

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

September 19, 2017
Rose Cottage
102 South State Street
Dover, DE 19901
1:30 p.m.

ATTENDANCE

Council Members:

Debbie Heaton, Chair
Ted Palmer
Christopher Heckscher
Jim White
Ed Lewandowski
John Williams
Richard Bergold

Staff:

Eileen Butler, Parks & Recreation, DNREC
Bob Ehemann, Parks & Recreation, DNREC
Ray Bivens, Parks & Recreation, DNREC

I. Call to Order/Welcome/Introductions/Announcements

Ms. Heaton called the Natural Areas Advisory Council meeting to order at 1:01 p.m. welcoming Council members and staff and asked for announcements.

II. Approval of Meeting Minutes

Ms. Heaton asked for a motion to approve the June 8, 2017 minutes. Motion was made to approve as submitted by Mr. Lewandowski, Mr. White seconded, Mr. Bergold abstained. Motion carried.

III. Old Business

- *Christina River Natural Area* – Mr. White visited the site and indicated that the area is of high quality. Staff shared their experience on the site east of Christiana Mall; removed the Natural Area over the DelDOT dump site and parking area, and identified high quality Natural Area within the Costco/DelDOT property. Council will prepare a letter to DelDOT to share its concerns of potential impacts to mature forest on their property associated with any future plans for development and request a conceptual plan presentation to Council.
- *Mature Forest Protection Area* – Staff informed Council that the formal document urging New Castle County to amend the Unified Development Code to include mature

forest protection has been sent to the County. Staff is still working with County staff to amend the Code to improve its language and provide scientific validity to its resource protection efforts.

- *Landowner Outreach* – A subgroup involving Ms. Heaton, Mr. Heckscher, Mr. Palmer, and Mr. White was established to further educate and raise awareness of State Nature Preserves.
 - *Lums Pond Woods Nature Preserve* – The group met with Angel Burns of State Parks to determine best opportunities for education and informative outreach. A website was one strong suggestion. Staff will identify which preserves should be highlighted on the website. Specifically at Lums Pond State Park it was suggested that a small brochure explaining why the Lums Pond Woods is a State Nature Preserve. Mr. White offered to host a program in the Preserve. Installing interpretive signs, creating a logo, and establishing Friends Groups for Nature Preserves was also discussed.

IV. Natural Areas Registry

- No issues under this topic were discussed.

V. Nature Preserve Dedications

- *Frenchtown Woods* - Staff informed Council that Articles of Dedication would be prepared for this property and will be reviewed at the December meeting.

VI. Nature Preserve Management Issues

- Flint Woods – staff discussed the need to craft a corrective deed to permit the necessary installation of a septic system for the historic home within the Nature Preserve.
- Dragon Run – staff informed Council of its letter to the Northern View Maintenance Association regarding a landowner’s removal of vegetation behind the fence line and within the Nature Preserve. Staff is working to remedy this situation with the community.
- Fork Branch – Staff will send out a map of the Nature Preserve. Plans for installation of a trail will be soon and the kickoff for building the parking lot is scheduled for October 11, 2017.

VII. New Business

- Staff shared with Council its plans to partner with the Old Growth Network and highlight three nature preserves in Delaware that will become part of the Network; thereby establishing Delaware as the first State in the US that will have a forest in each county within the Network. Barnes Woods (Sussex), Fork Branch, (Kent), and Tulip Tree Woods (New Castle) will be recognized within the Network on April 27, 2018 (Arbor Day). Plans are still being worked out for this event and an update will be provided at the December meeting.

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

- A question was put forth by Mr. Heckscher regarding Ogletown Natural Area and its preservation. An update on the development plan was provided by Staff.
- DE Bar Journal article – Mr. Williams indicated that the article he wrote on land conservation will soon be published in the De Bar Journal magazine, with the hope that it will pique interest with large landowners to consider conservation easements when estate planning.
- Parks Council – no update at this time.
- Open Space Council – a property located near the shore in Lewes in Sussex County was lost for acquisition and has been proposed for development.
- Christina Conservancy – Mr. Williams informed Council that the Christina Conservancy has begun a project to identify and locate areas of concentration for PCBs and other industrial contaminants through the use of bathymetry on the lower Christina River.
- SCORP update – Mr. Ehemann extended an invitation to Council members to participate on the Technical Advisory Committee for the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan update as it involves land conservation.
- Mr. Lewandowski shared the good news that Dr. Estella Atekwana is the new Dean of the College of Marine Studies.

IX. 2017 Council Meeting Dates/Time

December 14

X. Adjournment

Ms. Heaton asked for a motion to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 2:45 p.m.