

ISLAND COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

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Minutes

Prepared by Ann Prusha

November 3, 2020

ZOOM

PRESENT: Kelly Zupich, Chair, presiding, Hannah Liss, Vice Chair, Barbara Bennett, Randy Berthold, Scott Chase, Ed Halloran, Gwendolyn Hannam, Andi Kopit, Matt Kukuk, Elsa Schwartz, Kes Tautvydas, Janet St. Clair, Island County Commissioner (non-voting), Jerilyn Ritzman, WSU Extension (non-voting), Anna Toledo, MRC Coordinator (staff), Ann Prusha (staff) **ABSENT:** Michael Bianchi (un-notified absence), Lori Clark (notified absence)

VISITORS: Ken Collins, Katie Harris, NWSC (Presenting), Lucas Hart, NWSC, Jill Lipoti

CALL TO ORDER: Kelly called the meeting to order at 3:01pm. **INTRODUCTIONS:** Introductions were made. **QUORUM:** A quorum was declared. **AGENDA:** Anna asked that the County Commissioner Leadership Report be moved to the top of the meeting because Commissioner St. Clair has to leave early. Kes moved to approve the agenda with the proposed change. Gwendolyn seconded. The agenda was approved. **MINUTES:** Anna received a request from Elsa to update the October 6, 2020 minutes to clarify that she removed herself from the meeting during the Eelgrass No-Anchor Zone presentation and discussion. She physically left the room and did not participate at all. She will continue to excuse herself from all future discussions on this topic to avoid any perceived conflict of interest. Hannah moved to approve the October 6, 2020 minutes with the proposed change. Barbara seconded. The minutes were approved.

CORRESPONDENCE: None.

COUNTY COMMISSIONER LEADERSHIP REPORT (Commissioner St. Clair)

There is a lot happening in Oak Harbor right now, and she is excited about the overlap of economic and sustainability issues. She sits on a couple of other committees and is monitoring the possibility to continue some of Commissioner Price Johnson's work, since Commissioner Price Johnson will not be Commissioner next year. She welcomed input from anyone, so that our input can be in her mind as she makes decisions. We have been lucky to have had elected leaders who understand the importance of the work we are doing to have a healthy and productive Salish Sea. MRC's efforts are part of why we have been lucky. Northwest Straits (NWS) is important for implementing restoration work. She was first introduced to this work long before at Cornet Bay, and was so impressed. Please email her regarding legislative priorities, and she will hold those close as we move into 2021.

OAK HARBOR MARINA RESTORATION FEASIBILITY PRESENTATION (Anna)

Anna gave a presentation about the Oak Harbor Marina Restoration Feasibility Study. The MRC, Island Local Integrating Organization (ILIO), Salmon Recovery Technical and Citizens Committee (SRTCC), Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF), and many others worked together to make this possible. The proposal was to look at the feasibility of restoration options, and they worked with Blue Coast Engineering on this. NWSF put together a monitoring plan. There are 3 main project goals: shoreline armor removal and restoration, water quality and stormwater

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improvements, and shading reduction. The goals are to provide maximum ecological benefit while maintaining recreational uses. The project area was broken into 5 main reaches. Blue Coast engineering put together multiple options for different levels of improvement for each reach. Overwater shading was not included due to structural constraints. Anna went through each option for each reach. Her PowerPoint is available on request.

Commissioner St. Clair commented that, using the Sunlight Shores armor removal project as an example, restoration seems to happen faster than the 7 years she was told to expect. Anna replied that success can be relative. Plants can come in quickly, and the way that we measure how restoration occurs can vary on the given timeline. It's great to see the immediate changes that can happen in a season.

The transition from Reach 1, with armor removal to Reach 2, with hard armoring, would likely use riprap to match the existing armoring in Reach 2.

For the alternatives analysis, the ecological benefits, recreational use, and feasibility were all analyzed. Alternative 5 was chosen by the project partners as the preferred alternative, and included the most habitat and recreational improvement. Alternative 5 includes armor removal in Reach 1, armor setback in Reach 2, and a reduced boat ramp footprint in Reach 3. The Oak Harbor Marina Advisory Committee recommended Alternative 4, which includes armor removal in Reach 1, armor clean-up in Reach 2, and reduced boat ramp footprint Reach 3. Anna will present the options to the Oak Harbor Park Board as well. The City of Oak Harbor will take the recommendations into consideration and make the final decision for how to move forward.

Initial funding opportunities will likely be through the existing Near Term Action. The City of Oak Harbor will move it into final design and permitting. There will be opportunities for the MRC to stay engaged through this, mostly via outreach (it's a popular, visible site) and monitoring.

There was a question about storm surges, especially with sea level rise. This was looked at during site characterization. In general, it is a fairly low energy site, but it does experience storm surges. However, natural beaches are more resilient and able to change from a habitat perspective. Making the shoreline more robust can be considered in preliminary and final designs as well. It is all filled tideland.

There was a comment that managed retreat was not a consideration but it is something we need to be bringing up.

Trails and access points to the beach would be added in subsequent design phases. There is potential to add stairs or something similar in Reach 2. At the moment, this is not much recreation at the beach adjacent to the parking lot.

There was a comment that there is a lot of impervious surface in this watershed, and a question about opportunities to break up pavement and add bioretention and swales. The project discussion did include several areas for bioretention throughout the site, including on Navy property. There were not any soil surveys done at this stage, but that would be done in subsequent phases. The main discovery was a utility corridor.

