

Memorandum

TO: Hart-Miller Island Citizens Oversight Committee

FROM: Taylor Hoskins – MES

DATE: July 7, 2022

SUBJECT: Next meeting – July 19, 2022

The next meeting of the Hart-Miller Island Citizens Oversight Committee (HMI COC) will be held **ON SITE** on Tuesday, July 19, 2022. **The boat pick up time will be 5:30 pm at the Maryland Environmental Service's (MES) land base at 2024A Riverview Rd in Essex, MD. Please arrive a few minutes early, as the boat will leave promptly at 5:30 pm.** The Maryland Department of Transportation Maryland Port Administration (MDOT MPA) will provide dinner. All attendees must confirm their attendance as well as number of guests and mode of transportation to Taylor Hoskins at Thoskins@menv.com by July 15, 2022.

Attached for your review is a copy of the summary from the January 18, 2022 meeting.

SUMMARY OF HART-MILLER ISLAND
CITIZENS OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MEETING

January 18, 2022 – 6:30PM
Virtual Meeting

Attendees:

Baltimore County Seventh District: Paul Brylske (Chairman)
Baltimore County Sixth District: Absent
Maryland Department of Natural Resources: Sara Rinta and Robin Reed
Maryland Department of Transportation Maryland Port Administration: David Bibo, Amanda Peñafiel, Katrina Jones, and Holly Miller
Maryland Environmental Service: Lincoln Tracy, Lien Vu, and Rebecca Kreatschman
North Point Peninsula Community Council: Fran Taylor
Sports Fishermen: Absent
Essex Middle River Civic Council: Absent
Friends of Hart-Miller Island: Joe Corocran
Others Present: Travis Cooke (Resource Environmental Solutions, LLC)

Action items:

1. MES will provide the HMI Annual Environmental Monitoring Report to the COC– *Sent to HMI COC on 1/26/22 for review.*
2. MDOT MPA will provide an update to the COC about alternative funding options for North Cell Habitat Development and the Committee on HMI Infrastructure.
3. Ms. Peñafiel will follow up with Mr. Brylske regarding citizen involvement in the Infrastructure Committee.

1.0 Welcome & Opening Remarks

Paul Brylske, Chair

After introductions, the October 19, 2021 meeting summary was approved. Mr. Brylske thanked MDOT MPA and MES for their responsiveness to the HMI Friends Group’s activities, specifically for the birding trip that took place with the Baltimore Birding Club on December 19, 2021.

2.0 HMI Friends Group

Paul Brylske

Mr. Corocran thanked MDOT MPA, DNR, and MES for their assistance with planning the December 19, 2021 birding trip to HMI. He shared photos from the trip taken by attendees as well as other photos of different species of birds that were seen at HMI. Mr. Corocran shared the eBird results from the 53 species observed during the trip including 4 Trumpeter Swans, 150 American Black Ducks, 5,800 Ruddy Ducks, and 7 Great Blue Herons, 9 Bald Eagles, three different types of Woodpeckers, and many more. The group also observed about 10 deer while on the trip. He also explained that this event was a part of the Audubon’s 110th Annual Christmas Bird Count which takes place all over the U.S. and around the world. The group appreciated being able to travel to

HMI to participate in the count.

Mr. Taylor asked how the Baltimore Bird Club advertises HMI State Park as well as North Point State Park to birders. Mr. Corocran explained trips to North Point State Park are planned regularly and advertised on their website. The Maryland Ornithological Society also advertises the hotspots for birding around the state, which HMI is included. Mr. Bibo stated that MDOT MPA would like to continue the winter birding trip as an annual event to continue participating in the Audubon's Christmas Bird Count.

3.0 HMI Environmental Monitoring Report

Lien Vu

Various monitoring efforts are conducted at HMI including groundwater and discharge monitoring. A presentation summarizing environmental monitoring from October to December 2021 was presented. Results from environmental monitoring from January to September were presented at the October 2021 meeting.

