

Bay Bridge Monitoring Committee

March 28, 2018

Meeting Summary

The Kent County Bay Bridge Monitoring Committee (BBMC) met on Wednesday, March 28, 2018 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: Ralph Dolinger, William Sutton, and Mike Waal; Gary DiVito attended the meeting via teleconference. BBMC Kent County staff included Amy Moredock, Person of Contact/Planning Director; Jim Wright, County Engineer; and Sandy Adams who clerked the meeting.

Guest Speaker: Carl Gallegos, Ph.D., International Environmental and Natural Resources Management Consultant. A "Bay Crossing Study Tier 1 NEPA Observations and Recommendations" PowerPoint presentation was shared with the committee. Dr. Gallegos gave an overview of his experience with NEPA related activities and then discussed his observations and recommendations concerning the NEPA study. With regards to the Tier 1 NEPA study, Dr. Gallegos stated the following:

- He has reviewed the Tier 1 NEPA PowerPoint presentation and found it to be very complete and to be an excellent overview. He said it is of great value to the Committee's records;
- He has reviewed the on-line public meeting video and found it to be very complete. He said all procedures were followed as required (by government and the law) for presenting to the public;
- He said with regards to the NEPA study, the public needs to be aware of the following key dates:
 - In Spring 2019, the Public Workshop will be presented; at this time, the initial document will be presented, and it is important to be reviewed by all interested parties; and
 - In Fall 2019, the Tier 1 EIS Public Hearing; a key document and a key time for people to provide input regarding the NEPA study.
- Dr. Gallegos said after studying the Tier 1 NEPA Environmental Impact Statement, it is his personal observation and view that the construction of a new bridge somewhere on the eastern shore is inevitable;
- Dr. Gallegos advised taking a logical approach, not emotional, when reviewing the NEPA EIS and he stated the following:
 - Consider the interests and needs of all citizens of the local population; and
 - The Committee, as a reviewer of comments, needs to have logical, objective questions raised;
- He said the public must use the NEPA process as a tool; it is online and there are sections that are essential for determining where and how the bridge will be built. He also recommends the use of the review process to strengthen regulations for avoiding abuses that have happened on Kent Island;
- Dr. Gallegos suggested making "The Citizens Guide to NEPA: Having Your Voice Heard" a valuable resource for when and how to get involved and how to comment; the guide is online; and
- Dr. Gallegos suggested using "environmental justice" as the #1 approach and as a tool for the review of the NEPA process and having your voice heard. He said it considers human health and safety.

Dr. Gallegos answered questions from the audience which consisted of 6 attendees.

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Updates from “Next Steps” at the previous meeting:

- A next step identified was to submit a PIA requesting scoping comments. Update: Ms. Moredock said that this process is unnecessary between government officials, but when she contacted the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT), they said they were working on publishing those comments and they are available on-line; and
- A next step identified was to fill the Committee’s vacancy: Update: Ms. Moredock said the Commissioners have received names for consideration, and she noted that the Committee was hoping Dr. Gallegos would be interested in filling the vacancy but when contacted, Dr. Gallegos said he is unavailable to serve on the Committee at this time. She said Dr. Gallegos has, however, graciously offered to help educate the Committee on the NEPA process and to assist the Committee any way he can in the future.

Committee Business:

- Ms. Moredock requested that each member of the committee take the Open Meetings Act training and quiz and print their certificate of completion for Sandy Adams for the file; Ms. Moredock will email the Open Meetings Act training (Word) document for committee members to review prior to taking the online quiz; Ms. Moredock demonstrated where the online quiz can be found;
- Ms. Moredock demonstrated how the Committee’s website works and flows. She said that all materials and resources and anything else relevant to the Committee’s charge will be posted on the website; and
- Ms. Moredock demonstrated the Bay Bridge Crossing Study’s website and how the State posts their studies and pertinent information.

Next Step(s):

- Post the “Citizens Guide to NEPA” document on the Committee’s website;
- Stay abreast of the resources that are out there and post the resources and links on the Committee’s website;
- Invite representatives from the “Stop the Span” group and the Kent County Historic Preservation Alliance Group to speak at the April meeting; and
- Ms. Moredock agreed to contact the State regarding the Bay Bridge Crossing Study’s Coordination Date(s), the link needs to be updated, and for the release of their methodology process.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, April 25, 2018 from 10:00 – 11:30 a.m.

The meeting concluded at 11:40 a.m.