberland, MD 21502

Tony DiPaolo
Pixelle Specialty
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Delmar, Maryland 21875

Frederick Johnson
M-NCPPC Department of
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Upper Marlboro, MD
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SFC Members

Gary Allen
Bill Rees
Kim Finch
Bryan Seipp
Donnelle Keech
Steve Resh
Tony DiPaolo

DNR Staff

Anne Hairston-Strang
Daniel Rider
Marian Honeczy
Kenneth Jolly
Iris Allen

Guests

Frederick Johnson

Interim Chair of the Sustainable Forestry Council (SFC), Bryan Seipp, called the meeting to order at 3:04pm. SFC discussed Fred Johnson's appointment. His application has been submitted to the Office of the Governor, but it can take some time to be processed as they need to process Al Goetzl's retirement first. Steve Resh reminded the council that they need to fill out financial disclosures. Bill Rees moved to approve the December 2021 minutes as written, Steve seconded, and the minutes were approved at 3:11pm.

Anne Hairston-Strang proved an update on activities at the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The Governor's budget was submitted to the Legislature with expected funding levels, including some additional Program Open Space funding. They are hoping to replace a quarter of their state vehicles in FY23. Anne also gave a brief overview of staff promotions, position changes, new hires, and retirements. The Maryland Forest Service is about 15% vacant, but they are filling positions as fast as they can. Fred recommended posting new vacancies on NeoGov and the Society for American Foresters job boards. DNR is starting the recruitment process for the 13 new contractual positions funded through the Tree Solution's Now Act (HB991). They are hoping to have the positions filled by summer 2022. The positions would be 1 assistant manager at the state nursery, 2 supervisory positions (one urban focused, one rural focused), and 10 tree planting specialists. They have started collecting contact information for people who are

interested in any of these positions. The positions generally do not require a forestry degree, but they will require a degree or at least five years of experience.

Marian Honeczy provided an update on the 2022 legislative session. Items reviewed included House Bill 11 removing woody biomass from the renewable energy portfolio standard, a bill about native and invasive plants, the Conservation Finance Act, electrification of the state vehicle fleet, emergency response trail access on lease agreements, the Climate Crisis and Environment Justice Act (HB 171), and Sunday hunting bills that could affect State Forests. There are also multiple bills affecting the state retirement system. Maryland Department of Agriculture is doing a briefing about the spotted lantern fly quarantine area, which changed recently, on February 1st at 1pm. Everything in the House is virtual this year while the Senate is doing a hybrid approach. All hearings are recorded are posted online. Contact Marian if you want help navigating the legislative website.

Gary Allen continued the legislative update. He mentioned that several bills that will impact forestry have not been dropped yet. The 30 by 30 bill will set a goal to set aside at least 30% of the state's land resources in some protective status by 2030, and 40% by 2040. As of today, 29% of the state is protected. This bill

includes a green space equity bill that will contain several forestry provisions, including a mandatory, annual appropriation of \$1 million to the Mel Nolan Woodland Incentive Fund. The intent of that funding would be for private land stewardship. Engagement of private landowners is integral to achieving the 40% goal, so the lawmakers are looking into incentives for private landowners to protect their land from development. The bill will also focus on creating connectivity between protected areas. This bill would be consistent with the Smart Growth objectives set in the 1990's. There is a need to sort out how the bill will consider water resources. Gary recommended that council members attend briefings on bills hosted by stakeholders. The Climate Action Bill (HB171) is in its final stages; its principal sponsors will be Senator Pinsky and either Representative Barve or Representative Stein. The Park Commission Recommendation bill will be dropped tomorrow.

Interested members volunteered for an ad hoc legislative subcommittee to discuss the upcoming bills before the March SFC meeting. The outcome of this subcommittee will be to synthesize information on these bills and pass that information along to the rest of the SFC. The ad hoc legislative subcommittee will meet on February 15th.

