

**Anne Arundel County  
Citizens Environmental Commission (CEC)**

**Annual Report  
February 2021-November 2021  
September 2022-December 2022**

**OVERVIEW**

*The Commission was officially chartered through Executive Order 8, which provides language regarding composition of Commissioners, how public meetings are to be held, and governance. The Commission consists of thirteen (13) voting members, as follows:*

- A. One representative from each of the following nine (9) watershed assessment and planning areas: Patapsco River (non-tidal portion); Patapsco River (tidal portion) and Bodkin Creek; Magothy River; Severn River, Little Patuxent River; Patuxent River (upper portion); Patuxent River (middle and lower portions) and Herring Bay; West River and Rhode River; and*
- B. Four (4) representatives from environmental, not-for-profit organizations with offices in Anne Arundel County.*

**Key Priorities**

The key priorities for this year focused on the Green Infrastructure Master Plan Draft. Starting in February, County Staff provided the CEC with an introduction, criteria and purpose for the green infrastructure plan and related it to the Land Preservation Parks & Recreation Plan.

The CEC proposed several questions to consider including:

- Should different criteria be applied to more highly developed areas?
- How should trails be addressed?
- How should sea level rise be addressed?
- Should the County set a numeric target for protection of the network (acres or %)?

In March and April the CEC will further develop its committee structure and articulate goals and objectives for those committees to pursue. The CEC will also actively recruit new members to replace those that have cycled off of the CEC.

**Commission Members:**

- Ammar Hanif - Interfaith Partners of the Chesapeake
- Carmera Thomas - Little Patuxent River
- Jesse Iliff - Arundel Rivers Federation (as of 2022 Severn River Federation)

- Jim Lyons - West/Rhode River
- Kate Fritz, Chair - Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay
- Kirvin Bonner - Patapsco Non-Tidal
- Sally Hornor - Magothy River Association
- Steve Miller - Magothy River
  
- OPEN - Patuxent Middle/Patuxent Lower/Herring Bay - Vacated by Jette Findsen
- OPEN - South River - Vacated by Milly Welsh
- OPEN - Patapsco Tidal/Bodkin Creek - Vacated by Rich Hergenroeder
- OPEN - Severn - Vacated by Ruth Berlin
- OPEN - Patuxent Upper

### **Commission Committees**

The Commission categorized priorities for ongoing attention. The priorities are below. Members of the Commission have divided themselves into workgroups based on various County priorities, including **Education and Outreach, Pesticides/Toxins, Renewable Energy and the General Development Plan**. To provide recommendations that are most inclusive to all County residents, the priorities will also be looked at through a lens of public health, equity, and accessibility.

### **Governance**

The Commission is chaired by Kate Fritz, Executive Director at the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay. Jesse Illiff serves as the Vice Chair. The commission receives support from Matt Johnston, Environmental Policy Director, and Lauren Peterson, Communications and Policy Assistant, who both serve in the Office of the County Executive.

The Commission held monthly meetings virtually due to COVID-19, since April 2020. Recordings and meeting notes are posted on the CEC website. Members of the Commission meet and take public comment towards the end of each meeting.

The Commission held eleven meetings between June 2020 and December 2021. In 2022, the CEC plans to meet in February, May, June, August, October and December.

### **County Legislation**

- Green Infrastructure (Master Plan)
  - Bill 8-22 presented to County Council on February 22
- Open Space Plan

## 2021 ACHIEVEMENTS AND GOALS

### Achievements

- Approved written CEC Bylaws in May 2020. Work began in January 2020, and development of the draft document was facilitated by Matt Johnston and the Office of Law.
- Green Infrastructure Subcommittee Report presented in July - Jim Lyons, Subcommittee Leader. Steve Miller and Milly Welsh, members.
- CEC Members listened to a presentation by Commission Steve Miller about the four County programs that influence the planting of trees and shrubs in new residential developments that add to tree canopy. There was also a discussion about the need to help educate HOAs about proper maintenance of the trees **(Jan 21)**
- Members of the Office of Planning and Zoning, the Department of Recreation and Parks, and the Department of Public Works presented the draft Green Infrastructure Master Plan to the Commission in February 2020 and took questions from commissioners. The CEC decided to form a subcommittee to provide written comments and suggestions from the CEC for the draft Plan. **(Feb 21)**.
- The draft General Development Plan (Plan2040) was presented to the County Council in February 2021 with public hearings beginning on March 1. The members of the Commission agreed that the group should submit a letter in support of the GDP. The effort was discontinued after recognizing that a draft letter could not be voted on by members in an open meeting before testimony was due.

### Ongoing Goals

1. Investing in an Equity Officer: For further recommendation, the Commission suggests an Equity Officer for Anne Arundel County. In June 2021, CE Pittman Annapolis, MD (June 15, 2021) - Anne Arundel County Executive Steuart Pittman announced the hiring of Richard H. "Pete" Hill as the County's first Director of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI). He is tasked with developing a county-wide EDI strategy that will be the roadmap for department and government-wide equity action plan implementation.
2. Collaborating with Other County Commissions and Board: The second recommendation is to collaborate with other County Commissions and Boards. Increased interaction and cohesion would connect environmental priorities to social, education and other administration priorities. Some of the top Commissions or Boards to meet with include the Recreation Advisory Board, the

Agricultural Preservation Advisory Board, the Local Workforce Investment Board, and the Bicycle Advisory Commission.

## **INTERESTS AND NEW PRIORITIES (2021)**

### **Proposed topics for the year 2022 include (in no particular order):**

- Draft Land Preservation Parks and Recreation Plan (LPPRP) - presentation by the Department of Recreation and Parks
- FY23 Budget presentation with info on what funding is specifically addressing policies/strategies in the “Planning for the Natural Environment” section of the GDP
- Presentation by the I&P and DPW Stormwater Strike Team
- Presentation on the County’s progress in meeting the MS4 2025 water quality goals for the Chesapeake Bay
- Renewable energy initiatives - presentation by County Energy Manager and Facilities Manager
- Presentation on the Resilience Authority of Annapolis and Anne Arundel County established by Bill 3-21 and what might be in the first annual report
- Update on inclusive/equitable community outreach and education plan as proposed in green infrastructure plan

## **2022 ACHIEVEMENTS AND GOALS**

### **Achievements**

- Land Preservation Parks and Recreation Plan presented by Erica Matthews and Bruce Bruchey, Department of Recreation and Parks (**Feb 2022**). There are new projects proposed that include community places, natural areas, outdoor sports and walking and bike trails.
- Commission Member, Carmera Thomas-Wilhite (Patuxent Watershed) participated as a panelist for the public Green Infrastructure forum

## **NEXT STEPS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Renewable energy
- MS4 presentations from County

## **RESOURCES**

CEC webpage

<https://www.aacounty.org/boards-and-commissions/environmental-commission/index.html>

Submit Agenda ideas:

<https://www.aacounty.org/boards-and-commissions/environmental-commission/form/index.html#agenda>

Get added to the email list:

<https://www.aacounty.org/boards-and-commissions/environmental-commission/form/index.html>