

NATURAL AREAS ADVISORY COUNCIL
36 Years of Service to Improving Delaware's Quality Of Life
“Preserving Delaware's Natural Areas Today For All Delawareans Tomorrow”

NATURAL AREAS ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING

June 8, 2017
Rose Cottage
102 South State Street
Dover, DE 19901
9:30 a.m.

ATTENDANCE

Council Members:

Debbie Heaton, Chair

Ted Palmer

Christopher Heckscher

Jim White

Ed Lewandowski

Staff:

Eileen Butler, Parks & Recreation, DNREC

Bob Ehemann, Parks & Recreation, DNREC

Ray Bivens, Parks & Recreation, DNREC

William McAvoy, Fish & Wildlife, DNREC

I. Call to Order/Welcome/Introductions/Announcements

Ms. Heaton called the Natural Areas Advisory Council meeting to order at 9:33 a.m. welcoming Council members and staff and asked for announcements.

II. Approval of Meeting Minutes

Ms. Heaton asked for a motion to approve the March 9, 2017 minutes. Motion was made to approve as submitted by Mr. Lewandowski, Mr. Palmer seconded. Motion carried.

III. Old Business

- *Christina River Natural Area* – Mr. Bivens provided an update to the Council on the current status of the delisting application. Deputy Director Coats is reviewing the paperwork submitted by Costco and the Attorney General's office is reviewing the regulations of the program to ensure the Department is in compliance with the steps identified in the regulations for the listing/delisting process. Matt Chesser reached out to Duffield to provide an update. A decision is expected in July.
- *Landowner Outreach* – Much discussion ensued over various way to raise the Council's profile and the Natural Areas program as a whole. Mr. Palmer urged the Council to consider creating a flyer that could be passed out at various meetings, provide articles in newspapers that will inform the public what benefits they would garner should they become involved in the program. Mr. White suggested a short video on the benefits of the program, focusing on an organization that will promote nature preserves. DNS

volunteers to participate for such a video. Both Mr. Palmer and Mr. White agreed to participate in a subgroup to encourage landowner outreach.

- *Lums Pond Woods Nature Preserve* – Ms. Heaton, Mr. White, and Mr. Heckscher met with Park staff to walk the area under consideration for nature preserve dedication. Staff indicated that they are not interested in pursuing permanent preservation of the area; however, Council is interested in discussing what might be helpful for outreach purposes (i.e., interpretive signs) with Angel Burns, Outreach Education Coordinator for State Parks. Council decided on a path forward on this issue:
 - Invite Lums Park staff and Council on monitoring field trip
 - Council will not seek dedication at this time
 - Conduct a survey (bioblitz) next spring

IV. Natural Areas Registry

- No issues under this topic were discussed.

V. Nature Preserve Dedications

- *Esther Shallcross Marshall Tract, Red Clay Creek Valley Nature Preserve* – Staff updated Council on status of dedication. Articles of Dedication should be signed very soon by Sec. Garvin.

VI. Nature Preserve Management Issues

- No issues under this topic were discussed.

VII. New Business

- *Mature Forest Protection Area* – Mr. McAvoy, Div. F&W, provided an overview of the efforts thus far to amend the New Castle County Unified Development Code to require a standard methodology for identifying mature forest when proposing development plans. Currently the definition for mature forest is arbitrary and subject to personal opinion. There is inconsistency in data collection and no requirement for verification as well. It was suggested by Council that Mr. McAvoy and Ms. Butler provide training workshops for practitioners to assist in their understanding as to how to implement the new methodology should the UDC be amended. Council supported the methodology and urged staff to prepare a letter of support to be sent to the General Manager of Land Use for the County. Staff will prepare such a letter.
- *Christina River Natural Area Presentation by Mr. McAvoy* – Mr. McAvoy provided an ecological overview of the watershed and indicated that a majority of the trees, especially located east of the Christiana Mall, are of high quality and are mature trees. He also indicated that there are seepage wetlands and un-channelized streams and it is a site worth fighting for as it reflects the best, most mature forest for what remains in that drainage.

VIII. Public Comment and Synopsis Reports From Other Councils, Stakeholders, and Partners

- Mr. Lewandowski was unable to attend the Parks Council meeting and indicated that should that happen in the future he would let Ms. Heaton know so that she could attend in his place. Mr. White shared with Council that Cape Henlopen was discussed, especially the Wolfe Neck Partnership where plantings will occur in an area where tertiary wastewater will be sprayed.
- HB 190 (which would amend the Coastal Zone Act) was discussed briefly. No actions were offered by Council.

IX. 2017 Council Meeting Dates/Time

September 14, December 14

Staff will send out a doodle poll to reschedule the September meeting due to a training conflict on that date.

X. Adjournment

Ms. Heaton asked for a motion to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 11:35 am.