Dan Rider provided an update on Biomass the State Wood Energy Team. House Bill 11 would make the Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard (RPS) flame free, removing wood products. Gary recommended countering the bill with well-communicated science. Maura Ross with the Clean Energy Center has developed an equity screening protocol that identifies facilities to consider for biomass projects. The tool factors in many things like environmental justice and economics. The Wood Energy Team will meet this week and SFC members are welcome to join the call. Garrett College has chosen to not move forward with a biomass project at the time. Allegany County has some potential for biomass projects. Frostburg State has reached out to Maura about a potential wood thermal opportunity on campus. Dan connected them with the USFS's Lew McCreey. If Frostburg State has a viable project the USFS will help them get the engineering analysis done. Dan then provided updates on work with the Greater Cumberland Committee, which is a regional organization that covers five counties, including Garrett and Allegany in Maryland and three others West Virginia and Pennsylvania. It is a very active group of businesses, elected leaders, economic development officials, and conservation organizations, including Donnelle with TNC. They have become a key partner to the Wood Energy team and with rebuilding the forest products sector in Western Maryland. They want to put together an Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) brand or standard that recognizes the sustainable characteristics of the forest product sector. They have some great resources on ESG that Donnelle can share with the SFC. The ESG advisory committee is also hosting an ESG Charette in April that Dan encourages all SFC members to attend.

Gary then discussed the Parks Commission Report. The report has 19 recommendations, including the primary recommendation to establish new parks, especially in accessible urban areas that interpret the diverse history of the state. The second recommendation is that DNR should establish State Historical Parks that preserve and interpret the history of Black Marylanders and other underrepresented communities in the state. Many of the recommendation suggest capital investments for the large backlog of projects and staffing.

Dan then reported on workforce development efforts and the Economic Adjustment Strategy (EAS). The federal Economic Development Administration (EDA) provided the funds for Maryland's EAS. The EDA recently received a lot of funding from congress, including money for workforce development. The EDA said they would like to see Maryland's EAS implemented, and that Maryland should apply for these new funds to do so. Dan wants to use some of that money on the primary forest product sector in Maryland by working with colleges to provide specific training on operating forestry equipment. Allegany College, Wor-Wic Community College, and a handful of other schools have expressed interest. The Maryland Department of

Labor has a great apprenticeship program and would like to help with this workforce development. The State is going to provide more support to University of Maryland Extension's Mater Logger Program as well.

Iris Allen gave a summary on DNR's strategy for 5 Million Trees. Maryland Forest Service staff is meeting every two weeks to work on the strategy. They are currently working to sort out the job classifications and requirements for the 13 new contractual positions from the bill. DNR is also working to develop new planting programs with funding from the bill that would address tree planting need in rural and urban areas. DNR is developing a map that shows the areas that qualify for funding through the bill's Urban Tree Program. The [Chesapeake Bay Foundation already has a map](#) that the Chesapeake Bay Trust is using. The goal for DNR's map would be to display what areas qualify a little more clearly, but it would look very similar to CBF's. There are monthly "Trees and Markets Commission" meetings that serve as a coordinating point for the bill. [The website](#) provides details on the meetings and how to join them. Gary suggested having a more detailed breakdown of DNR's plan and the breakdown of Maryland's tree planting goals.

Anne gave a summary on strategic planning efforts with the Forestry Boards. Anne has been attending meetings with the Forestry Board President, Joli McCathran. Strategic planning assistance will likely be the most useful at the executive committee level, which has a meeting on March 3rd. Gary suggested a goal of increasing diversity among the boards.

During member updates Gary mentioned a new program hosted by the Maryland Forestry Foundation called "Framing the Future", which will be a series of monthly webinars for at least a year. Some of the topics include invasive species and policy, the Hughes Maryland Forest Technical Study, and a tree canopy goal for the metropolitan Washington region. The committee then talked about the Faces of Forestry Campaign, which can be found of the [Maryland Forest Associations' blog](#). Bryan suggested that Jenny Willoughby, the Frederick City Watershed Manager, be one of the featured profiles.

The council then discussed meeting topics for March, which included a 5 million trees program update, an overview of the Hughes Technical Study, the Rural Maryland Council, and an MARBIDCO update.

Bryan adjourned the meeting at 5:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Hairston-Strang
Iris Allen