



Coastal Advisory Council
February 6, 2024
Location: SSELC

Meeting Summary

Welcome and Introductions:

Chairman Mr. Charles McMillan called the meeting to order. Mr. McMillan introduced new Georgia Coastal Management staff, Max Kleinhans. Mr. Kleinhans gave an overview of his background. Members introduced themselves. Mr. McMillan also recognized Kelly Hill's recent recognition for the inaugural Outstanding Partner Award. This new distinction recognizes individuals who have made exceptional contributions to the UGA Marine Extension and Georgia Sea Grant's mission of improving the environmental, social, and economic health of Georgia's coast through research, education and extension.

Old Business:

Meeting Summary November 3, 2023

Mr. McMillan asked for any questions about the Fall 2023 Meeting summary. None were brought forward.

New Business

Committee Reports

Communications Committee – Stacia Hendricks

Ms. Hendricks introduced the Communications Committee's newest member, Hyde Post. Mr. Post was impressed by the talks from last meeting and believes the general public remains woefully uninformed and without the resources to be informed. He is interested in ways in which the CAC can educate people, what are the existing vehicles or methods of communication and should it be more than a traveling roadshow and social media connectivity. Mr. Post concluded that there is a lot happening not only on the environmental front but also the financial front, forcing lending and insurance companies to leave the coast due to climate issues. He is looking forward to having additional conversations about communicating with coastal stakeholders.

Legislative Committee – Scott Hendricks

Mr. Hendricks gave the legislative committee updates. HB 370 is a new version of HB 748. It creates the framework for property owners to prove a crown grant. Called the Coastal Marshlands Restoration Act, HB 370 extends the time that the state property commission has to review to claims, and if the state doesn't act within that timeline, it would be assumed that the individual has ownership. Even through there is no mention of mitigation, the result of this bill would likely expedite ownership claims.

Dr. Montague stated that in a South Carolina case, impoundments for water fowl were the topic of ownership. A case claiming kings grant and lawsuit was rejected because there was no direct line of unbroken title within the family. The only person who would qualify would be the person who has direct decent.

Mr. Hendrix said that that is how it works now in the State Properties Commission. The way this legislation is written, if you have a title running 40 years you could make a case.

Upland Component Stakeholder Rules update – Jill Andrews

Mrs. Andrews gave a follow up to the presentation Josh Noble gave at the Fall 2023 meeting on the Upland Stakeholder Rules. Mrs. Andrews reminded the Council that any permitted projects that have activities in the upland related to the marsh impacts are regulated under the CMPA. The upland component is any service areas that are augmenting the use the of the marsh component (parking, boat stowage, etc.) are subject to the rules since they are a service area of the marsh.

The proposed amendments add specifications to definitions. The public participation plan started August 2023, about 150 total comments per period. There were lots of calls for additional stakeholder groups from individuals interested in more conversations on bank stabilization and sea level rise and marsh migration in their backyards. Ms. Andrews will be summarizing public comments and be turning those over to the DNR Board.

Dr. Montague asked if there will be any changes to the wording in the amendment due to the public comment? Ms. Andrews stated that most comments were form letters saying the same thing, more of an interest in shoreline management so do not apply to the specifics of the Rule change. The Council discussed a vote to support the Rule change. Chairman McMillan stated that if we are going to do something like that there is a period of review and we would need to revisit the bylaws.

There was discussion on how the CAC can provide advice in a situation like this. Dr. Montague stated there is a process here and it is for everyone to get the memo and review the information and go through the period and have a real motion and vote. For future changes, the CAC can discuss at initial meetings.

More information can be found at the CRD website at https://coastalgadnr.org/sites/default/files/crd/CZM/CAC/ProposedAmendment_Upland%20Rules_CACFeb2024.pdf

Proposed changes to Dock Rules

Ms. Andrews introduced the proposed Dock Rules as the official first notice of new rules for private dock. Private docks are exempt from the CMPA. This Rule will codify how CRD has been managing private docks and working with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). Regulation of private docks between 1997-2022 was jointly with the USACE. Together CRD and USACE developed a Programmatic General Permit. If a dock met those standards then CRD could issue the permit for the USACE. The PGP expired in 2022. CRD continued to carry forward the requirements.

The details of the Dock Rule can be found at the CRD website at https://coastalgadnr.org/sites/default/files/crd/CZM/CAC/CRD%20Item%20A_Private%20Recreational%20Dock%20Rule%20Change.pdf

The Public Participation Plan started January 23 with a DNR Board briefing. February 15 is the public hearing in Brunswick. The public comment period closes March 15 and final action by the Board is expected April 24. **Note: final action delayed until further notice.

Executive Committee – Charles McMillan

Mr. McMillan stated that there are two CAC member vacancies for state government (non-DNR) or regional commission representatives. A notice for applications was released and those applications are being reviewed by the Commissioner.

Staff gave updates on multiple projects including the Coastal Stormwater Supplement, culvert assessment, the Cycle 27 CIG update, 309 Resiliency updates, an Ossabaw living shoreline update, and the Marine Debris grant.

Chairman McMillan adjourned the meeting.