

**SUMMARY OF THE
MASONVILLE CITIZENS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING (MCAC)
May 14, 2024, 5:30 PM - Hybrid Meeting**

Attendees:

Action Baybrook: Kevin Hodges
Angie Ashley Consulting: Angie Ashley
Baltimore Bird Club: Nancy O'Hara
Benjamin Franklin High School: Ashley Winter
Canton Kayak Club: Ray Scurr
Curtis Bay Resident: Rodette Jones
Chesapeake Bay Association: Frank Neighoff
Chesapeake Climate and Conservation Corps: Julia Moya
Dartmouth College, Environmental Anthropology PhD Candidate: Alexandria Casteel
Friends of Masonville Cove: Ralinda Wimbush
Kramer & Associates: Andrew Bing
Living Classrooms Foundation (LCF): Lorraine Warnick
Maryland Geological Survey: Anna Gilmor
Maryland Port Administration (MPA): Bertrand Djiki, Katrina Jones, Holly Miller
Maryland Environmental Service (MES): Matias Orrego
MCAC Chair: Anita Kestel
MedStar Harbor Hospital: Brian Grey
National Aquarium (NA): Swathi Ayyagari
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development: Thea Becton
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS): Dr. Ela-Sita Carpenter

Action Items:

- Mr. Bing will share recent traffic concerns voiced by community members with the MCC project team.
- Ms. Ayyagari will share the NA Community Engagement Survey link with Ms. Ashley and the MCAC to share with local community members.
- Ms. Ashley will provide the LCF summer program flyer to MCAC members to share with interested community members.

1.0 Welcome and Introductions

**Angie Ashley, Facilitator
Anita Kestel, MCAC Chair**

All meeting materials can be found here: [MCAC – Google Drive](#). Ms. Ashley and Ms. Kestel convened the meeting. The Committee unanimously approved the March 5, 2024 MCAC meeting summary. It was noted that all March 2024 meeting action items were completed or will be completed during this meeting.

2.0 Harbor Development Updates

**Holly Miller, MPA
Bertrand Djiki, MPA**

Ms. Miller presented updates on the Key Bridge response, which the MPA is heavily involved in. MPA appreciates everyone's continued patience and support during this challenging time. Teams are working around the clock to manage this unimaginable situation, and responses to other items may be delayed.

As of May 7th, the Unified Command salvage team has located all six individuals missing since the bridge collapse. MPA extends their deepest sympathies to the families affected by this tragedy. MPA

continues to collaborate closely with the Unified Command under the leadership of MPA's new Executive Director, Mr. Jonathan Daniels, who joined a month before the collapse and has been an exceptional leader during this crisis.

The Port of Baltimore (POB) is crucial to Maryland's economy, and the Unified Command is diligently working with federal, state, and local partners to clear and reopen the navigation channels to restore Port operations as quickly as possible. Recently, the Unified Command team used precision charges to cut the remaining spans draped over the bow of the Dali. Initial observations confirmed the charges were effective, with the span separating as intended. Comprehensive surveys, underwater imaging scans, and diver assessments are ongoing to confirm the success of these operations. The final removal date of the Dali will be determined shortly. Meanwhile, the Fort McHenry limited access channel will reopen for commercial vessel traffic nightly, unless salvage operations require otherwise. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers aims to reopen the permanent 50-foot channel by June 1st, restoring normal capacity for the POB, and are on track to meet this target. For updates on the Key Bridge response, please visit www.keybridgeresponse2024.com.

In response to a question from Ms. Rodette Jones, Ms. Miller stated that the Dali will be moved to a berth within the POB, although the specific location has yet to be determined. The cargo may not be removed immediately, as there are many assessments to be done. Due to ongoing investigations, the ship will remain docked as long as it can float.

Ms. Rodette Jones also inquired about the resumption of commercial cruise ship operations. Ms. Miller confirmed that cruise terminal operations are planned to resume on June 29th. The channel is currently open and can receive cruise vessels, but the cruise industry is taking some time to reschedule. The efforts of hundreds of people to reopen the channel and resume normal activities have been extensive and highlight the impressive collaboration among federal, state, and local partners.

