



STAFFORD COUNTY WETLANDS BOARD

Meeting Minutes

Monday, September 18, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.

Board Chambers | George L. Gordon Government Center

A. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chair Henderson

B. Roll Call

Members Present: Sue Henderson (Chair), Mary Rust (Vice-Chair), Anthony Pineau, Dan Adams, and Benjamin Rudasill

Members Absent: Robert Hayden

Staff Present: Joe Fiorello, Emily Torrey, and Savannah Carabin

C. Determination of a Quorum

A quorum was established with 5 of the 6 members present.

D. Approval of Minutes

Ms. Henderson asked if anyone had any discussions or comments regarding the minutes and mentioned that they were included in the meeting package. Mr. Rudasill made a motion to approve the minutes, and Mr. Pineau seconded the motion. Ms. Henderson inquired if anyone had any comments. All attendees expressed their agreement, and the meeting minutes from January 30, 2023 were approved unanimously.

E. New Business

Ms. Henderson opened the floor for the public hearing for permit number 23155224. Mr. Joe Fiorello, an environmental planner and Board Liaison for Stafford County Department of Development Services, began his staff report. Ms. Henderson noted that Mrs. Rust recused herself from the conversation. Mr. Fiorello outlined the agenda, focusing on the Rust application and its resolution for VMRC permit application number 23-1736, which pertained to the Rust Revetment.

He provided an overview of the criteria for granting the permit, emphasizing the anticipated public and private benefits, conformance to standards, and adherence to the purpose and intent of the relevant



code. The application, VMRC 23-1736, aimed to install a 112-linear-foot riprap revetment along the Potomac River shoreline, specifically at 921 Brent Point Road. The purpose was to combat natural erosion caused by wave action over the years.

Mr. Fiorello presented details of the proposed revetment, including its dimensions and the impact on vegetated tidal wetlands. The loss of wetlands would be compensated through in lieu fees of \$980 to be paid to Stafford County. The location of the property was described as surrounded by Widewater State Park. The presentation included visuals depicting the proposed riprap revetment, its proximity to wetlands, and cross-sectional views.

The staff report concluded with a summary of the proposed project, emphasizing its intention to halt erosion and the acceptance of a \$980 fee for the loss of wetlands. This marked the conclusion of the staff's presentation on the Rust application.

Ms. Henderson opened the floor for presentations from the public. Mr. Jim Beck, the engineer for the project, commended the staff on their coverage of the Rust application and offered to answer any questions. Ms. Henderson then invited comments or questions from the board members.

Ms. Henderson specifically mentioned a query from the VIMS (Virginia Institute of Marine Science) report regarding the timing of replanting after the project. Mr. Beck explained the preference for allowing natural vegetation to take over and highlighted the challenges of planting in the current mudflat conditions.

Ms. Henderson inquired about the timeline for completing the project before winter, and Mr. Beck expressed the desire to proceed shortly. The discussion touched upon the natural timing for replanting.

Mr. Jeff Madden, representing the Virginia Marine Resources Commission, drew attention to the VIMS report, emphasizing the importance of avoiding encroachment upon vegetated wetlands. He mentioned the observation of vegetated wetlands during the site visit and stressed the need to ensure no net loss of such wetlands.

Ms. Henderson thanked Mr. Madden for his comments, and with no further questions from the board, she sought a motion regarding the resolution (WB-2301) for the wetlands permit. Mr. Rudasill made a



motion to accept WB-2301, which was seconded by Mr. Adams. Ms. Henderson then called for a vote, and the resolution was approved, allowing the installation of a 112-linear-foot riprap impacting 112 square feet of non-vegetated tidal wetlands along the Potomac River at the specified location (tax map parcel ID 41-1A). The motion was carried with unanimous approval from the board members.

F. Old Business

Ms. Henderson addressed the old business items, particularly focusing on the discussion about the website. Ms. Torrey reported that there had been no updates to the website since the last meeting, which prompted Ms. Henderson to express her dissatisfaction with the perceived delay. She emphasized the need to make the website a higher priority and sought ways to encourage the county to allocate more resources to this task.

Ms. Torrey explained that staff resources were limited, running nine programs, making it challenging to allocate staff for website updates. Ms. Henderson inquired about the involvement of the public relations department in the county, to which Ms. Torrey clarified that they were not engaged in the conversation. Ms. Torrey pointed out that technical expertise had to come from within the department.

Ms. Henderson, looking for solutions, asked for suggestions beyond waiting for additional staffing. Mr. Pineau suggested bringing the matter to the attention of Mr. Santay, in charge of development services, to explore the possibility of hiring additional staff for website development. Ms. Henderson welcomed this idea, seeking information that could assist in presenting the case effectively.

