

SUMMARY OF HART-MILLER ISLAND
CITIZENS OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MEETING

July 19, 2022 – 5:30PM

On Site Meeting

Attendees:

Baltimore County Seventh District: Paul Brylske (Chairman)

Baltimore County Sixth District: Karen Wynn

Maryland Department of Natural Resources: Robin Reed

Maryland Department of Transportation Maryland Port Administration: David Bibo,
Amanda Peñafiel

Maryland Environmental Service: Lincoln Tracy, Tim Carney, James Cooper, Taylor
Hoskins

North Point Peninsula Community Council: Fran Taylor

Sports Fishermen: Sam Weaver

Essex Middle River Civic Council: Larry Lee

Friends of Hart-Miller Island: Joe Corcoran

Others Present: Devin Crum (The Peake Newspaper), Charmaine Dahlenburg
(National Aquarium), Amanda McCulloch (Our Lady Mount Carmel), James Looper
(NPS Fort McHenry), Hannah Emmons (MD Waterways Foundation), Pariya Ahmadi
(MD Waterways Foundation), Desirae Williams (MD Waterways Foundation)

Action items:

1. MES will provide the HMI Annual Environmental Monitoring Report to the COC by the first meeting of 2023.
2. The group will provide feedback on the Chesapeake WILD grant as well as the Chesapeake Bay Trust restoration outreach grant.
3. MDOT MPA and MES will provide updates on North Cell Habitat Development progress.
4. MES will provide the infrastructure inventory list and map to the COC.

1.0 Welcome & Opening Remarks

Paul Brylske, Chair

The HMI COC approved the January 18, 2022 meeting summary. Mr. Brylske thanked MES, MDOT MPA and DNR, for hosting the meeting and transporting the group to HMI. Mr. Brylske thanked Ranger Reed for coordinating to provide transportation to Joe Corcoran and the Baltimore Bird Club.

2.0 HMI Friends Group

Paul Brylske

Mr. Brylske highlighted some of the recent events by the Friends Group such as the HMI Volunteer

Day where a clean-up of the beach and sand removal was completed. A recent fundraiser occurred at Rowboat Willies. Mr. Brylske thanked Karen Wynn and Sam Weaver at Weaver's Marina for assisting with the event. A similar event was planned at Rowboat Willies on August 13, 2022.

Mr. Brylske thanked Maryland Waterways for supporting a Snakehead tournament at the Dundee River called Snakes on the Dundee. Mr. Weaver spoke about the success of the Snakes on the Dundee event and highlighted how DNR was there to help show people and kids how to catch, clean, and cook the Snakehead. Maryland Waterways has cleaned up 265,000 pounds of trash out of the water basin. Another clean-up was in progress during the summer on Grays Road alongside Sparrows Point Country Club where in 4 hours about 6,700 pounds of trash was collected.

The North Point Volunteers and Friends Group had a fishing tournament where fishing rods and reels were donated by the Friends Group for prizes.

Ms. Charmaine Dahlenburg from the National Aquarium provided information about the WILD grant. The WILD grant is through The Fish and Wildlife Foundation. The National Aquarium along with the Friends Group and MDOT MPA have partnered to submit an application for the grant requesting just under \$500,000 for a 2-year grant to cover debris cleanups and camps at Hart-Miller Island, Poplar Island, and Swan Creek. Ms. Dahlenburg is also working with Mr. Brylske to put in a Chesapeake Bay Trust restoration outreach grant for \$40,000 focusing on the projects at HMI.

The Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) selected HMI for their annual field trip/meeting on October 19, 2022. Mr. Bibo explained that the CAC is a DMMP committee that meets quarterly and does an annual field trip to Port facilities.

3.0 HMI Site Updates

Amanda Peñafiel, MDOT MPA

Monitoring HMI's surrounding water is conducted by various organizations to evaluate water quality. One of the more continuous, long term monitoring programs is the Eyes on the Bay program with DNR. With the Eyes on the Bay program long-term fixed stations collect dissolved oxygen (DO), water temperature, salinity, pH and secchi depth data. There are four monitoring stations in the vicinity of HMI including two stations along Back River, one station along Middle River and one station along Gunpowder Neck. Data collected from the Eyes on the Bay program can be found online at <https://eyesonthebay.dnr.maryland.gov/>.

Baltimore County Health Department also conducts recreational water quality monitoring sampling, where samples for bacteria are collected along swimming beaches including HMI State Park and Back River during spring-summer months. Parameters that are collected with this include E. coli, temperature, specific conductivity, DO, pH, and salinity. E. coli is sampled for recreational water as it's a bacteriological indicator organism, that can be found in the intestines of all warm-blooded

animals. In higher concentrations, it can be linked to a suspected source of sewage contamination. The most recent results taken by Baltimore County on June 21, 2022, has shown that E. Coli results are 10 MPN (Most Probable Number) and below at the HMI sampling locations. The EPA recreational water quality standard is 126 MPN (or CFU)/100 mL. The website to the Baltimore County Health Department Water Quality can be found online at:

<https://www.baltimorecountymd.gov/departments/health/environmental/water-sampling/sampling-results/hartmiller.html>.