Ms. Miller shared updates on upcoming MPA-sponsored events in Baltimore and at Masonville Cove:

- Captain Trash Wheel's Sixth Birthday Celebration: Captain Trash Wheel's sixth birthday will be celebrated on Friday, June 7th at Masonville Cove. The event will feature cupcakes, a bounce house, snacks, and various fun activities. Everyone is invited to join the festivities.
- National Maritime Day Observance: On Sunday, May 19th, the POB will host open houses on the historic liberty ship John W. Brown and the nuclear ship Savannah from 10 AM to 4 PM, with the last boarding at 3 PM. The Baltimore Port Alliance will hold a ceremony aboard the Savannah at 11:30 AM, featuring an address by MPA Executive Director Mr. Johnathan Daniels.
- Spring Bird Banding Days: Multiple bird banding sessions are scheduled with dates available on the Masonville Cove Partnership website. Participants can reserve spots to participate in and/or view bird banding activities. This initiative, led by Birds of Urban Baltimore (BUrB), allows people to see bird banding up close and understand the importance of urban green spaces for migrating birds.

3.0 Masonville Construction Update

Bertrand Djiki, MPA

Mr. Djiki shared updates on the construction and dike-raising projects at Masonville. In 2023, several dredging projects were completed with inflow to the Masonville DMCF(). The projects consisted of 21,900 cubic yards (cy) from Seagirt Berth 3 Pocket Phase One, 18,786 cy from Seagirt Berth 3 Pocket Phase Two, and 23,500 cy from Dundalk Marine Terminal Berth 3 reconstruction. 2024 inflow projects completed thus far include 5,173 cy from Consol Energy and 76,545 cy from Tradepoint Atlantic.

The DMCF, initially built in 2010 to elevation +10' mean lower low water (MLLW) and was raised from +10 feet to +18 feet in 2021. The current project aims to further raise the dike to +30' using a new steep slope design. The design was completed in November 2022, and construction began in November 2023, with plans to eventually raise the dike to +42' with a capacity of 10.4 million cy (mcy). The project is divided into two phases, with Phase A focused on improving drainage and infrastructure around the southern dike; and Phase B involves raising the entire perimeter dike to +30'. Phase A is nearly complete and is expected to be finished by July 2024, ahead of the originally planned August completion date.

Once Phase A is completed, the team will move to Phase B. This phase includes foundation stabilization using block wall and access road support, allowing site operations to continue during and after construction. The dike raising is designed with a steep slope using the mechanically stabilized earth (MSE) wall technique to reduce construction material costs. This expansion will provide an additional 10 to 15 years of dredged material storage. The current phase is scheduled to be completed by the first quarter of 2026.

In response to an inquiry from Ms. Rodette Jones regarding the factors involved in selecting the final dike height, Mr. Djiki and Ms. Miller confirmed that the final height of +42' will match the elevation of the adjacent marine terminal, allowing the site to be used as terminal space in the future. Ms. O'Hara asked if the blocks used as a part of the dike-raising stabilization would be those developed by the innovative reuse (IR) research and development (R&D) contractors. Mr. Djiki stated that the dredged material blocks created as a part of an IR R&D project do not yet meet the specifications for this project but hopes that they will in the future.

Mr. Djiki shared updates on tidal wetland mitigation projects in Masonville Cove's Access Zone 2, which began in 2018. Initially, the wetland had issues with water migration, which prevented trees and grass growth as intended. However, through a redesign and hydrology study, improvements were made to facilitate proper water migration that supports wetland vegetation. Emergent planting was completed in May 2024, and final seeding will follow. The project will undergo an MDE inspection this summer, to ensure the wetland meets its intended purpose and performs effectively.

3.0 Masonville Cove Connector (MCC)

Andrew Bing, Kramer & Associates

Mr. Bing provided an update on the MCC project, aiming to ensure safe, convenient, and equitable access to Masonville Cove.

During the first phase of outreach, the MCC team received 147 completed surveys, showing overwhelming support for the MCC. The focus now is on refining the concept based on feedback. The project team, in consultation with MPA leadership, narrowed the initial eight design concepts to four. These refined concepts were shared in a brochure for further review and consideration. Concepts three, four, seven, and eight have all been retained as viable options for further review. Concepts one and five, which featured just a single lane of traffic in each direction, were deemed too drastic a change and eliminated. Concepts two and six, similar to three and seven, were also removed from consideration.

