

**FINAL DRAFT SUMMARY OF THE
MASONVILLE CITIZENS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING (MCAC)
May 6, 2025, 5:30 PM - Hybrid Meeting**

Attendees:

Action Baybrook: Kevin Hodges
Arcadis: Albert Buell
Baltimore Bird Club: Kathy Lambrow, Nancy O'Hara
Baltimore City Department of Planning: Jazmin Kimble
Baltimore Office of Sustainability: Natalie Cohen
Canton Kayak Club: Ray Scurr
Chesapeake Bay Association: Frank Neighoff
Curtis Bay Community: Rodette Jones
Friends of Masonville Cove: Jason Brannock, Tieya Parker
Living Classrooms Foundation (LCF): Grace DeLuca
Maryland Port Administration (MPA): Danielle Fisher, Katrina Jones, Kelvin Moulden, Joseph Ross, Darren Swift, Nathan Thompson
Maryland Environmental Service (MES): Matias Orrego, Mackenzie Miller
MCAC Chair: Anita Kestel
MCAC Facilitator: Dr. Mamie Parker
Medstar Harbor Hospital: Brian Gray
National Aquarium (NA): Greg Atkin
Riviera Beach Community: Karen Wanner
U.S. Geological Survey: Anna Gillmor
Unknown Affiliation: Elizabeth Jenkins, George Riddle

Action Items:

- MPA will **invite speakers**, including those local to the community, to discuss migratory bird conservation at an upcoming MCAC meeting.
- MPA will **submit a Chesapeake WILD grant application** by May 16th, in partnership with the Friends of Hart-Miller Island, to **fund a Friends Coordinator for Masonville Cove**. Members and partners were requested to **provide letters of support for this application**.

1.0 Welcome & Review of Previous Action Items

**Dr. Mamie Parker, Facilitator
Anita Kestel, MCAC Chair**

All meeting materials can be found here: [MCAC Share Drive](#). Dr. Parker and Ms. Kestel convened the meeting. The Committee accepted the March 4, 2025, MCAC meeting summary as its final version. Action items from the March 2025 meeting were all ongoing or otherwise completed.

2.0 Office of Navigation, Innovation, and Stewardship Updates

**Darren Swift, MPA
Kelvin Moulden, MPA
Joseph Ross, MPA**

Mr. Swift provided MPA updates on developments around Masonville Cove, including the Dredged Material Containment Facility (DMCF). The DMCF expansion is approximately eight to nine months ahead of schedule. Construction crews are currently working to raise the dike to +30 feet, with anticipated completion by June 2025. The next phase of the expansion, raising the dike to +42 feet, is in final design and permitting stages. Once design and permitting are completed, MPA will re-advertise for construction

bids to advance the project. Mr. Swift also shared that the American white pelican, affectionately referred to as “Peg” by visitors, has returned to the DMCF, a rare presence for Baltimore wildlife and a strong indicator of Masonville’s successful habitat work.

Mr. Swift confirmed that federal grant funding from the Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) remains in place for the Masonville Cove Connector project. A third round of FLAP applications will open in September, and MPA is actively preparing for submission. MPA is also scheduled to meet with the National Park Service, the project sponsor under the current FLAP grant, on May 19th to provide a project briefing. A separate meeting with MPA’s Executive Director, Mr. Jonathan Daniels, is expected to finalize approval of the preferred project concept by the end of May. Once approved, the team will move forward towards 100% design completion of the Masonville Cove Connector.

Coordination with the Maryland Transportation Authority (MDTA) on the I-895 toll plaza realignment project and Baltimore City’s Frankfurter Avenue sewer infrastructure upgrades remains a top concern in the coordination of the Connector. MPA’s construction schedule will align with the sewer project to prevent contractor conflicts, as both efforts will affect the same space. The MDTA-led I-895 realignment project is expected to conclude by 2030, and MPA anticipates incorporating updated traffic designs into the Connector’s final plan.

3.0 Urban Wildlife Conservation Day & Friends Updates **Danielle Fisher, MPA**

Ms. Fisher provided updates on the planning efforts for Urban Wildlife Conservation Day (UWCD), scheduled for September 20th. The annual UWCD event celebrates environmental stewardship and wildlife conservation through hands-on activities including bird walks, an onsite BioBlitz for species identification, monarch tagging, nature crafts, fishing, and more. Last year’s event welcomed a record 223 participants, with 91 children and 132 adults, nearly 60% being first-time visitors. In a collaborative brainstorm session, members shared ideas to enrich this year’s event, including art and driftwood workshops, plant giveaways, nature-based scavenger hunts, yoga, and food vendors. Members strongly agreed to continue shuttle pickup locations to increase accessibility for community members.

Ms. Fisher also shared updates on the growth of the Friends of Masonville Cove group, which is entering a year of learning focused on developing leadership capacity, clarifying member roles, and pursuing long-term sustainability. A March 29th field trip to Patuxent Research Refuge provided inspiration and mentorship from their more established Friends group. Friends members shared that attendees learned about fundraising strategies, 501(c)(3) formation, governance structures, and community outreach. The Masonville Cove Friends group is currently reviewing shared board descriptions and bylaws from Patuxent as a model for its development. Ms. Fisher emphasized that Friends members can share their skills or contribute their time flexibly, as little or as much as they’d like. She noted that Friends can also contribute by choosing to share their skills as gardeners, organizers, artists, or educators, and intergenerational and neighborhood engagement is key to the group’s success.