Groundwater monitoring occurred on December 6, 2021. Groundwater results from June 2021 for trace metals were below the State Water Quality Standards and in most circumstances below EPA drinking water standards. Dissolved Iron and Dissolved Manganese exceeded the EPA Maximum Concentration Level (MCL) for drinking water at all wells. Iron and Manganese are secondary standards. EPA has Secondary Drinking Water Standards, that are not mandatory, however have set Secondary MCL, to assist public water systems in managing drinking water for aesthetic considerations such as taste, color, and odor. Dissolved Arsenic exceeded the EPA MCL at Well 12A for drinking water in groundwater but was still below Maximum Contaminant (MC) for groundwater protection.

All water leaving the facility is required to meet requirements set forth by HMI's Discharge Permit issued by Maryland Department of Environment. Between October and December 2021, HMI discharged a total of 6.22 million gallons (MG) from North Cell Spillways 007, 008, and 009. No water was released from the South Cell through Spillway 003. All discharge results were within permit limits for 2021. Spillway 009 underwent trench maintenance in November and December and as a result, discharge was paused. Due to cell elevation being below the target elevation of 37.5 feet in the North Cell, discharge did not occur frequently. All discharges were compliant with the permit except for a December lab error noncompliance. Quarterly Discharge Monitoring Reports were submitted to MDE as required by the Discharge Permit. In total in 2021, 110.22 MG was discharged from the North Cell and 41.01 MG was discharged from the South Cell.

The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) completed a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Inspection on December 10, 2021. Overall, MDE was pleased and said HMI was in good condition. MDE also inspected the Operations Building and noted issues concerning the water treatment system and septic system. The water treatment system was replaced on December 16, 2021. MES is working to locate plans from the septic system installation. MES followed up with MDE regarding requested flow data and the water treatment system update.

Algae sampling occurred from June to October in 2021 and three locations were sampled- Spillway

003, Spillway 009 and the South Cell Holding Pond. Monthly samples were sent to Greenwater Lab to check for possible harmful algae blooms. In October, bloom levels of *Anabaenopsis sp.* were reported again at the South Cell Holding Pond, along with *Microcystis sp.* at the South Cell Holding Pond and Spillway 009. Additional toxin analysis showed results were lower than the threshold for recreational advisory. As a result, no further action was taken.

An aerial spray was conducted on November 6, 2021. A total of 420 acres of *Phragmites* were sprayed in the North and South Cells and the DNR marshes. MES is coordinating with DNR Forest Service and Baltimore County for a burn of the North Cell and DNR marshes in 2022. Ground spraying for invasive species will resume in spring 2022. On December 13, 2021, the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) conducted a Pesticide Inspection at HMI. Overall, HMI was in compliance. A minor comment to label spraying vessels with pesticide name and concentration were noted by MDA and remedied by MES.

4.0 Operations Update

Lincoln Tracy

MES continues to conduct general maintenance on roads, dikes, piers, and trails. Inspections for the landbase pier and the station 265 personnel pier were completed. The station 265 pier requires minimal maintenance and is in overall good condition. The landbase pier will require a complete replacement due to its poor condition. Maintenance and construction for both piers will begin in fiscal year (FY) 23. Mr. Brylske asked how guests will be transported to HMI as interest increases and the piers are under construction. Tours during this time will be evaluated once a temporary landbase is determined.

The Blue Heron will undergo an engine and transmission replacement and will be out of use until the maintenance is completed. Upgrades to the engine will have lower diesel emissions and will be more environmentally friendly. A crew boat from Poplar Island, the Osprey, will be used to transport crew to and from HMI in the meantime. The Blue Heron is expected to return June 2022. Due to safety concerns with boarding and deboarding, additional precautions for guests will be assessed. Currently, due to these safety concerns, tours will not be offered.

Spillways in the North Cell have not been opened frequently in order to hold the target pond elevation at 37.5 feet to maintain water quality.

