**June 16, 2021 Meeting of the****Coastal Zone Advisory Committee**

The regular meeting of the Coastal Zone Advisory Committee (CZAC) was called to order by Ms. Kristina Peacock-Jones at 9:30 a.m. This meeting was held virtually via Microsoft Teams.

**The following committee representatives were present:**

Kristina Peacock-Jones Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), Coastal Resources Management Program (CRMP)

Ken Shaffer Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (PUC)

Casey Hansen Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC)

Sean Gimbel Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC)

Janet Flynn Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT)

Mark Lombard Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT)

Erin Wiley-Moyers Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR)

Darin Clark Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC)

**The following agency representatives (non-CZAC members) were present:**

Stacey Box DEP, CRMP

Summer Kunkel DEP, CRMP

Randy Brown DEP, CRMP Southeast Regional Staff

J. Samantha Burton DEP, CRMP

Kevin Hess DEP, CRMP

James Peifer DEP, CRMP

Joe Sieber DEP, CRMP

Matt Walderon DEP, CRMP

Mark Matlock DEP, Water Planning Office

James Horton DEP, Water Planning Office

Brian Chalfant DEP, Policy Office

Shelby Clark DEP, CRMP Northwest Regional Staff

Joy Fronzoli Erie County Department of Planning and Community Development (ECDPCD)

Amy Verbofsky Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC)

Tom Hughes Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA)

Bill Bradfield Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA)

Anne Stauffer Delaware County Planning Department (DCPD)

Diana Olinger National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)

Sarah Witney Pennsylvania Sea Grant/Pennsylvania State University (PSU)

**Introductions:**

Kristina Peacock-Jones began the meeting at 9:30 a.m., welcomed attendees and led the introductions.

**Review and Approval of Minutes:**

Kristina Peacock-Jones asked for approval of minutes from the previous CZAC meeting of January 13, 2021. Joy Fronzoli requested a minor correction to update the title of her county office, now titled the Erie County Department of Planning and Community Development. With no additional comments, Ken Shaffer made a motion to accept the minutes and Sean Gimbel seconded the motion. The minutes for the January 13, 2021 CZAC meeting were approved.

**Coastal Resources Management Grant Program Update:**

Stacey Box reported that for the reporting year, all 2020 CRMP grant awards were fully executed and all projects are underway, enabling a total of 19 grant projects worth $827,000. Total funding for 2020 (including Section 306 and 309 funds) was $1,989,500. Stacey noted that DEP’s coastal program’s funding levels have increased slightly, reversing a downward funding trend of the recent past. For 2021, total funding is just over $2 million. With the grant project selections forwarded to NOAA, the CRMP now awaits NOAA review, anticipating approval anytime in August or September. Diana Olinger (NOAA) noted that NOAA expects no delay in its review.

Stacey announced that the fiscal year 2022 grant round is expected to open on August 30 of this year and remain open through October 18, 2021. Further, the funding for Section 309 is $116,000, of which $50,000 is being passed through for coastal resilience work. Finally, Stacey announced that grant application workshops will be held in early August in both Coastal Zones (virtual or in person if possible) giving applicants an opportunity to learn about the grant requirements and ask questions about their proposed projects.

**Delaware Estuary Coastal Zone Update:**

Amy Verbofsky (DVRPC) presented her update for DVRPC, starting with the many impressive trails and circuit trail development projects in the greater Philadelphia region. Among recent projects Amy highlighted the Delaware River Development and the Delaware River trail, as well as the Chester Creek trail project completed at a cost of $442,000, noting the recent ribbon cutting of the Eyre Park Levee Walk project in Chester. Amy reported that the DVRPC board approved over $2.6 million in project funding (via the William Penn Foundation) for four projects located in the coastal zone, including the Wissahickon Gateway trail, the Cobbs Creek Connector Segment B1, the Schuylkill Banks Bulkhead Restoration, and the Manayunk Towpath.

Amy discussed the Justice Equity Diversity and Inclusion (JEDI) Task Force, which hired a consultant to conduct marketing research concerning equity, users and uses of various trails. This effort is part of the circuit trails coalition effort, an innovative new approach brought forth by the William Penn Foundation.