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NORTHWEST STRATIS INITIATIVE (NWSI) COMMUNICATIONS

NWSI Communications Plan and Fact Sheet (Katie)

Over the past 9 months, Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) staff have been part of developing the communications plans. Thank you to everyone who helped contribute. One of the first major findings was that there is confusion about the different arms of the NWSI: MRCs, NWSF, and NWSC. There were varying levels on the understanding of these arms, depending on how long people have been engaged. It is important to distinguish these arms because it helps us tell our story and meet our goals. They developed a fact sheet, and Katie walked the group through this. She encouraged people to print it out and refer to it as needed.

There were comments to reformat the Venn diagram portion of the graphic, to help distinguish the different MRCs. There was also a comment that an organization chart would be valuable. This could be valuable for the upcoming interviews.

Kelly commented that this is excellent and will be very beneficial for us to have. These are key messages that we should be sharing.

MRC Elevator Pitch (Anna)

In a recent staff meeting, there was a question if MRCs want their own elevator pitches. She asked the group to consider having one for ourselves. Katie offered to help work through it. There are a couple of potential ones on our website. Anna modified one to put on our 2020 factsheet. There was general consensus that it would be good to have one. There was discussion about the need to have two elevator speeches for one entity, and ours can consist of 2 sentences – the NWSI one, and then another that is for us.

An elevator pitch is very quick with simple language and functions as a communication tool. A mission statement is longer and functions as a decision-making tool. There was a comment that the shorter mission statement on the website was preferable. We can change some words from the NWSI elevator pitch, and this should not be very time consuming.

The group decided to form a subcommittee, and they can bring some options back to the group. Kes, Gwendolyn, and Katie will be on the subcommittee.

COORDINATOR'S UPDATE (Anna)

Some membership terms are ending. Elsa, Kelly, and Ed requested reappointment for a 3-year term. Matt and Mike's terms are ending at the end of the year, and they are not seeking reappointment. They have a lot of other commitments, but want to stay engaged. Matt will keep leading the forage fish work. Mike is interested in taking on a technical advisor role. This is a way to say that the MRC has identified him as a technical expert that we can reach out to as needed. He has been asked to be on a radio show in Port Townsend, and he said he will plug the work of the MRC. There are 3 new applications – our Executive Committee will be reviewing them and providing recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners.

At the staff meeting, the topic of joint meetings was discussed. Anna asked the group if they are interested in holding a virtual joint meeting with another MRC. There was discussion that this is a good opportunity, especially for social networking. There could be a social hour. We could

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have a meeting that has different breakout rooms based off of interest (outreach, monitoring, restoration, etc.). There was discussion about using Slack, and setting up different channels that other MRCs can access. Katie will ask about using it. However, we need to be sure we are following certain rules while communicating. There was still support for doing a trivia, game, or some sort of challenge with the other MRCs. Maybe each MRC can host a round of trivia. We could also have bingo cards for when pets show up on screen.

Anna sent out an email about the upcoming ILIO meeting. There will be a presentation on a mitigation credit program for creosote pilings. They will also discuss initial results of their survey.

Anna showed photos from Representative Rick Larsen's visit. During this visit, Kelly shared about restoration work. They visited Seahorse Siesta and Sunlight Shores. She also showed photos of construction at Seahorse Siesta.

NWSC GRANT REPORTS

Forage Fish Monitoring

Monitoring continues at Cornet Bay, Hidden Beach, and Glendale. We completed 5 years of post-restoration monitoring at Ala Spit, and have discontinued monitoring there. Thanks to volunteers Karen Scharer and Matt Colston for monitoring that site!

Monitoring at Seahorse Siesta will resume in November for the winter months (November-February). Hoypus Point will be added as a new site starting this month. Ann is organizing a volunteer training hosted by Lisa Hillier from WDFW. These new volunteers will assist existing teams at Hidden Beach and Seahorse Siesta, and will likely start sampling at Sunlight Shores as an additional site.

Update: There is no data from WDFW yet. Thank you to Matt for making this a successful season!

Needs assessment

The Needs Assessment process is well underway. A team of MRC members will launch interviews in November with plans to conclude interviews by mid-February. The ILIO is preparing two questions to be added to the questionnaire and training sessions for the interviewers have helped polish the questions and format. We have extended the schedule to an anticipated final report to the MRC by April, 2021. The MRC Needs Assessment team includes Andi Kopit, Ed Halloran, Randy Berthold, Kelly Zupich, Anna Toledo and Barbara Bennett, Project Lead.

Update: They are shifting the timeline a little to add some questions from ILIO's survey. Barbara is excited to have a great team!

OTHER REPORTS

NW Straits Commission/Foundation

Update at meeting.

Update: none

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Island Location Integrating Organization

Update at meeting.

Update: Barbara encouraged the group to attend the next meeting, which will be on Tuesday at 1pm.

Salmon Recovery Technical & Citizen Committee

Update at meeting.

Update: SRTCC is working on updating its bylaws. They did a presentation about the Greenbank Marsh Restoration Project, which included sharing about lessons learned. They will not be pursuing construction at that site, as sea level rise will likely cause issues at the water table there. Unfortunately houses are built in flood plains.

LEADERSHIP REPORTS

Chair: There is a potential opportunity to partner with the Whidbey Island Arts Council. There would be a project that has a portion about science, and then a portion about art that is related to the science. They would like to focus on orcas, then seaweeds. It is a lot of fun and a good model. Gwendolyn, Andi, Barbara, and Hannah are interested in this. We might be able to contribute some funding for supplies. The kids who participate will be able to take supplies home and continue to use them. Kelly will keep them in the loop, and it should start next year.

County Lead: None

COMMUNITY COMMENT FORUM AND Q&A FROM THE PUBLIC:

Jill Lipoti thanked the group, and commented that this meeting was very informative.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business and no further comments, the meeting adjourned at 4:58pm.