

COASTAL ZONE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

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 10th 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

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)
Cindy Dunlap Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR)

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)
Kristen Bowman Kavanaugh Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC)
Chris Metka Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT)
Chris Linn Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC)

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

Stacey Box PA DEP, CRM
Randy Brown PA DEP, CRM Southeast Regional Staff
J. Samantha 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

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.

Coastal Zone Program Update:

COASTAL ZONE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

- The FY 2020 Coastal Zone grant round opened and closed since the last CZAC meeting. Twenty-five 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 Two of the 10 applications from the LECZ were withdrawn.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 Benczkowski 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 12 -14, 2019 in the Philadelphia area, 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 Minnesota 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 very 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 of 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 are in the process of being developed. The future of the site is uncertain as bankruptcy proceedings continue. Lastly, Mr. Linn discussed the Delaware

COASTAL ZONE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

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

- Joy Knapp (Erie County Planning Department) discussed the ongoing development along the Erie Bayfront, including remediation and development of the GAF site/Bayfront Place, and construction at Harbor Place. PennDOT is planning Bayfront Corridor improvements to begin in 2021. Ms. Knapp also discussed projects being developed by the Erie-Western Pennsylvania Port Authority (EWPPA) including the fishing pier at Holland Street, Dobbins Landing, and Lincoln Avenue Bluffs. At the Lincoln Avenue Bluffs, EWPPA is planning a study to develop a bluff maintenance and preservation policy to be completed by February of 2020. Ms. Knapp then discussed other topics of local concern, including an update of the 2016 Harmful Algal Bloom study conducted by the Regional Science Consortium, bluff-related property damage in North East Township, and seiches that occurred on Halloween and Thanksgiving in 2019, flooding the basement of the Maritime Museum.

Section 309 Update:

- Kevin Hess provided an update on the development of the new Section 309 Assessment and Strategy. Surveys were provided to key stakeholders to inform CRM's program assessment and strategy development. CRM received 17 completed surveys, compared to 35 received during the development of the previous 309 document in 2015. Notable in the present responses was the difference in perceptions toward wetlands between the LECZ and the DECZ, more protective in DECZ. Comments received during the survey process are being used to develop the strategy, for which no specifics have been determined but will include a focus on resilience. Topics discussed included historical structures inventories, public access vulnerability, water quality, flooding, and extreme weather events. Mr. Hess suggested to the committee that any additional input that committee members or their agencies would like to provide, be sent as soon as practicable. Cindy Dunlap asked if education was provided on the enhancement areas. Mr. Hess responded that information was presented at the local LECZ and DECZ committee meetings. Questions should be directed to Kevin Hess.

Coastal Effects of Climate Change in Southeast Pennsylvania:

- Mr. Chris Linn from DVRPC provided a presentation on the effects of climate change in southeast Pennsylvania and the work being done to document and adapt to the changing climate. Mr. Linn provided a walk-through of the Story Map project (funded through the previous 309 grant) including demonstrating its flooding predictive functions with sea-level rise projections. The map contains projections for both high and low emissions scenarios, based on research from Rutgers's University. The flooding maps are for storm-surge events only – not meant to predict precipitation related flooding. The map is capable of providing projections for chronic inundation, infrastructure risks, and threats to private property, selectable by jurisdiction. Mr. Linn gave a summary of the Community Rating System (CRS) which provides insurance discounts through the National Flood Insurance Program for policy holders for properties insured within

COASTAL ZONE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

participating jurisdictions. Presently, no coastal communities in Pennsylvania participate in CRS. The City of Philadelphia may participate in the future.

Agency Updates:

- Mark Shaffer (PHMC) updated CZAC that PHMC is looking to go paperless within the year, approximately. Introduced Casey Hansen again, who had attended the last CZAC meeting with Mr. Shaffer. Mr. Hansen came to PHMC from the Texas State Historical Society and is transitioning to assume Mr. Shaffer's post to the committee after Mr. Shaffer retires in April. Mr. Hansen may be the permanent PHMC representative to the committee.
- Sean Gimbel (PFBC) discussed PFBC's work on access issues and the development of a strategic plan that is currently in draft form. The strategic plan will include resilience, invasive species response, and climate change adaptation plans.
- Cindy Dunlap (DCNR) announced a good year for their grant program. A windfall from real estate transfer taxes has resulted in \$60M total available grant funds for this year. 67% of applications were funded. Next year is also expected to be a good funding year. The grant round opened Jan 15, 2020 and closes April 22, 2020. DCNR is in the process of launching a grants customer service portal with the goal of being paperless by 2023.
- Chris Metka (PennDOT) is proposed to become the new PennDOT representative to CZAC. Ms. Felion-Koons has been promoted. Mr. Metka reported that 351 grant projects have been funded at \$215M. Projects include transportation enhancements targeted at bike/pedestrian trails, historic facilities and canals, and stormwater mitigation. The rapid bridge replacement program is still ongoing, and they have replaced 556 bridges this year.
- Ken Shaffer (PUC) announced that PUC has a PFOS action team and also is developing a "Black Sky Initiative" to help utilities plan for long-term power outages.

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

- Mr. Benczkowski thanked everyone for attending.
- Mr. Benczkowski announced that the date of the Summer CZAC meeting will be June 24, 2020 and will be held in the 10th floor conference room of the Rachel Carson State Office Building.
- Mr. Benczkowski presented Mark Shaffer with a certificate of appreciation for his years of service to the committee.

COASTAL ZONE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

- Mr. Benczkowski announced that Jennifer Orr-Greene resigned from her Commonwealth position effective January 3, 2020.
- Congratulations was given to Chris Linn for the birth of his son, Hugh, on December 10, 2019.
- Motion to adjourn by Ms. Dunlap. Seconded by Mr. M. Shaffer.

Adjournment - The meeting adjourned at 12:08 p.m.