Finally, Amy presented updates on notable projects including the Central Delaware Waterfront Development (proposed tower). Interestingly, this site would require an archaeological dig due to an historical shipyard buried in the site’s parking lot. Additional projects of interest include the South Wetlands Park, various projects on Connector Streets (where a focus on 28 different streets that go under Interstate 95 would better connect neighborhoods to the waterfront in a more inviting manner), the Waterfront Piers District (DRWC) projects, and the much-anticipated Chester City Engle Street Connector at its waterfront.

**Lake Erie Coastal Zone Update****:**

Joy Fronzoli (ECDPCD) shared her update with the group, covering an impressive variety of projects completed or underway in Erie County. Currently, the Erie City bayfront is witnessing a number of unprecedented, exciting projects like the newly developed Bayview Park on the Bayfront Promenade, and Harbor Place (with its beer garden under construction).

The Erie Western Pennsylvania Port Authority (EWPPA) Master Development Plan is now completed. Next, Joy presented photos of the bayfront’s recently completed Holland Street Fishing Pier and East Dobbins Landing Dock. These impressive projects now provide enhanced public access and increased fishing opportunities for many people. Accompanying Joy’s presentation were views of the new 1,200-foot-long Liberty Park Seawall.

Highlighting other ambitious projects, Joy discussed the Lampe Marina fish cleaning station, the continuing collaborative work on Harmful Algal Blooms with the Regional Science Consortium, and the Erie County Municipal Stormwater (MS4) assistance program. Joy concluded her presentation on recreation planning, highlighting the Erie to Pittsburgh trail development feasibility study. To execute its recreational plans, Erie County will be hiring a recreation director to focus on its Parks, Trails and Recreation Plan (for Erie’s 38 municipalities). Finally, Erie will host this year’s PA Greenways and Trails Summit meeting at the Erie Bayfront Hotel September 19-21, 2021.

**Section 309 Update:**

Kevin Hess (DEP) provided an update on the new Section 309 Strategy and Assessment which was approved by NOAA on June 4, 2021. This process requires that every five years, the CRMP develop strategies for the upcoming five years. Looking ahead, the CRMP will begin its new strategy on October 21, 2021, focusing on coastal hazards and addressing stormwater impacts, including bluff face erosion in the Lake Erie Coastal Zone (LECZ). In the Delaware Estuary Coastal Zone (DECZ), CRMP will focus on climate resiliency work, continue work with the DVRPC on the storymap, examining storm surge data, flooding, green infrastructure and stormwater. CMRP seeks to work further with our partners to enhance intermunicipal coordination in addressing stormwater planning. Another strategy component of the next five years will be to utilize GIS data layers in support of a consideration of a coastal zone boundary expansion in the DECZ.

**Agency Updates:**

Sean Gimbel (PFBC):

* Sean stated that the PFBC has created a new Bureau of Boating. The new bureau will have a staff of 12 people to focus on boating and access issues.
* Work is underway to update Pennsylvania’s Fishing and Boating Access Strategy.
* PFBC staff are developing an agency climate action plan to be published later this year.
* Grant applications for the fiscal year 2020-2021 round of the Erie Access Improvement Program were reviewed by staff and four grant applications are recommended for funding. The projects include Holland Street Pier fishing access improvements, Lampe Marina Fish Cleaning Station refrigeration unit, Avonia Beach Park improvements, and the Regional Science Consortium Lake Erie buoy project. Total estimated project costs for these projects are $1,025,200 and the total recommended grant funding is nearly $600,000. Funds for this grant are made possible by sales of Lake Erie stamps as required for fishing in the Lake Erie Watershed.
* PFBC has resumed implementing its statewide Boating Facility Grant Program (BFGP). For the fiscal year 2020-2021 grant round, the PFBC received 26 applications and staff recommended funding 22 projects totaling $1.7 million. BFGP grant projects recommended by staff include: Lawrence Park Township Lakeside Boat Launch renovation in Erie County; East Falls River Landing on the Schuylkill River; Stroud Preserve Boat Launch on the East Branch of Brandywine Creek in Chester County; and Shaw’s Bridge Park canoe/kayak launch on Brandywine Creek in Chester County. Regarding future grant rounds, BFGP applicants located in the Delaware watershed will have access to additional funding via the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Delaware Watershed Conservation Action Grant Program.