Discussion ensued about the technical aspects of website updates, with Ms. Torrey explaining the process of writing content and then having it posted by another staff member. Mr. Fiorello added that staff was responsible for conducting research before updating the website.

Ms. Henderson raised the possibility of outsourcing or utilizing existing state resources to expedite the website updates. She suggested guiding the public towards already available state resources relevant to the environmental division's work. Ms. Torrey acknowledged the usefulness of existing resources and agreed that linking to them could be a practical approach once they could update the website.



Mr. Pineau provided observations and recommendations related to the content on the website. He highlighted broken links under the Resources section, specifically regarding Virginia erosion and sediment control, and suggested fixing the links to provide accurate information. Additionally, he pointed out the lack of FAQ content under environmental services and recommended adding frequently asked questions that citizens might have.

Ms. Torrey acknowledged Mr. Pineau's observations and assured him that the broken links could be fixed easily. She also agreed with the suggestion to add FAQ content to the website. The discussion continued with Mr. Pineau addressing grammatical errors in the listings related to shoreline erosion solutions, specifically the use of "and" before "bulkheads."

Following this, Ms. Henderson sought Mr. Madden's observations, who mentioned that VMRC faced similar issues and recommended utilizing interns, particularly from IT departments, to assist in updating the website and collating information.

The conversation shifted to funding discussions related to public outreach. Ms. Henderson mentioned a previous discussion about a sum of money that could only be used for public outreach or public properties, possibly penalty fees. Mr. Fiorello clarified that this fund was the in lieu fee fund, designated for wetland mitigation. Ms. Henderson expressed interest in exploring ways to use these funds for broader public outreach purposes, and Mr. Fiorello agreed to look into whether the fund's restrictions could be changed.

Ms. Torrey explained that in lieu fees were state-regulated and could only be used for wetland mitigation. She suggested exploring other funding options like review fees for potential public outreach initiatives. Ms. Henderson emphasized the need to include public outreach funds in the budget discussions and suggested using the in-progress rack card for distribution.

Ms. Carabin shared the completed rack card design, featuring a QR code linking to the environmental division's webpage. She mentioned plans to distribute it in the Community Development Services Center, and Ms. Henderson suggested involving the public relations department for wider distribution through social media.



Mr. Pineau raised a question about using in lieu fees to create wetlands in neighboring jurisdictions, and Ms. Torrey agreed to review the ordinance to provide more information on this possibility. The discussion concluded with Ms. Henderson suggesting potential locations for wetland creation, including Chopawamsic Island and Falmouth Park, and Mr. Fiorello expressing the need to carefully consider the limitations and regulations associated with these funds.

Mr. Madden provided additional information about the ongoing work at VMRC regarding the identification of the fall line. He explained that they are mapping the fall line, which represents the upper extent of tidal influence, and users will be able to determine whether a site is tidally influenced by clicking on a location on the VMRC site. He mentioned the example of the fall line for the Rappahannock River in Fredericksburg.

G. Chairman's Report

Ms. Henderson shared information about a recent study conducted by the Corps of Engineers for the city of Fredericksburg, covering the entire stretch from above Culpeper. She suggested that this study might aid in determining wetlands in the area.

The discussion then shifted to the progress on the rack card, with Ms. Henderson expressing satisfaction that staff is moving forward on it. She also suggested writing a letter to Mr. Santay to prioritize the ongoing discussions and decisions related to the committee's issues.

Mr. Pineau brought up the need for more maps and graphics on the website, specifically mentioning a map that identifies the locations of bulkheads and sandy beaches. Ms. Henderson agreed and recommended linking to a user-oriented GIS map created by VIMS or VMRC, showcasing the impact of storms and sea-level rise.

The conversation concluded with Mr. Fiorello providing an update on Chesapeake Bay violations. He reported four complaints of Chesapeake Bay violations since the last meeting, with three related to RPA violations along Benton Farm Drive. Mr. Fiorello explained that he was working with the homeowners to address these issues administratively.



Ms. Henderson expressed satisfaction with the low number of violations and requested a periodic report on complaints and resolutions. Mr. Fiorello agreed to provide such reports, suggesting monthly updates and offering to include them in staff reports during meetings. The section ended with an agreement to have regular updates on the status of complaints and resolutions.

H. Staff Report

The staff report was addressed in remarks to the chairman's report.

I. Adjournment

With no further business to discuss, Mr. Adams made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Ms. Rust. The Wetlands Board meeting adjourned at 6:56 p.m.