

Clean Bay Backers: Citizen Advisory Committee to the DNR for the Lower Green Bay and Fox River Area of Concern

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, November 12, 2014, 3-5 pm

Jack Day Environmental Education Center, 90 Bay Beach Road, Green Bay

Meeting Goals:

1. Provide input on the Bay Beach project
2. Continue discussion about CAC direction for 2015

Attendees: Bill Hafs, Pat Finder-Stone, Bruce Deadman, Angela Pierce, Kathy Lefebvre, Megan O'Shea, Dotty Juengst, Chad Cook, Janet Smith, Jeff Mazanec, Julia Noordyk, Annette Pelegrin, also from Leadership GB: Mussie Tuclezion, Gina Anderson, Mike Demerath, Tricia Garrison

Agenda

Day at the Bay Tricia Garrison, NEW Water & Leadership Green Bay committee member- The "Day by the Bay" is an idea to plan an event that helps the community envision: What could the waterfront be? The purpose is to garner public support for a better waterfront by providing outreach to families. This Leadership Green Bay committee is thinking about an Earth Day event, and April 2015 time frame. They would like to affiliate with other organizations so that the event can be repeated into the future. They want to co-brand with another organization to keep it going. Their committee would do the work for the first event and then hand it off to others. Their committee needs to know how we would like to be involved before their next meeting Dec. 16th. A Clean Bay Backers ad hoc subcommittee led by Bruce Deadman will respond to the Leadership Green Bay request.

Bay Beach Restoration Angela Pierce, Bay-Lakes RPC-Angela provided a review of work done to date. Her group was granted an Urban Waters grant to take a look at Bay Beach and test bacteria on beaches in the area. They tested water, sand, & tributaries. Most bacteria happened during stormwater events at outfall areas. UW-Oshkosh partnered with the testing. In 2012, 2013 Bay Beach e-coli levels were good. Blue Green Algae (Microcystin) levels were higher in end of July/August as expected, but not above threshold levels. So if Bay Beach had been an operational beach, in years 2012 & 2013 (waiting for 2014 tests), Bay Beach would not have had any beach closures.

The second part of the project involves redesign plans. Engineers have completed redesign plans and city of GB has approved. The plan includes dunes, dune grass, covering the break wall with sand and dune vegetation, phragmites removal, and boardwalks to the water in 3 different locations. This is typical of other beaches in Lake Michigan, like Egg Harbor. The water clarity is ok a little way out into the bay. Goey muck is only near the shore; it is nice and sandy further out. Getting over the break wall is the main safety issue. This is just a design; there is no timeline.

The City of Green Bay wants further testing on PCBs, heavy metals and mercury. The project is gathering momentum. While a beach would require maintenance (concern of park department), it would bring money in. Perhaps economic studies are needed. The action plan is next-what steps need to be done to get it swimmable?

Angela asked the Clean Bay Backers: What do we have for a vision of Bay Beach? The beach restoration relates to the "Beach Closings/Recreational Restrictions" Beneficial Use Impairment (BUI)." Note: AOCs have 14 possible BUIs and Green Bay has 13 out of the possible 14. Bay Beach closed in 1943. Megan is encouraged to hear bacteria and toxic algae problems are below recommended levels. This has a pretty good chance at finding funding. Funding for monitoring should be pursued. Monitoring should be ongoing (UWGB/NEW Water?). Politically we have an opportunity to show this project and get support: a summer gathering to show our vision may be appropriate. Per Megan, from the perspective of the AOC program-we are meant to address toxic sediment issues, and somewhat non-point source water pollution. The AOC program was not meant to address public access issues. Chad noted that the Menominee CAC was involved with spring boarding AOC work into a bigger plan of public access and city development. Angela asked for input and we decided for the Bay Beach Restoration Action Plan Vision:
"To restore and sustain a healthy, safe, attractive, and swimmable beach at Bay Beach."

How to move the CAC forward to 2015- Chad Cook, UW-Extension. We started a discussion to figure out where the CAC is going. Our DNR connection and leadership has changed. Science, community, and politically connected people are a part of this group and that's a strength. Successful AOCs have a very strong CAC. Our original purpose was to provide advice to the DNR as programs are developed, act as a counterbalance to DNR, support education & outreach, bring diverse stakeholders together (agencies and local community). We need DNR to clarify: What level of engagement and involvement does the DNR want from the CAC? We need to look at other AOCs and look at other successful CACs. How do we exist in a way that allows us to do the things we want to do? We need rough project ideas scoped out for Megan. We could ask for a grant for staff time.

Other announcements and key dates Committee members decided we should meet earlier than the 3rd Thursday in December to continue these discussions, so Annette will send out a Doodle poll.

Adjourn 5 pm