Casey Hanson (PHMC):

* Casey announced the new online “PA SHARE” review system is now available for parties to submit review materials to the State Historic Preservation Officer. Also, the PHMC will soon hire a replacement for the recently retired Mark Shaffer.

Erin Wiley Moyers (DCNR):

* Erin reported that her program is currently reviewing grant applications, receiving fewer applications than last year. This year, approximately $170 million is requested from 390 applicants. DCNR expects to fund more than an average number of the usual 55% requested thanks to higher real estate transfer tax revenues.

Mark Lombard (PennDOT):

* Mark announced that PennDOT will open for transportation set-aside and enhancement projects on June 28, 2021. A total of $18 million is available and the window closes on October 15, 2021. Next, Mark noted that PennDOT and the Federal Highway Administration are improving resiliency of transportation enhancement designs in effort to help assess vulnerability and flooding risks to infrastructure in high risk areas.
* Mark addressed the controversy regarding a proposed tolling of nine bridges in the state as a solution to address severe funding shortages needed for bridge work. In response, PennDOT Pathways, a public-private partnership, has been formed to develop tolling alternatives in order to keep up with the state’s highway infrastructure costs.

Ken Shaffer (PUC):

* Ken reported that Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) treatment costs are under examination and the PUC is working to develop figures and determine what these costs should be.

Tom Hughes (PEMA):

* Tom informed CZAC that a house bill is under consideration to officially move the National Flood Insurance Program from the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) to PEMA.
* Tom noted that a billion dollars are available for 160-200 flood mitigation assistance grants, with a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) due to PEMA during the first week of August. Tom referred to the State Hazard Mitigation Plan which is updated every five years. PEMA is working with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to update the plan for adoption in 2023. PEMA will soon begin working with DCED and other agencies to begin updating the plan. Tom seeks to provide an “enhanced” plan instead of a “standard” plan because Pennsylvania could be eligible for an additional 15-20% in set aside funding.
* Working with DEP, PEMA secured $1,000,000 for high hazard potential dams in 2020.
* PEMA offers a training opportunity called “Floodplain Fridays” for floodplain professionals. This PEMA training of local officials is a priority.
* The PEMA Hazard Mitigation Plan update forthcoming, and as stated in the NOFO discussion, upgrading to an enhanced program can secure an additional 20% funding.
* Finally, Tom asked if there has been any official movement for PEMA to be a charter member of CZAC. Kristina Peacock-Jones responded that the effort to add PEMA is still in the process of consideration.

**Presentation of State Water Plan Updates:**

Mark Matlock (DEP) gave a brief overview and introduced James Horton (DEP) who described the history of state water planning along with the intellectual lineage milestones leading to today’s current state water plan update actions. As per Act 220’s requirements, DEP must update the state water plan every five years, and staff are currently working to update the 2009 plan. Over the past two years, DEP has been coordinating with regional watershed committees throughout the state to address key issues like water use reporting, critical planning areas, the water use data and (Greenport) system, and more. James described the innovative Power BI (software) and enhancing data-sharing with river basin commissions.

James noted intentions of approving three Critical Area Resource Plans and enhancing new water program web-based applications and tools, such as the Power BI. In addition, two of the Governor’s Climate Action Plan strategies will be included in the plan updates. These strategies are strengthening stormwater Best Management Practices (BMPs) and promoting integrated water resources management, particularly in the area of water conservation. Ultimately, DEP expects to complete final recommendations and approvals in 2022.

**Public Comment:**

Kristina Peacock-Jones asked if there were any comments from the public. There were no public comments.

**Other Business:**

Nothing reported.

**Adjournment:**

Kristina Peacock-Jones thanked everyone for attending virtually.

Ken Shaffer moved to adjourn the meeting. Erin Wiley Moyers seconded the motion, and none were opposed.