

COASTAL ZONE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

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**January 15, 2020 Meeting of the  
Coastal Zone Advisory Committee (CZAC)**

The regular meeting of CZAC was called to order by Mr. Don Benczkowski at 9:34 a.m., in the 10<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room of the Rachel Carson State Office Building, Harrisburg, PA.

**The following committee representatives were present:**

Don Benczkowski	Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), Coastal Resources Management (CRM) Program
Chris Linn	Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC)
Ken Shaffer	Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (PUC)
Mark Shaffer	Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC)
Casey Hansen	Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC)
Sean Gimbel	Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC)
Chris Metka	Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT)
Cindy Dunlap	Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR)
Kristen Bowman Kavanaugh	Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC)

**The following agency representatives (non-CZAC members) attended the meeting by phone:**

Shelby Clark	PA DEP, CRM Northwest Regional Staff
Joy Knapp	Erie County Department of Planning (ECDP)

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

Stacey Box	PA DEP, CRM
Randy Brown	PA DEP, CRM Southeast Regional Staff
Sam Burton	PA DEP, CRM
Kevin Hess	PA DEP, CRM
James Peifer	PA DEP, CRM
Joe Sieber	PA DEP, CRM
Matt Walderon	PA DEP, CRM

**The following members of the public were present:**

Richard Whiteford	Journalist; World Information Transfer at United Nations
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**Introductions:** Don Benczkowski began the meeting 9:34 a.m., thanking members and attendees and leading the introductions.

**Review and Approval of Minutes:** Don Benczkowski announced that a quorum was achieved for this meeting. Ken Shaffer made a motion to accept the minutes for the May 29, 2019 CZAC meeting. Cindy Dunlap seconded. The minutes for the May 29, 2019 CZAC meeting were approved with no changes.

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### **Coastal Zone Program Update:**

- The FY 2020 Coastal Zone grant round opened and closed since the last CZAC meeting. 25 applications were submitted, 15 in the Delaware Estuary Coastal Zone (DECZ) and 10 within the Lake Erie Coastal Zone (LECZ). Two of the 10 applications from the LECZ were withdrawn.
- A list of the submitted projects and their applicants was distributed to the committee and members were given an opportunity to review the applications. Stacey Box requested comments from CZAC members be provided no later than Jan. 13, 2020.
- CRM review of the grant applications will be completed in February 2020. Selected projects will be forwarded to NOAA for final approval before the next CZAC meeting, which is scheduled for June 24, 2020.
- FY 2019 grant awards were announced in October 2019. Twenty projects were funded for a total of nearly \$700,000. Detailed press releases are available upon request.

### **Section 312 NOAA Evaluation Update:**

Don Benzkowski explained that every five to ten years, a program evaluation is conducted by NOAA's Office of Coastal Management under Section 312 of the Coastal Zone Management Act. This evaluation was conducted November 13-14, 2019 in Philadelphia and in the Rachel Carson State Office Building in Harrisburg and covered the period from October 2010 through October 2019. The Lake Erie Coastal Zone was not visited during the evaluation. The evaluation team was comprised of four NOAA staff members. The review team typically includes at least one other member from another state's Coastal Management Program. The selected representative was from the state of Michigan but was unable to attend the evaluation due to weather conditions. The evaluation included stakeholder surveys, interviews with CRM partners and DEP executive staff, and a public meeting. The evaluation team also visited a number of sites within the Delaware Estuary Coastal Zone to highlight program successes. NOAA will send an evaluation final report, with findings and program recommendations to CRM upon its completion. Mark Shaffer stated that PHMC relayed to NOAA that their experiences with CZAC and the Coastal Program were positive.

### **Local Coastal Zone Updates:**

- Chris Linn (Delaware Valley Regional Planning Department- DVRPC) discussed a few notable projects, including major trail and circuit trail project updates (Cobbs Creek Trail, Delaware River Trail, and Schuylkill River Trail Suspension Bridge). The goal is to build connections between existing trail networks and Bartram's Garden. Mr. Linn also discussed The Chester Waterfront Masterplan, The Navy Yard's initiative to encourage the development residential communities at the site, and taking part in NOAA's Section 312 Evaluation of CRM. Mr. Linn discussed the explosion at the Philadelphia Energy Solutions (PES) refinery and its subsequent bankruptcy. Competing plans for reclaiming and redeveloping the site in the process of being developed. The future of the site is uncertain as bankruptcy proceedings continue. Lastly, Mr. Linn discussed the Delaware

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River Public Access Plan and the effort to compile and update comprehensive information regarding public access throughout the DECZ. Draft is planned to be fully developed by this summer.