5.0 North Cell Habitat Development Funding

Amanda Peñafiel

The estimated HMI North Cell development funding, \$47M for the North Cell and \$11M for the South Cell, are not in the rolling 6-year Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP) budget. MDOT MPA continues to put it on the unfunded project wish list and will continue to do so, but it is competing with other mission critical projects. MDOT MPA is exploring a potential Request for Information (RFI) where a private partner could invest in the North Cell for potential mitigation credits. When the RFI is published, the HMI COC will be informed. Also being explored is potential USACE funding, the program used to help restore the South Cell. MDOT MPA is continuing to investigate all alternative funding sources. Staff and equipment will remain onsite and will continue

to do so until HMI is turned over to DNR. In the meantime, cost saving opportunities are being evaluated and MES is looking into options to chip away at the North Cell development with the staff and resources available. Once plans are determined, they will be shared with the Committee.

MDOT MPA, DNR, and MES held an IGA (Intergovernmental Agreement) meeting on January 11, 2022. The holding pond in the South Cell was discussed. DNR indicated that they would like to keep it as a feature but not at a high maintenance expense in the future. MDOT MPA and MES will be developing a pros/cons list for keeping the holding pond. Additionally, MPA and MES will meet with MDE Tidal division to see if that area could be opened to tidal flow in order to remove the duckbill valve currently installed. The IGA contains an article for a Committee on HMI Infrastructure: *“The Parties shall form a Committee on HMI Infrastructure/assets to study, evaluate, and make recommendations to the heads of MPA and DNR on an asset management plan that will review the current and ongoing cost of providing and maintaining the assets and infrastructure necessary to meet the changing uses at HMI and the requirements of the community and end users at HMI within available budgets. The Committee shall put a special focus on assets/infrastructure nearing the end of their useful life, including but not limited to, MDOT MPA/MES building complex (Operations building, garage, sheds, diesel tank), South Cell holding pond, electricity, piers (265 personnel pier, crane pier), DNR building complex, observation tower, Clivus system, and boating access. The Committee shall use reasonable efforts to make timely recommendations to the appropriate agency approval authorities.”*

DNR indicated they would like to remove anything without a critical need. MES was tasked with creating an inventory with listing initial costs, maintenance/operating costs, current statuses, and labeling the inventory on a corresponding aerial image. A meeting will be arranged in the spring to discuss the infrastructure inventory and have a site visit. MDOT MPA will keep the HMI COC updated as the Infrastructure Committee progresses. Mr. Brylske asked if citizens would be involved with the Infrastructure Committee. Ms. Peñafiel will follow up with Mr. Brylske regarding citizen involvement.

6.0 DNR Update

Sara Rinta & Robin Reed

DNR provided updates regarding the HMI State Park and personnel:

- Clivus restroom replacement/repairs are approved and will be completed by a private contractor.
- Park Service staff have submitted a wish list to the HMI Friends Group to prioritize fundraising efforts.
 - The HMI Friends Group plans to fund new interpretive signage for Blue, White, and Marsh Overlook trails.
 - The HMI Friends Group plans to purchase a locking donation box for park patrons to use to support HMI programs and additional recreational opportunities.
- Park service management has approved a Youth Group camping area to be created at the rear of the Ranger Station, near the lookout tower, to alleviate the overcrowding of camping

areas on busy weekends throughout the summer. Eagle Scouts and park volunteers will be assisting Park Service employees with setting up the new Youth Group camping area. Campers in this area will be limited to groups who hold a Youth Group camping pass with DNR, the general public will camp only in the designated public camping areas.

- A volunteer workday with the HMI Friends Group and Scouts groups is tentatively planned for the end of April/early May to prepare the park for opening to the public on May 1st, 2022.
- Sunday Funday activities will occur each Sunday during the months of June, July, August and September.
- Park service is in the process of replacing the facade of the restrooms.
- Maintenance projects have been underway on the restroom facilities and boardwalk as well as winterization of the buildings.

7.0 Administration and Open Discussion

Dave Bibo

Mr. Bibo shared with the group that in addition to safety concerns regarding transportation of guests with the Osprey, all tours are currently cancelled due to the ongoing surge of COVID-19. He also added that MDOT MPA, DNR, and MES are currently planning the 2022 HMI 5-Miler run for fall.

The 2022 meeting schedule is planned as follows:

April 19, 2022- Legislative Sessions Updates

July 19, 2022- Site Visit

October 18, 2022-Updates via email

Meeting adjourned at 8:00pm.