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Delaware Nutrient Management

Meeting Minutes – April 2, 2019

The Delaware Nutrient Management Commission

In attendance:

Commission Members Present: Chairman Bill Vanderwende, Jim Elliott, Laura Hill, Kenneth Horeis, Wayne Hudson, Larry Jester, Tak Keen, Garry Killmon, Brenna Ness, Jon Nichols, Jr., Bud O'Neill, Robert Palmer, Scott Webb

Ex-Officios Present: Secretary Michael Scuse, Nutrient Management Program Administrator Chris Brosch, Jennifer Singh, Jamie Mack

Commission Members Absent: Mark Adkins, F. Kenneth Blessing

Ex-Officios Absent: Shawn Garvin

Others Present: Bob Coleman, Clint Gill, Julia Moore, Brooke Walls, Carol D. Atkinson, James Atkinson, Sydney Riggi, Amanda Fabi, Ronnie Wright, Robert Wright, Gerhard Maute, Eugene Maute, Daniel Kreider, Bruce Paulish, Jeffrey Ulrich, Robin Hayes, Jennifer Walls, Sonja M. Carey, Mark E. Dudley

This meeting was properly notified and posted as required by law.

Call to Order/Welcome:

Chairman Vanderwende called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., welcomed everyone in attendance, and reminded those seeking education credits to sign the sign-in sheet.

Approval of Minutes:

A motion was heard to approve the minutes of the last Full Commission Meeting of March 5, 2019. The minutes were moved for approval by Commissioner Elliott and seconded by Commissioner Horeis, resulting in a final vote of unanimous approval.

Discussion and Action Items:

Update from the Delaware Center for the Inland Bays – Executive Director, Chris Bason

Administrator Brosch introduced Director Bason who was invited to speak about the Center and some of the activities it has been undertaking for at least the last year. He and his Board presented their Annual Summary in December, and he has come to our Commission to share some of that information as well as some progress reporting for their conservation efforts in the Inland Bays.

Director Basin noted that the Center is a private, non-profit organization and one of only 28 National Estuary Programs in the country. He talked about the status of the Bays and Estuaries, providing information about the growth of the population and subsequent pollution. Among other details, he stated that Nitrogen (N) and Phosphorus (P) are the big pollutants which are not only polluting the Bay, but also drinking water wells. Restoration is one of their values, and they are working with the whole community to achieve their goals. Their Long-Term Management Plan for the Bays includes partners such as DDA as a board member and sponsor. And they involve the public as much as possible in everything they do to educate about the Bays and how to clean them up.

In addition, Director Basin reviewed the Top Ten Things that happened to the Inland Bays in 2018. It was a good year overall, with lots of grants and positive happenings. An eleventh event that he wanted to specifically call out was the proposed Bond Bill of \$2.9 million for Cover Crops Advancement. He agreed that this is needed to improve water quality, and with these funds we can meet the demand for cover crops.

In closing, he announced that their 25th Annual Fundraising event will be held at the Hyatt at Dewey Beach on September 27th.

Comments from the Commission –

- Chairman Vanderwende: Why it is believed that P is under control in this region when N still isn't?
- Director Bason: In this particular watershed a lot of the P load is coming from wastewater from people. And the pollution control strategy set up really focused on eliminating those wastewater loads. Wastewater improvements have been huge – including hooking septic folks up to centralized wastewater and removing it to the ocean now. There have also been great agricultural improvements.
- Chairman Vanderwende: But what about the N?
- Director Bason: The N is tough, no matter what the landscape. It's just so mobile that it's really hard to capture. And the recent weather may have caused that to exacerbate. So cover crops are great for that, and riparian buffers are great for that. The real benefits we'll see, however, will be in the rural environment and agriculture.
- Commissioner Horeis: Everyone wants green lawns, and this has to be where a lot of the problems come from.
- Director Bason: Agreed.
- Administrator Brosch: This is definitely a problem. And so many homes come with programmed irrigation systems, which is an accelerator for N loss. Especially if it is running at the same time it is actually raining. But we rarely see this in an agricultural setting. And part of the reason we see so much of a spread in data about N coming from urban is because there are almost as many homeowners that do nothing as there are homeowners that do everything wrong. So where you have a concentration of one versus the other, you can have very big effects.
- Commissioner Horeis: And as we travel through these communities, there are so many lawn care people spraying who knows what. How to control this?
- Administrator Brosch: We can control the folks that manage more than 10 cumulative acres. And that is part of the proposal we talked about last month. Hopefully that will get done.
- Public comment: The University of Delaware has referred to the Delaware Bay when working with the Master Gardeners and other groups like that to encourage homeowners to use more native Delaware plants. Maybe more could be done with that.
- Director Bason: That is a wonderful idea. Every time you take away from a lawn and plant some of those native plants you're going to have a positive impact. To support this effort, the Center does a native plant sale every year at the James Farm on the weekend before Mother's Day, at which they try to educate as well as host those who sell native plants.
- Chairman Vanderwende: Thank you for this informative presentation.