- Joy Knapp (Erie County Planning Department) discussed the high lake levels and the local concerns highlighted at Presque Isle State Park and the Walnut Creek Boat Access. She also discussed the Bluff Recession Setback Act spring flyover on April 18, 2018, the Bayfront development updates and local planning efforts including the Erie County Municipal Stormwater assistance program.

### **Section 309 Update:**

- Stacey Box [on behalf of Kevin Hess (DEP)] explained the status of CRM's Section 309 of the Coastal Zone Management Act assessment and strategy. Section 309 establishes the Coastal Zone Enhancement Program that encourages states and territorial coastal management programs to strengthen and improve their federally approved coastal management programs in one or more of nine enhancement areas designated by NOAA. Every five years, coastal programs are encouraged to conduct a self-assessment and determine priority challenges and opportunities for enhancing the program to better address those challenges. At this time, the program is three years into the current strategy and must begin to write the new strategy in October 2019 to ensure timely executive staff review and approval. Ms. Box discussed the survey that was provided to the meeting attendees. The goal of the handout is to prioritize focus areas for the next 309 cycle. She asked that the survey be returned by November 4, 2019. Questions should be directed to Kevin Hess.

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### **Dissolved Oxygen in the Delaware Estuary:**

- Dr. Namsoo Suk from the Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) provided a presentation on dissolved oxygen in Delaware Estuary. Dissolved oxygen is the amount of gaseous oxygen dissolved in the water. Oxygen enters the water by direct absorption. Living organisms need oxygen in the water to live. Dr. Suk discussed the importance of temperature and salinity. He discussed the sources of dissolved oxygen, such as photosynthesis and turbulence, and provided a history of dissolved oxygen in Delaware Estuary dating back to 1963. In the summer of the 1960s there was no dissolved oxygen in the river. DRBC developed water quality standards in 1967. The goal was to support maintenance of aquatic life in urbanized portions of the Delaware Estuary by establishing water quality standards. Water quality standards are comprised of designed uses and criteria. Some of the criteria were originally only for the maintenance of fishes, not for the propagation of fishes. There has been strong evidence of successful fish reproduction, such as white perch and striped bass, and moderate evidence of successful fish

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reproduction, such as alewife, American shad and anchovy, so DRBC will need to adopt new designated use and criteria to protect these communities.

### **Agency Updates:**

- Casey Hansen (PHMC) updated CZAC that he is working hard to get many of Mark Shaffer's responsibilities moved to him, as Mark may be retiring in April 2020. It appears Casey will now be the new PHMC committee representative going forward. Casey is from the Texas Historic Preservation Office and has worked with coastal resource issues before.
- Scott Bollinger (PFBC) discussed three grant programs and what they offer related to boating and fishing infrastructure and access in the two coastal zones. PFBC plans to revive its boating facility grant program starting in July 2020.
- Mark Lombard (PennDOT) reported that Jackie Felion-Koons is the contact for PennDOT grant information. The rapid bridge replacement program is still ongoing, and they have replaced 525 bridges so far.
- Ken Shaffer (PUC) had no update. He is still active on the Governor's Action Team, which involves working with utilities to plan for outages.
- Jean Lynch (DCNR) discussed that DCNR is in the middle of grant reviews. They are expecting to award \$21 million in community grants, \$8 million in land trust grants, \$2 million in the Heritage Program, \$2 million to trail projects, and \$5 million to local playgrounds. They plan to announce successful projects in November or December 2019.
- Diana Olinger (NOAA) reported that the Section 312 survey is not out yet but will be in the next few weeks. It will be in a Survey Monkey format.

### **Public Comment:**

- As required by the PA Sunshine Act, Don Benczkowski asked if there were any comments from the public. There were no public comments.

### **Other Business**

- Don Benczkowski thanked everyone for attending.
- Don Benczkowski concluded the meeting by stating the dates for CZAC meetings next year have not been set. He will contact the group with the dates once they are established.
- Amy Verbofsky informed the committee the next Delaware Estuary Advisory Committee meeting will be August 7th.

**Adjournment** - The meeting adjourned at 11:39 a.m.

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