MPA will also submit a Chesapeake WILD grant application, a collaborative effort between Masonville Cove and the Friends of Hart-Miller Island, to secure funding for a shared Friends Coordinator. This grant would support Friends group leadership and event development, with possible funding for dual staffing between the two refuge sites. Dr. Parker noted that the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation specifically encouraged Masonville Cove to apply due to past success, and the application was being finalized ahead of the May 16th deadline.

The Friends group also hosted a rescheduled Celebrate Trails event on May 17, featuring activities such

as nature walks, music, and a partner meet-and-greet. Participants were encouraged to bring their ideas for community-based projects and learn how to get involved in these initiatives. Flyers and a QR code were distributed to join the mailing list and access further information.

4.0 Partnership Updates

National Aquarium (NA)

Greg Atkin, NA

Mx. Atkin reported recent conservation, education, and community events led by the NA. The City Nature Challenge, held April 26–28, resulted in over 11,700 observations in the Baltimore area, 78% of which were research-grade, thanks in large part to community efforts. NA's long-term partnership with Templo de Alabanza y Restauración (TAYR) continues to thrive, with TAYR independently leading a successful community cleanup involving 60 participants, which removed over 300 pounds of debris. Due to changes in the political environment, Latino Conservation Day will be relocated to the Aquarium this year to ensure safety and accessibility, offering free admission and educational opportunities for TAYR and Latino community members.

Other highlights included the Teacher Mindfulness Summit, which brought together South Baltimore educators for wellness workshops and included a tour of Masonville Cove by boat on the LCF Sigsbee. Masonville Cove alumni Ms. Sharon Dorsey helped facilitate the summit and was instrumental to the event's success. The Aquarium's Terrapin Education and Research Partnership (TERP) program participants also released turtles at Poplar Island. Mx. Atkin also highlighted the career development program for local workforce groups, in partnership with the Climate Crew Network and Grow Home, which was held at Masonville Cove on May 7th.

Living Classrooms Foundation (LCF)

Grace DeLuca, LCF

Ms. DeLuca reported LCF updates, highlighting a busy spring season of programming at Masonville Cove. Since the March meeting, over 650 students have visited Masonville Cove for field trips. LCF continues to deliver the SLURRP (Students Learning Urban Runoff Reduction Program) curriculum to local students at Lakeland Elementary Middle School, teaching students about stormwater pollution through in-class sessions and action projects. Fifth graders are planning a schoolyard cleanup, while fourth graders will decorate local storm drains to raise awareness.

Throughout April, LCF organized shoreline cleanups around Earth Day, collecting over 470 pounds of trash with the help of volunteers, including corporate volunteer groups and school groups. Outreach efforts have reached over 400 students across city schools, with staff traveling to classrooms when transportation is a barrier to access. Educational topics for these programs included bird biology, urban heat island effects, and the general ecology of the Chesapeake Bay.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)

Dr. Ela-Sita Carpenter, USFWS

Dr. Parker delivered USFWS updates on behalf of Dr. Carpenter. Masonville Cove's third year of bird banding studies has seen continued success, with rare sightings recently including yellow warblers and grasshopper sparrows. The banding station has seen continued outreach success, including engagement with Bowie State University students and interpretive sessions with Stillmeadow Community Fellowship and the Master Gardener training group.

Wildlife updates included the continued monitoring of the proposed listing of the monarch butterfly as a threatened species, with public comments due May 19th, and the Masonville Cove bald eagles. Masonville Cove remains a key site for pollinator and monarch conservation efforts, including monarch tagging and

habitat restoration. Dr. Carpenter confirmed that Masonville's resident bald eagle pair successfully hatched one eaglet this year, which is expected to fledge in June. Upcoming community engagement opportunities include World Migratory Bird Day on May 10th, a First Friday Pollinator and Fishing program on July 11th, and continued support for the Masonville Cove Links WildSTEM internship program, which will run through August. Mx. Atkin also shared that USFWS and NA collaborated to develop a new interpretative poster on ospreys in an ongoing partnership with the Johns Hopkins University medical illustration program, and committee members saw a draft of the poster, which highlights how ospreys use restored habitats like Masonville Cove.

5.0 Workshop & Discussion

Dr. Parker facilitated a follow-up discussion based on feedback from the previous workshop session, and the members divided into groups to discuss priorities and requests for updates before reconvening. Participants reiterated the **need for more community speakers, interactive sessions, history-focused programming, and discussions, as well as reduced presentation density to facilitate more active collaboration in meetings.** Activities **before, during, or after the MCAC meetings** for participants were also discussed, including **nature walks.** Additional requests included **guest speakers from external agencies, expanded support for Friends of Masonville Cove, and the involvement of government officials in future meetings and field trips.** These results will inform the structure and content of **future MCAC meetings.** MCAC members were encouraged to attend partner meetings, provide letters of support for upcoming grant applications, and share meeting slides and partner flyers for programs.

Dr. Parker and Ms. Fisher closed the meeting with a reminder of the upcoming May events, including a free yoga retreat, a plant-based tie-dye workshop, and the Black Birders Week bird banding and walk.

6.0 Adjournment

The meeting concluded at 7:30 pm. The next MCAC meeting is scheduled for **August 5th, 2025.**