Exterior monitoring was also conducted at HMI for 35 years to evaluate sediment quality outside of HMI. Monitoring concluded fall 2018. The data consistently concluded there were no adverse impacts that could be directly tied to HMI operations and/or discharged water from the site. On-site monitoring is continued including discharge monitoring which evaluates water quality before it is discharged from HMI, Submerged Aquatic Vegetation Sampling on the exterior of HMI, Stormwater (Spillway) Reference Sampling, Nutrient Sampling, Algae Sampling, North Cell Transect Testing and Groundwater sampling.

MES and MDOT MPA are contracting with an engineering firm to conduct geotechnical work and take soil borings around the North Cell to analyze the stability of the sediment in the North Cell. MES and MDOT MPA will utilize this information to figure out areas where onsite MES operations can mechanically and hydraulically dredge, working towards implementing the chosen North Cell design plan. A cost estimate of the chosen North Cell design was completed in 2019 and is \$57 million dollars (\$47 million for North Cell, \$10 million for South Cell) with the majority of the costs being associated with dredging the North Cell to create a deeper pond. The geotechnical analysis will help the team develop a plan where existing operations at HMI can work towards chipping away at the design, while other funding mechanisms are being investigated. The work towards implementing the North Cell design with current operations will be funded through the Annual Operations Budget.

MDOT MPA and MES signed a new lease at HMI's landbase to continue utilizing the space for the landbase pier. After performing an inspection, it was determined that the landbase pier will need to be replaced. Design plans and specifications for repairing and replacing the landbase pier are being developed. A question was also raised by Mr. Taylor to Ms. Peñafiel of what the life at the land base pier looks like and whether the improvements and costs are necessary or justified. Ms. Peñafiel said that a lease for the pier was just signed for 5 years with the option to renew 5 times. The improvements are deemed necessary and safety is a top priority.

Along with replacement of the landbase pier, the area surrounding the 265 personnel pier on HMI will also be dredged to allow better access for the boat. MES and MDOT MPA are coordinating with MDE to start the permitting process for the dredging project. Design plans are being developed to avoid shallow water and Submerged Aquatic Vegetation (SAV) area, as recommended by MDE to minimize impacts and mitigation requirements. The material dredged around the 265 pier will be taken to Cox Creek Dredged Material Containment Facility as HMI can no longer accept dredge

material.

As part of the HMI IGA, an HMI Infrastructure Working Group was formed in order to study, evaluate and make recommendations to the heads to MDOT MPA and DNR on an asset management plan. MDOT MPA, DNR and MES met onsite at HMI on June 13, 2022 to begin this process. MES drafted an HMI inventory list and map, which included the South Cell holding pond and various items in the operations building compound. The group visited and discussed each of the items on the inventory list. MES will be providing more details on maintenance costs for the items. MDOT MPA will keep the HMI COC updated as discussions and the HMI Infrastructure Working Group progresses. Mr. Brylske asked Ms. Peñafiel how the group could gain real time information and feedback from these meetings. Ms. Peñafiel said MPA will provide summaries of the discussions along with the inventory list and map that was created.

4. DNR Update

Robin Reed, DNR

Ranger Robin Reed led the group around the HMI State Park to display some of the improvements to the HMI Nature Center as well as the grounds, toilets, and camping areas. Ranger Reed also discussed some of the recent and future educational programs hosted by DNR.

DNR with the help of MDOT MPA and MES hosted Lieutenant Governor Boyd Rutherford on July 11, 2022 where he toured the island and state park for about 2.5 hours. He has a goal to visit all Maryland State Parks before the end of his term. After visiting HMI, the Lt. Governor only has seven parks to tour before completion.

5.0 Administration and Open Discussion

Dave Bibo, MDOT MPA

Mr. Bibo elaborated on North Cell Development and planning as well as HMI Infrastructure Working Group progress and updating the HMI COC as we receive information. Mr. Bibo stated that the Friends Group has been the catalyst to improving the HMI State Park. Mr. Brylske and the Friends Group have partnered with North Point State Park to create Miller Island license plates. Two hundred of the license plates have already been sold and the funding that goes back to the two groups is \$25 per plate. Mr. Corcoran, President of the Baltimore Bird Club explained that membership has been growing rapidly since the pandemic began and there are currently over four hundred members. The Maryland Ornithological Society are interested in a few dates to tour HMI and are coordinating transportation.

Meeting adjourned at 8:00pm