The remaining concepts include two options on the north side of Frankfurst Avenue, where the project is currently located, and two on the south side. These options feature both four-lane and two-lane designs with intermittent shoulders and turning lanes to accommodate traffic flow and access to local businesses like Vulcan Materials. The four-lane options, which would require new right-of-way and more extensive construction, are estimated to cost twice as much as the two-lane options. Traffic studies conducted in 2023 showed that Frankfurst Avenue supports under 6,000 vehicles per day, well below the 15,000 vehicle threshold recommended for a four-lane road. This data supports the feasibility of reducing the road to two lanes while maintaining sufficient capacity for future traffic growth. Further community feedback will help determine which concept to advance, ensuring the project meets local needs and preferences.

Upcoming projects along Frankfurst Ave., including the Maryland Transportation Authority toll reconfiguration project, also favor the two-lane concepts since they will alter access ramps to I-895 and include a new traffic light at the entrance of Masonville Cove, facilitating safer pedestrian crossing. Another advantage of placing the MCC on the south side of Frankfurst Ave. is the minimal number of driveways, reducing conflict points for pedestrians and cyclists. This side features only one low-traffic driveway, compared to the north side, which has multiple driveways, including the busy Vulcan Materials site. The traffic study supports the two-lane option, and the new signalized intersection will enhance safety and accessibility.

Additionally, Mr. Bing highlighted the upcoming Baltimore City Department of Public Works (DPW) sewer project, which will close two lanes of Frankfurst Ave. for two years. This project is set to begin by the end of 2024, with further details and community outreach to follow. The timing of the MCC and other MDTA projects remains tentative, particularly due to the current focus on Key Bridge repairs. Ms. Rodette Jones highlighted recent traffic caused by the increased use of the Harbor Tunnel and Child Street as a result of the Key Bridge collapse. Mr. Hodges noted that many residents avoid Frankfurst Ave. given the poor condition and potential flooding. Mr. Bing acknowledged these concerns and committed to sharing this information with the MCC project team.

Mr. Bing concluded by reiterating the MPA's commitment to improving community access to Masonville Cove and thanked the community for their support, emphasizing the importance of ongoing engagement and feedback.

4.0 Partnership Updates

National Aquarium (NA)

Swathi Ayyagari, NA

Ms. Ayyagari shared NA updates on recent and upcoming community programs including cleanups, the City Nature Challenge, the Harbor Wetland Project, summer programs, and an upcoming NA Community Engagement Survey. These efforts align with the Masonville Cove Partnership's mission of engaging local communities, promoting conservation awareness, and enhancing environmental stewardship.

The May 4th cleanup at Masonville Cove was canceled and rescheduled due to rain, but the April cleanup with Pathway Church of God and Templo de Alabanza y Restauración (TAYR) in Brooklyn was successful. The event saw 142 participants from the two congregations, repainted faded storm drains, and collected over 630 pounds of trash.

The international 2024 City Nature Challenge occurred in late April and early May, with participants using the iNaturalist app to record and identify various species. Baltimore's efforts contributed to over

10,000 observations and 1,000 species. The global challenge winners included cities in Bolivia, Mexico, and Texas.

The NA Harbor Wetland Project, which involves creating a fabricated wetland between Piers 3 and 4 in the Inner Harbor, also began planting in May. This project aims to provide habitat for species and improve harbor water quality. The wetland will feature a bridge for visitors to view the habitat as part of the aquarium's free exhibits. The wetland will open with the aquarium's hours and have a formal opening in late summer or early fall.

Summer events include collaborations with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and MPA, hosting activities with the Brooklyn Boys and Girls Club on May 22nd and June 3rd. An exciting First Friday event is planned for August 3rd and will feature the Chesapeake Shakespeare Company performing scenes that relate to nature. Latino Conservation Day will be held on August 11th, organized in partnership with Mr. Orrego with Maryland Environmental Service and TAYR. This year's event will be held at Patapsco Valley State Park per TAYR's request to visit different parks annually.

The upcoming NA Community Engagement Survey is open and seeks feedback from visitors, Partners, and the public to understand their experiences and perceptions of NA. Participants can win a family membership. The survey takes 10-15 minutes and can be completed by individuals and partner organizations. Ms. Ayyagari will share the NA Community Engagement Survey link with Ms. Ashley and the MCAC to share with local community members.

Living Classrooms Foundation (LCF)

Angie Ashley, Angie Ashley Consulting

In 2024, over 700 students participated in LCF field trips to Masonville Cove. Support from various partners and funding from Keep Maryland Beautiful, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, and the South Baltimore Gateway Partnership have helped with the success of these programs. The South Baltimore Gateway Partnership, funded by revenue from the Horseshoe Casino, reinvests in community programs around the casino and has been a significant supporter of Masonville Cove initiatives.

