

Bay Bridge Monitoring Committee
February 27, 2019
Meeting Summary

The Kent County Bay Bridge Monitoring Committee (BBMC) met on Wednesday, 27 February 2019 at 10:00 a.m. in the County Commissioners' Hearing Room in the R. Clayton Mitchell, Jr. Government Center in Chestertown, Maryland. The following committee members attended the meeting: Gary DiVito, Torr Howell, and Thomas Tontarski. BBMC Kent County staff included Amy Moredock, Person of Contact/Planning Director; Jim Wright, County Engineer; and Sandy Adams who clerked the meeting.

The meeting summary for November 28, 2018 was accepted by the Committee as presented.

Janet Christensen-Lewis, Chair, Board of Directors, Kent Conservation and Preservation Alliance (KCPA) updated the members regarding the activities the Alliance has undertaken and the communications it has had with the State:

- Two Bills are currently in legislation dealing with Statute 4-407: Senate Bill 107 (cross referenced as: House Bill 212) is for adding Anne Arundel County to the already 9 counties on the eastern shore who have certain rights regarding toll bridges and roads within their county; and House Bill 102 (cross referenced as: Senate Bill 442) which would include every county within the State. Ms. Moredock informed the Committee that she will forward them the links to the legislative site;
- Washington College has assisted the Alliance by providing mapping overlays to the County's farmland areas where a third span could potentially be crossing. In addition to the County's historic resources, the Alliance has determined there would be a significant impact on preserved agricultural land;
- The "Predeterminational" Corridors are two miles wide;
- KCPA has just completed a Preliminary Cultural Landscape Assessment draft. The Alliance received grant funding through several sources to do this study and were able to hire a team of experts who combed the County for its historic and cultural knowledge and resources. One of the experts determined that Kent County has some of the "rarest" significant resources he has ever seen in the United States, but the problem is that it is not well-documented because the County has not had any big projects which required a NEPA study. This Assessment, however, defines all historic sites, landscapes, and buildings and includes the following historic data:
 - Tobacco plantations, grain farming, and age of sale;
 - Old roads;
 - African-American Communities that were set up for freed slaves;
 - Indentured servants; and
 - Caulks (battle) Field.

KCPA is pleased with the Assessment and has also applied for a grant for doing a documentary film. Maryland Public Television is interested in the project, and this will be significant for Kent County because it looks at the impacts that a bay crossing would have on cultural and historic resources. The Alliance has submitted an application to be part of the Section 106 process [National Historic Preservation Act], and all of this documentation will be part of a package for providing a cogent argument for Kent County.

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- Ms. Lewis said the State released the Purpose and Need Study and noted that they changed the dates for when the next public meetings will be held without any notification to the public. She said KCPA is talking with the State about this and are documenting their lack of transparency and public engagement so that later on, this will all become part of the litigation. Ms. Christensen-Lewis encouraged everyone to write a letter if they see something that is happening with the process that is not transparent and in the public's interest. Ms. Lewis said KCPA will eventually put the Magellan maps on their website, and people will be able to zoom in to see the areas of all who might be affected.

Following her presentation, Ms. Christensen-Lewis welcomed questions.

Committee Business:

Ms. Moredock addressed the Purpose and Need document and her conversations with State Representative Heather Lowe. She shared the following:

- The release dates for the Purpose and Need study were delayed nearly one year;
- The public meetings will be scheduled this spring; and
- The Range of Corridor Alternatives will be released sometime in the spring/summer timeframe.
- Ms. Moredock said she is doubtful that the Range of Corridor Alternatives will be released prior to the public meetings. She said she is also not sure of how much lead time there will be between the release of the Range of Corridors and the Corridor Alternatives Retained for Analysis (CARA).

Ms. Moredock asked the Committee for their comments on the Purpose and Need document:

- Mr. Tontarski, referring to the third Need (Section 1.3.3, Flexibility to Support Maintenance and Incident Management in a Safe Manner), said he does not understand how a crossing in Kent County would relieve this problem.
- Ms. Moredock commented that items identified in the Environmental Responsibility Section (Section 1.5) are noteworthy. The document states "all counties neighboring the Bay have planning documents with goals that address resource protection, growth, and development." Ms. Moredock said she believes the State is acknowledging that local zoning is in place, and there are plans and ordinances in all jurisdictions that direct the maintenance of agricultural and cultural character. Ms. Moredock said she has been informed by the State staff that 80% of all the comments they have received have come from Kent County.
- Mr. Tontarski said the "vehicles per hour" needs to be identified;
- Mr. Howell commented that it looks like the State has provided this information to make it look like they are doing their due diligence steps. He said there are a lot of interesting facts, but he believes they already know what they want to do and where they want to put the third span;
- Ms. Moredock said pointed out the following statistics of note:
 - The downward trend of the weekday truck traffic (Table 3, Page 11);
 - On the origin and destination maps (Figures 3 and 4, Pages 12 and 13), the percentage is low for Kent County regarding the summer and non-summer traffic, and there is not a clear indication as to what the origins and destinations are as they relate to Kent; and

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- The population projections noted on Figure 2 (Page 10) for Kent County do not ring true based on the census in the County's Comprehensive Plan.

Comments were received by three members of the audience.

Ms. Moredock reviewed the Pre-Decisional Range of Corridors maps with the Committee which were "leaked" to the public prior to State staff's intended release. She noted that these are the methods of evaluation for the corridor study under the NEPA study.

Ms. Moredock polled the Committee to see if they want to continue to meet monthly or to meet only when there are updates or new topics to address. The Committee unanimously agreed to meet only when there is new committee business and/or updates to discuss.

Next Step(s):

- Touch base with Queen Anne's County representatives regarding the newly released Purpose and Need study and Range of Corridor maps.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, March 27, 2019 from 10:00 – 11:30 a.m.

The meeting concluded at 11:14 a.m.