Introduction of newest Commissioners – Chairman Vanderwende

Chairman Vanderwende introduced the two new Commissioners, Brenna Ness (who fills Brenna Goggin's seat) and Gary Killmon (who fills Richard Sterling's seat), and invited each to give a brief bio about themselves:

- Commissioner Ness has been appointed as the representative for Environmental Groups
 - She is with the Delaware Wild Lands, a non-profit conservation organization based in Odessa.
 - Her title is Land Steward and Conservation Programs Manager
 - The organization protects about 22K acres throughout the state and they have about 2K acres that are in Agriculture
 - One of her many duties is to work closely with a number of local grower farmers to make sure they are all on the same page in terms of sustainable agricultural practices.

- Commissioner Killmon has been appointed as a Sussex County Public Citizen
 - He moved here, for the first of 3 times, with Southern States Co-op in 1977 and they had to teach him what N, P, and K (Potassium) were!
 - When invited to join the Commission, he asked what he needed to do, and Administrator Brosch told him to just be ready to serve. So here he is, ready to help.

Administrators Report – Administrator Brosch and staff

- Complaints – Bob Coleman
 - There were 3 informal complaints since our last meeting.
 - Two were normal odor complaints from folks who are just not used to the normal odor of a poultry operation. The farms themselves were pristine.
 - The third was a mortality complaint for improper handling thereof. It was legitimate, and the farmer was counseled on the proper procedure to follow when adding mortalities to the compost pile. It has been kept open so that we can monitor the farm for another month.
 - So now there are 2 open informal complaints that are being monitored.
- Certifications – Administrator Brosch. Sessions were completed and the numbers are as listed.
- Audits, Inspections, Reporting – Administrator Brosch. There have been 14 inspections completed since the beginning of the calendar year.
- CAFO Update – Administrator Brosch.
 - We are going to see an increase shortly in the number of poultry operations that don't till land covered by CAFO General Permit 1.
 - 20-25 operations are to be ready for Public Notice before the May meeting
 - We have been told by DNREC that issuance of the General Permit II is imminent
- Salesforce Database Update – Administrator Brosch. There has been a large uptick in the number of completed Annual Reports received. Since the last meeting we sent out reminder letters and they yielded nearly as many responses as those received by the actual deadline.
- Meetings and Training – Administrator Brosch. Separated out this month are the Chesapeake Bay Program meetings that we attended, as well as those we anticipate attending in April.
- Financials / Budget – Administrator Brosch. Highlighted is one of our grant projects, for Poultry Litter Transport. That is Chesapeake Bay Implementation money that was increased \$75K since our last meeting to help fund a new Agricultural Inspector position and we are right in the middle of trying to get that position created and then filled. We are waiting for additional funds to come. And we will have to go through a very formal process for those funds to arrive and be used to hire a new full-time staff person.
- Updates on Reimbursement for Cost Share related to Nutrient Management Plans and our Poultry Litter Relocation Project – Chris Brosch. Bob Coleman advised that we are way up on Planning, and Chris agreed we will definitely break the record for the last 5 years that was set in FY17. And that is just fine because Poultry Litter numbers are still down from FY16 although Bob reassures that they have picked up significantly since we changed our Cost Share rate.

Comments from the Commission -

- There were no Commissioner comments voiced.

Public Comment –

- There were no public comments voiced.

Next Meeting: The next regular Full Commission meeting will be scheduled for May 7, 2019 at 7:00 p.m.

Adjournment: Chairman Vanderwende adjourned the meeting at 7:43 p.m.

Approved,

B. Vanderwende, Chairman
Delaware Nutrient Management Commission
jlm