



Citizens Advisory Committee
DRAFT Meeting Minutes
Sept 16-17, 2020
Virtual Meeting (Zoom)

CAC Members Present: John Dawes, Bill Dickinson, Matt Ehrhart (CAC Chair), Verna Harrison, Charles Herrick, Ann Jurczyk, Anna Killius, Julie Lawson, David Lillard, Mike Lovegreen, Joe Maroon, Bill Matuszeski, Charlie Stek, Kendall Tyree, and CAC Staff Jessica Blackburn and Adam Bray

Speakers/Guests Present: Jim Edward, Raul Gonzalez, Wendy O'Sullivan, Tuana Philips, Jennifer Starr, Kathy Stecker, Patrick Thompson, Bo Williams

Meeting presentations and materials are located at:

https://www.chesapeakebay.net/what/event/citizens_advisory_committee_quarterly_meeting_september_2020

Wednesday, Sept 16, 2020

The CAC Chair, Matt Ehrhart, called the meeting to order at 10:01 AM. He welcomed members and gave an overview of the agenda, the afternoon's panel webinar and highlighted the meeting's goal: to foster a deeper understanding of the connections between environmental quality and public health.

CAC Business Meeting

CAC voted to adopt the draft May 2020 meeting minutes as submitted. The CAC chair opened the floor for discussion regarding officer elections which will take place during the December meeting. Matt will be rotating off from his position as Chair and Julie will be running for that position. This leaves an opening for Vice Chair. If CAC members are interested in this position, they are encouraged to contact Matt with any questions. CAC will also be re-evaluating its subcommittee structure to explore opportunities to be more effective, as well as determining subcommittee leaders. Matt proposed dates for **2021 CAC meetings (Feb 25-26, May 19-20, Sept 16-17, and Dec 1-2)** and they were provisionally approved by the group.

Officers briefed CAC on their recent participation in Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP) meetings. The 2020 Chesapeake Executive Council meeting ([YouTube link](#)) took place on August 18th. Dr. Underwood, Chief Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer of Virginia, gave the keynote and spoke about the need to incorporate environmental justice throughout Bay Program work. During the meeting, Gov. Northam was elected EC Chair and the council adopted a [DEIJ \(Diversity,](#)

[Equity, Inclusion and Justice\) Statement](#). CAC members expressed their frustration that some Council members did not attend and that no real updates were given regarding 2025 restoration goals. Matt and Julie updated CAC on the recent Principals' Staff Committee (PSC) meetings and the conversations that led to the DEIJ Strategy, Action Plan and the statement that the EC endorsed. Matt is representing CAC on the BMP Verification Action Team. This team will initially focus on the issue of credit duration and partial credit for practices. Julie is representing CAC on a new Plastics Pollution Action Team. Matt announced that Chanté Coleman and Jorge Ribas have stepped down from CAC. There are currently several CAC vacancies. If anyone has recommendations for nominees they should send them to Jess and Adam. Staff agreed to send around a matrix of current member affiliations with a reminder for candidate recommendations.

Chesapeake Bay Program's DEIJ Strategy and PSC Action Plan

Wendy O'Sullivan, Vice-Chair, Diversity Workgroup, National Park Service

Jim Edward, Chair, Diversity Workgroup, EPA Chesapeake Bay Program

Wendy highlighted the three documents that will guide DEIJ in CBP work – the CBP DEIJ Strategy, Executive Council DEIJ Statement, and the PSC DEIJ Action Statement. The strategy document was developed by a contractor, Skeo Solutions, and features 20 broad recommendations and 48 detailed actions that will grow racial and ethnic diversity in the CBP from 13% to 25%. The actions also include providing partners with resources and helping them develop DEIJ leaders. The CBP DEIJ Statement was signed at the August Executive Council meeting. Wendy said that CAC's report to the EC that strongly supported the endorsement of the DEIJ Statement was helpful in making it happen. The Action Statement openly endorses the Diversity Strategic Plan and includes five commitments. One of these is to explore the creation of a community advisory board that could potentially be part of CAC or LGAC.

Discussion: Jim led a discussion with CAC on the action statement and the five commitments. Members discussed how this plan intersects with state environmental justice commissions and regional diversity initiatives. CAC discussed the advantages and disadvantages of the community board being connected to CAC and decided to take up the topic in more depth the next day.

Webinar: Bridging the Gaps between Environmental Quality and Public Health

Members participated in a [panel webinar](#) hosted and organized by CAC. The webinar featured an expert panel and aimed to foster a deeper understanding of the connections between environmental quality and public health. The webinar had 165 registrants and the [recording is available online](#).

