

ELMS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
10:30 A.M. October 20, 2010
Minutes

Members present were Derick Berlage, Kim Howe on behalf of Brad Clements, Charles Ray Cameron, Sandi Patty on behalf of Pete Dunbar, Phil Rollins, and David Heilmier.

Members excused were Dr. Robert Paul, Steve Riley, and David Gailey.

Others present were Margarita Rochow, Elms Environmental Center; Tyrone Harris, Park Operations; Niles Primrose, DNR-PPRP; and Gayle Moreland, DNR-PPRP.

Mr. Berlage called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m. and asked for additions or amendments to the agenda.

I. Approval of Minutes – 5/19/10

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of 5/19/10 as presented. The motion passed without opposition.

II. New Business

a. Introduction of New Member

Mr. Cameron stated he has been in St. Mary's County all his life. Mr. Cameron stated he has worked for the Navy for 40 years and is very involved with encroachment issues and planning for the base. Mr. Cameron stated he is looking forward to serving on this committee. The Committee members welcomed Mr. Cameron. Mr. Berlage gave a brief overview of the Committee's functions and goals.

III. Unfinished Business

a. Update on By-Laws

Mr. Berlage stated he would have Ms. Stuckert email the final version of the by-laws to the members for a final review. Mr. Berlage stated if there are no additional additions or amendments he will schedule them to go before the County Commissioners for approval. It was the consensus of the Committee to move forward as discussed above.

b. Update from Power Plant Research Division

Mr. Primrose stated PPRP received a proposal over the summer from a developer who would like to put in a four (4) mega watt solar facility on the twenty (20) acre parcel where the old houses are currently located. Mr. Primrose stated we are working closely with the developer and SMECO to gain all the applicable information necessary to move this proposal forward. Mr. Primrose stated if everything goes well the negotiations should be done by next spring and if this in fact comes to fruition construction of the plant will happen very quickly. Mr. Primrose stated no construction will take place in the Critical Area and some of the cultural resources will have to be investigated. Mr. Berlage asked at what point this information would be released to the public for input. Mr. Primrose stated he would like to have DNR's final approval prior to gathering public input however he is sure the developer would be willing to come down and give a presentation.

c. Update from Wildlife & Heritage Division

Mr. Heilmier stated the Wildlife & Heritage Division is working in a cooperative effort with the County to reclaim the parking area on Bay Forrest Road. Mr. Heilmier stated he shares a concern with Mr. Rollins regarding the parking area for the new 85 acre site which will be used for bow hunting. Mr. Heilmier stated originally one parking area was to be shared amongst the bow hunting only portion of the property and the combined wildlife management area. Mr. Heilmier stated we have now reclaimed the old parking lot on Back Door Road to be utilized for the bow hunting area only.

It was asked if there is a way to track users of the property. Mr. Heilmier stated the Elms Management Plan requires the Wildlife & Heritage Division to track the usage by hunters but not the general public. It was asked if the bow hunting area is clearly marked. Mr. Heilmier stated yes, it has been clearly marked with fly tape. Mr. Rollins stated there are also "Bow Hunting Only" signs throughout the area. Mr. Rollins stated the Board of Education staff marked the area between the County Lease Line and the School area as well.

d. Update from Forestry Service

There is no update at this time.

e. Update from Land Use & Growth Management

There is no update at this time.

f. Update from Schools

Ms. Howe stated we are in the process of finding monies to implement the educational plan we have for the Elms. Ms. Howe stated our next step is to implement the plan in which we will need Critical Area approval therefore we are looking into grant monies. Ms. Howe stated we are hoping to get the Critical Area Management Plan to Land Use and Growth Management for approval over the winter.

g. Update from Recreation and Parks

Mr. Rollins introduced Tyrone Harris, Park Operation Coordinator, and stated we have had eighteen (18) permits issues for the County hunting area. Mr. Rollins stated we monitor the sign-in sheet at the site as well as issue permits for bow hunters. Mr. Rollins stated to date we have not had any issues or problems arise on the site.

Mr. Rollins stated it was a busy summer here as this park gets a lot of use, particularly on weekends and holiday weekends. Mr. Rollins stated on holiday weekends we try to have two staff present and an off duty police officer. Mr. Rollins stated we would like to increase the size of the parking and picnic areas in the future. Mr. Harris stated on holiday weekends we are estimating between 375 and 450 people utilize this particular park, 80 to 90 on the average weekend and 10 to 15 cars every day throughout the week. Mr. Harris stated to date this fiscal year we have spent \$10,785.00 in staff and deputy's. Mr. Harris stated at this point in time we don't have any way to recoup this money. Mr. Rollins stated we will be going before the County Commissioners in the near future to ask for permission to charge a small fee. Mr. Rollins stated this was requested in the past but was not well received. Suggestions were given to charge all out-of-state vehicles a fee and Maryland residents would be free.

h. Update from Educational Center

Ms. Rochow gave an overview of the activities of the Educational Center.

IV. Next Steps

None

V. Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned at 11:45 a.m.