

Delaware Canal Advisory Committee Meeting

Silver Lake Nature Area

1306 Bath Rd, Bristol, PA 19007

10:38 AM: Call to Order

Chairman's Address & Approval of Minutes & Updates- Nick Forte

Meeting minutes approved- Additions and Corrections-

- Approved
- Thanked Bill Mitchell for having the meeting at the Silver Lake Nature Area

Director's Report- Kevin Fazzini/ John Hallas

Kevin Fazzini

- Update on the state budget
 - We do have a budget for state parks with the exception of our salaried staff
 - Far more seasonal positions as far as employment opportunities go
 - We are down 9.9% on salaried staff
 - The revenue package to support the budget has not been passed yet so that has restricted DCNR to essential spending only
 - We do not know if the original budget package will support the full budget and if they can't approve it soon, we will probably see regional restrictions
 - The legislators were very supportive of the canal and of the special funds which we rely on for projects
 - However, it wasn't the same support across the state
- Salary
 - Our salary staff are the ones that provide continuity for park operations
 - A 10% reduction in salaried staff across the state is a big deal and those staff are the ones who keep our parks operating smoothly
 - We are spread thin right now which is a big concern for us
- Strategic Plan
 - 13,000 responses from the survey.
 - 25 years since we did our last survey
 - October 31st is the last day to take the survey
 - It will be interesting to see what the public's sentiment is on how we are doing and where we go from here as far as our plan for-the-future
- DC-21
 - DCNR benefited from this conference
 - Steve Dunlop was hosted and came to Harrisburg
 - DC-21 presented to DEP, DCNR, AND DCED
 - The next day, another presentation was done in New Hope

Engineering Report- Tony Giacobbe/ Bilal Baqai

Tony Giacobbe

- Conrail Tunnel Project-
 - Location is Falls Township
 - 2 bids received
 - October 5th a preconstruction meeting was held
 - Contractor will be preparing a construction schedule for review and approval
 - Work will begin this winter and completion will be early summer 2018
 - 12 ft. diameter steel-plate liner in tunnel
 - 24/7 operation
 - 140 ft. tunnel
- Milepost 52 Kleinhan's Aqueduct
 - Just this week received preliminary plans for the design
 - Just sketch plans without a lot of detail at this point
 - Goal- final design documents by the end of this calendar year and that includes permits
 - Project will take 9-12 months
- Sub-canal Culvert Inspection
 - To date we have completed 11 of the 13 structures
 - 2 are remaining but they are concealed by vegetation
 - One is located by the Easton Trailer Park and the other on Kenwood Drive, milepost 4
 - Waiting for leaves and vegetation to die back before they can view the structures
 - Waiting for funding to become available
- 12-Bridge Replacement Project
 - Our consultant LaBella Associates has been approved to proceed with the design
 - A kick-off meeting was held last Friday (10/6/2017)
 - The project is anticipated to be conducted in 3 phases, 4 structures per phase
 - We asked the consultant to prepare a design schedule for the 3 separate phases for approval and that is our current situation
 - This is the first time working with this consultant
- Concerns:
 - Concerned citizen- Bristol Lagoon to Tyburn Rd. in Morrisville is clogged up with debris, trees, lilies, etc. Can engineering put together a work package to start cleaning up the canal and berms? Dredging? What would it take?
 - Susan Taylor- Canal South of 13 is dry and has green vegetation growing on the bottom of the canal. Also, trees are down along the berm that need to be cleaned up
- Questions:
 - Susan Taylor- Where is the [PA Outdoor] corps working?
 - Answer: Josh- Morrisville going South has been a project the park has been working on. Different segments of the southern half have had work done to clear banks, do graffiti removal, and picking up trash

Bilal Baqai

- Mile Marker 17-Tebola Beans Project
 - Bridge inspection showed a deficiency that we needed to repair immediately, even though it is one of the 12 bridges that are going to be replaced
 - A contractor was solicited and work will begin in October to repair the beams, even though it is a temporary fix
- Milepost 26- Phillips Mill Bridge Replacement
 - Have received the final plans and technical specs
 - DCNR is in the process of reviewing them
 - Once that is finalized they will be generating a bid package which they will send out for bid
- Milepost 26- Lower Limeport
 - Project completed
 - Final inspection completed in August
- Sinkholes
 - Reports have been submitted to DCNR and they are coming up with the best practices
 - Using flowable fill to plug sinkholes which has been promising
- Suggestion-Susan Taylor
 - Asked that an evaluation be done on the old Tebola Beans bridge because it is a fairly new bridge and to have the materials rust away makes it appear that it was bad materials that were used

Park Managers Report- Josh Swartley/ Beth Hare

- Update on vacancies and personnel
 - Currently short 2 salaried positions
 - Environmental Education Specialist and an Equipment Operator
 - Right now, we are trying to fill our EES position with a seasonal
 - This wait should be ending soon, still waiting some employment verification
 - Also, short a seasonal Semi-Skilled Laborer position
 - We will try to hire this position spring of next year
- Menzi-Muck
 - It finally arrived
 - A few of our maintenance staff will be training on the Menzi
 - Delivered to the Giving Pond
 - Question- What is it capable of doing?
 - Answer- Dredging the canal. We have enough work between the Northern and Southern end to keep us busy for years
- Delaware River Basin Commission
 - Spoke with DRBC and we are still scheduled for the public hearing on November 15th
 - The draft dockets are in the hands of DEP
 - The DRBC manages the water of the Delaware River and the streams that flow into it
 - In order to pump water from the river into the canal, we need permission from DRBC