Thursday, Sept 17, 2020

The CAC Chair, Matt Ehrhart, reconvened the meeting at 1:00 PM. The meeting began with members break-out sessions to discuss the previous day's webinar and possible follow-up actions. Representatives from the smaller groups reported back to the full group about their conversations. Members reflected on the importance of focusing on justice and the need to lead with human health in restoration efforts, instead of it being an afterthought. Members were pleased with the public nature of the webinar and expressed interest in hosting additional webinars in the future. Action items included creating a follow-up document that outlines the lessons learned and creating a summary of the resources mentioned. Chuck volunteered to help create this summary document.

Chesapeake Bay Program Updates

Jim Edward, Chair, Diversity Workgroup, EPA Chesapeake Bay Program

Jim updated CAC about progress in meeting the 2025 targets, the Conowingo WIP and the most effective basins funding allocation methodology. WV and DC are the only jurisdictions meeting all of their reduction goals. None of the other jurisdictions are meeting their nitrogen targets. MD and VA are also behind on their phosphorus and New York is behind in its sediment targets. In total, the watershed is only at 32% of its nitrogen goals so that is where there will be the most focus. For PA, Jim said the EPA will be providing as much technical assistance as possible. For oversight, they are also now meeting with PA quarterly to discuss progress and requiring quarterly written updates.

Jim relayed that the PSC's Conowingo Steering Committee approved their preferred implementation strategy and that it would cost ~\$53.3M per year. The majority of work will take place in PA and focus on natural filters (wetland restoration and forest buffers), sustainable farm practices, and nutrient reduction practices.

Jim also outlined the methodology for allocating funding for most effective basins. He explained that load effectiveness is a measure of the ability of management practices to have a positive effect on dissolved oxygen in the Bay. The top 125 basins identified as "most effective" will receive funding for the most cost effective agricultural BMPs that lead to nitrogen reduction.

Wastewater Epidemiology and COVID-19

Dr. Raul Gonzalez, Environmental Scientist, Hampton Roads Sanitation District

Dr. Raul Gonzalez briefed CAC on his work at the Hampton Roads Sanitation District's (HRSD) Pathogen Program. HRSD's mission is to protect public health and the waters of Hampton Roads by treating wastewater effectively. Raul explained that his COVID-19 surveillance work is part of their public health focus. Wastewater-based epidemiology has allowed researchers to observe community-level trends through bio-markers in raw wastewater and has been used in the past to

track and measure pharmaceuticals, illicit drugs, industrial chemicals and other diseases and contaminants.

By tracking COVID-19, Raul and his colleagues have been able to describe trends of the virus in wastewater and show how wastewater can be a leading indicator of COVID-19 cases. Through their analysis, they are able to detect COVID in the wastewater a week before it appears in clinics because of the delay between contracting the virus and showing symptoms. Raul discussed how this data can show trends in large population centers but can also be used for targeted small-scale monitoring in specific buildings like hotels and college dorms to see where and when viruses are spreading.

Discussion: CAC Members discussed the practical implications for scaling waste-water monitoring. Raul explained that it is possible to do surveillance at the building-level but requires a lot of funding and resources. He said that partnering with the CDC to target high priority areas that are more susceptible to community spread would generate a lot of useful data. Members inquired about the types of labs needed to conduct this research and analysis. Raul said that HRSD has a molecular biology lab and does this work in-house and that most waste-water treatment plants should be able to do the same with adequate training and resources. He said the difficult part is interpretation of the data. Third-party labs can charge a lot per sample so it will be more cost effective if treatment plants do it themselves.

CAC Reflection, Discussion and Action Items

CAC discussed topics and strategy for its upcoming Zoom meeting with Governor Northam. Members wanted to use this opportunity to raise issues that CAC is currently focused on, including public health, accountability and progress towards the 2025 Watershed Agreement goals, and the Conowingo WIP and financing strategy.

CAC also discussed the DEIJ Action Plan and members offered thoughts on the Community Advisory Board. CAC members agreed that the Advisory Board should be separate from CAC and LGAC, and there was strong support for a hybrid model where individuals would participate in both CAC and the Advisory Board. CAC felt it was important that the Advisory Board be independent and have seats at the table for all functions of the partnerships in order to be most impactful.

Following up from the panel webinar, CAC agreed to create a written synopsis of lessons learned during the webinar and to review [the recording of the webinar](#) and indicate meaningful clips to be used for future educational videos and promotional videos for citizen science and other major themes from the panel discussion. Members also wanted an appendix to the written resources that listed all of the resources and research mentioned by presenters during the panel.

Jess shared her ideas regarding future CAC webinars and how they can enhance members' learning in order to be more effective in responding to Bay Program policy decisions. The recordings of these webinars will also help with onboarding of new CAC members.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4pm.