New funding from the Environmental Protection Agency will facilitate educational programs for fourth, fifth, and ninth-grade students at the Masonville Cove Environmental Education Center starting this fall and continuing through the next academic year. Further details will be shared once the project commences.

Registration for summer programs are currently open. These programs are also listed on the website, and spaces are available. Sharing this information with families nearby or those interested in participating was encouraged. Unlike the grant-funded field trips, these summer programs have a fee but offer great value.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)

Dr. Ela-Sita Carpenter, USFWS

Julia Moya, USFWS CCCC

Dr. Carpenter provided USFWS updates on recent wildlife observations at Masonville Cove and events, and Ms. Moya, a USFWS Chesapeake Climate and Conservation Corps (CCCC) member, shared updates on her capstone project. Dr. Carpenter confirmed for the MCAC that the Masonville Cove eaglets failed to thrive this year due to unknown natural causes the week of April 7th. The Masonville Cove campus eagle nest limit of disturbance, regular observations, and campus restrictions were maintained throughout the nesting season. Dr. Carpenter confirmed that the areas of campus impacted by the eagle nest limit of disturbance will be reopening soon for public use.

Recent and upcoming programs included a spring mammal survey with the Weeds to Woods group. The program supported outdoor workforce professional development efforts led by the group and taught participants skills for mammal tracking and wildlife camera setup. Outreach efforts also included BenFest at Benjamin Franklin High School and the Imagination Celebration at the Brooklyn Branch Enoch Pratt Free Library. Dr. Carpenter shared that BURB will lead events with USFWS, including the bird banding station as an official National Black Birders Week program on May 31st and June 1st. Registration is available online.

Ms. Moya presented her capstone project for the CCCC which will create a container pollinator garden at Masonville Cove, inspired by interest in native plants expressed by community members. The project will utilize space at Masonville Cove for the pollinator garden, consisting of approximately 30 seven-gallon containers. This will promote accessibility to pollinator projects for local residents with limited space to accommodate a garden and will offer inspiration for planting. The planting event is scheduled for June 29th, and the project seeks to demonstrate that even small spaces can support native plants and contribute to conservation efforts. The containers and plants will be donated by the U.S. Geological Survey Bee Lab at the Patuxent Wildlife Research Refuge. The project is funded by a \$772 mini-grant from the Chesapeake Bay Trust, with potential additional support from the USFWS. The funding covers containers, soil, banners, signs, and refreshments for the event. Maintenance of the garden will be supported by LCF, with potential involvement from volunteers, students, and the Friends of Masonville Cove group.

Ms. Moya invited feedback on plant selection, emphasizing the need for a variety of species that bloom throughout the year to attract different wildlife. Participants suggested incorporating ranging colors and considering plants that attract specific pollinators. The attendees provided recommendations of Blue Vervain, Eastern Red Columbine, Yellow Indian Grass, native Echinacea Angustifolia, and Narrow-Leaved Purple Coneflower. The discussion included potential plant species, blooming periods, and how the project could serve as a model for urban conservation efforts.

To engage residents in the planting event, Ms. Moya sought suggestions on outreach strategies. Ms. Katrina Jones suggested leveraging existing community relationships, such as those with the Brooklyn and Curtis Bay community organizations or the Boys and Girls Club. Ms. Thea Becton suggested connecting with the Housing Authority of Baltimore City. Participants also suggested several outreach methods, including flyers, Masonville Cove's social media, and partnering with local libraries and community events. Additional recommendations were made to consider wildlife cameras to aid in monitoring pollinators. In response to a question from Ms. Ayyagari, Ms. Moya confirmed that there will be containers or plants for planting event participants to take home.

Maryland Port Administration (MPA)

Katrina Jones, MPA

Ms. Katrina Jones shared updates on the upcoming Youth Birding Week programs led by MPA at Masonville Cove, which has grown in popularity and is now fully booked for both weeks. The first camp, for ages 8-11, runs the week of July 8th and includes activities at Masonville Cove and visits to restored habitat by MPA. The second camp, for ages 12-15, takes place the week of July 22nd and follows a similar format. These camps offer engaging educational experiences related to Maryland's environment and birds, with resounding praise from participants, including several participants returning for this year's program.

5.0 Adjournment

The meeting concluded at 7:30 pm. The next MCAC meeting is scheduled for September 3rd, 2024.