- They regulate how much water can be pumped from the canal at any certain place at any certain time
- We currently have a docket for the pumps at Durham and Centre Bridge
- We need to add two new pumps to that docket (Marshall Island and Bowman's Hill)
- The draft docket is with DEP for their review and comment and should be back with DRBC by the November 15th meeting
- Once that draft docket comes in, we will have an allocation for the Centre bridge pump for 45 million gallons/month
- And, we will have an as-needed permission for the pump at Marshall Island, Durham, and Bowman's Hill
- Pumps will be installed with funding from DCNR, DC-21, and Friends of the Delaware Canal
- Tyburn Road
 - Working on a memorandum of understanding with PennDot to put in a trail that bypasses Tyburn Road
 - DCNR General Counsel is reviewing it
- Sinkholes
 - We have been repairing lots of sinkholes this year
 - We are not aware of any other sinkholes right now
- Centre Bridge Pump
 - Pump is repaired
 - It has been pumping water for the last 2 weeks
 - One modification we do want to make is installing a cut-off switch
 - In the event of a brown-out (temporary power surge), this switch will keep the pump from turning off and then back on right away
 - Currently talking to a sales representative from Sander Power & Pump
- Scudder Falls Bridge Replacement Project
 - On our website, you will see that we have been posting temporary closures, 3-4 days at a time
 - Delaware River Joint Toll Bridge Commission has a contractor down there right now to start doing work on the old bridge
 - The tow path will be closed the 23-25th of October from 6 AM- 5 PM

Beth

- Soil testing in Lower Limeport
 - AECOM is the company contracted to investigate the pervasive oil smell that has been there for years
 - They want to do a preliminary test by excavating a small portion on the toe of the embankments of the outer side of the towpath slope which borders the county park
 - The towpath will remain stable
 - They hope this will mitigate the oil smell but if oil is found further into the soil, there will need to be further excavation
 - If further excavation or testing if needed, they will work with DCSP and the county park

- Comment: Susan- There was pipe under the canal during WW2 the broke in the 60's. People complained about the smell near their homes and were concerned about their wells
- Answer: Beth- AECOM did do a ground penetrating radar in that area and found something in the ground that could be the pipe. The company that owns the pipe is responsible for paying for the well testing

Subcommittee Reports

- Nomination- no report
- Back-up Watering- no report
 - recommendations went to Harrisburg in July
- Legislative- no report
- Vision Study- Josh read the top 8 from the list
- Update on US Army Corps River Wall Study
 - We need to gather more data

New Business

- Presentation by Allen Black
 - People want water in the canal, and they want it now
 - The reason we don't have water is because of money
 - If we depend only on the state park budget, the canal will never have enough money
 - We already get more than our share of the whole state park budget
 - We are going to have to find money from other sources such as from private and other government agencies
 - One option is to create a municipal authority that would be called something like Delaware Canal Waterway Authority
 - Authorities are structured to engage with private sectors for money
 - Authorities are a body created by a municipality or a county to be entrepreneurial and bring money in from private and government markets
 - Examples of municipal authorities that have come together to provide additional money for public projects- Georgia Canal Authority, Pike's Place Market Authority, and the Philadelphia Center City Special Services District
 - In-order for this to happen, an agreement would have to be made between the authority and DCNR on exactly who would do what
 - The idea is that within 2-3 years the authority would become responsible for the maintenance and operation of the waterway in Delaware Canal State Park
 - DCNR would maintain full ownership of the park and would be responsible for park activities
 - What are the benefits of an authority?
 - The ability to focus all its attention on keeping the canal reliably working and operational
 - A way to provide supplemental income that isn't affected by the state park budget
 - The staff are focused on maintaining the canal all year long

- They could advocate for the park in many places
- This is an idea that DC-21 is bringing forward for consideration
- The idea is that Northampton and Bucks counties would form a bi-county canal waterway authority
- The board members would be appointed by the two counties
- The authority would over time build revenue sources and then gradually assume responsibility for the maintenance and operations
- How are we going to make money?
 - Rights of ways
 - Dues and fees
 - Appropriate concession or sponsorship
 - Storm water service fees
 - Municipal bond markets
 - Contributions from municipalities and townships
 - Individual Contribution
 - Grants from DCNR

Public Interest

- Questions and concerns about DC-21 presentation
 - Question: Nick- Is there an example where two counties have come together?
 - Answer: Allen- Yes, the Lehigh and Northampton Airport Authority
 - Additional comments were made by people in attendance concerning: funding, confusion of responsibilities between DCNR and the authority, legislative/political concerns
 - Question: Susan- In-order for this to be taken to the county, does DCNR have-to bless this endeavor?
 - Answer: Allen- Yes. Nothing is going to happen without DCNR's approval. DC-21 will not take an idea to the county that doesn't have the support of DCNR. To clarify, it is DC-21's initiative with DCNR's blessing
 - Concern: Susan- On the list of ideas for funding possibilities, that grant money from DCNR was mentioned (DCNR funding should not be used for the proposed Delaware Canal Water Authority)
 - Answer: Allen- If it gets to the point where the authority would be looking at where the funding options are, they will keep your concern in mind

Motions

- Jason Zimmerman motioned for affirmation for DC-21 to continue with the investigation. He asked for approval and/or acknowledgement from the board and for it to be mentioned in the minutes
- Nick agreed to this motion by agreeing to say there was a presentation from DC-21 and a discussion following. And, they are likely to discuss the matter in the future

Public Questions

Ralph commented on the 300-year-old tree in Bristol being cut down

Adjournment

12:10 PM

Members Present

Tom Stinnitt, William Mitchell, Susan Taylor, Jeff Marshall, Nick Forte, Brett Webber, Bill Kiesling, Bob Hodges, Brian Greene, Ralph Ratcliffe, Allen Black

**Next Meeting:
January 11, 2018
10:30 AM-12:30 PM
Washington Crossing State Park
1112 River Road, Washington Crossing, PA 18977**