

Neighbors of Northwest Branch (NNWB)
Minutes of Board Meeting
October 5, 2021

1. Welcome:

Present on Zoom: Board: Anne Ambler, Kem Morawski, Rebecca Henson, Ben Simasek, Michael Evans, Kristin Backert; FOSC liaison Ed Murtagh

2. Treasurer's report

Our current balance is \$6,095.85. We received an unexpected \$500 from Anacostia Riverkeeper for our participation in water quality monitoring and \$100 from the Audubon Naturalist Society from our participation in the State of the Streams project. Report was approved.

3. Updates:

Discussed business card distribution—Ben reported he has handed out a few.

Clean ups:

Ben had a good turn-out for the clean-up at Lane Manor, around 24 people. There were a lot of students seeking SSL hours.

Kem and Matt Boyer had a good turn-out for the Burnt Mills clean-up. There were 8 bags of trash and 6 bags for recycling.

State of the Streams:

Eliza Cava of The Audubon Society came to Burnt Mills and using her State of the Streams project protocol, interviewed Kem and several people who were entering the park. At Lane Manor Park, Anne interviewed Ben and an anonymous volunteer at his cleanup. This project is concerned, among other things, with how the community views local streams and how they use them.

Hyattsville update:

City of Hyattsville Environment Committee with input from Public Works sent a letter to Prince George's County Council about problems with stormwater runoff and the need for the county to modernize and

update the regulations to mitigate stormwater runoff in this era of climate change. They also asked for enforcement authority as enforcement of existing regulations has been lax.

The letter covered 8 different points dealing with polluted runoff from construction sites. There is still considerable runoff from the Werrlein Properties Development in the NNWB flood plain. Stop work orders have been issued but it is unknown if development has indeed stopped. Werrlein claims that the activity on the lower site is just for stabilization of the dirt. The Hyattsville Council needs the authority to stop any project in violation of stop work orders.

Latest on Supplemental DEIS for toll lane project.

Sierra Club is preparing a response. NNWB signed on to a Sierra Club letter requesting a much longer comment period than the 45 days allotted by the state. The SDEIS projected some decrease in travel time for those using both toll and free lanes going south in the morning, but speeds of an average 37 mph in the toll lane and 28 mph in the free lane, about the same as currently, going north in the evening. Backup is expected at the point where the toll lanes end. With dynamic pricing, the cost will run quite high in order to reduce traffic in the toll lanes to make it flow. The Sierra Club is also taking donations to fund a lawsuit based on errors and omissions in the DEIS. This cannot be filed until the Final DEIS is issued.

4. **Chesapeake Bay Trust/MoCo Grant opportunity.** Are we interested? Chesapeake Bay Trust/Montgomery County Grant opportunity—Anne will attend the information session tomorrow. One Montgomery Green wants to work with us on designing a project, but the deadline of December 2nd may be too soon for us to apply for the grant.

Options for future grants could include green infrastructure, trash traps, behavior change. We will need to do a lot of research on these. One Montgomery Green, particularly its SAPpling program (Student Advocates Protecting the Planet) would be a good organization with which to partner.

Ed reported that the request for a trash trap on the Lockridge tributary is stuck in Department of Environmental Protection bureaucracy due, he thinks, to permitting issues.

5. October 16 **Rachel Carson hike postponement**/replacement. We had to postpone the Rachel Carson hike as they are doing work on the house. The new date is November 13. We will have to rotate groups of 8 inside the house.

We discussed options to replace the October 16 hike—Adelphi Mill, Underground Railway, etc., but decided to cancel as there seems to be enough going on right now.

6. **Suggested purchases:**

Anne proposed a 2nd NNWB banner, cloth this time, that we could display at clean ups and other functions and T shirts with the NNWB logo to sell or give out. Michael and Kristin will look into the cost and logistics of the T shirts. Anne will look into her files for the NNWB logos.

7. **Reminders of upcoming events:**

Oct. 23, Anacostia boat trip (19 spots available). Anne will advertise.

Nov. 2, Zoom program with the Army Corps of Engineers on fish barrier removals that are planned.

Nov. 6, Clean-up at the Alderton Rd. side. Matt Boyer, who co-led the clean-up at Burnt Mills, may be willing to co-lead with Anne.

Dec. 7 Board Meeting. We need to plan for the spring and for the March Board elections. Program ideas are needed.