

January 11, 2016

As voted by the Board of Trustees and in accordance with the notice of the meeting, the monthly Workshop Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Portland Water District was held in the Nixon Training Center at the general offices of the District, 225 Douglass Street, Portland, Maine on January 11, 2016. In attendance from staff were Messrs. Miller, Crovo, Kane, Firmin, Wallace, Johnson, and Messes. Demers and Katsiaficas. Mary Cerullo and Ivy Frignoca of the Friends of Casco Bay and Peter Bennett, Esq. were also in attendance.

All Trustees were present with the exception of Trustees Garrison and Swinton.

President Cote convened the meeting at 6:38 p.m.

Update on Activities of Casco Baykeeper. Mary Cerullo, Friends of Casco Bay Associate Director and incoming Casco Baykeeper Ivy Frignoca provided an update to the Board on the activities of the Friends of Casco Bay and Casco Baykeeper.

Ms. Frignoca began the presentation and introduced herself as the new Casco Baykeeper. She last worked for the conservation law foundation. She has been on the job for one week. Ms. Frignoca gave a brief biography of her experience. She asked the Trustees to introduce themselves and express their areas of interest.

Ms. Cerullo then carried on the presentation. She has been with the Friends of Casco Bay for 19 years. The mission is to improve and protect the environmental health of Casco Bay. The group started as a citizens' group in 1989. They work on a variety of issues, which Ms. Cerullo identified. The issues include overboard discharges, discharges of storm and sewer water into Casco Bay, clean up of oil spills, and keeping contaminants out of Casco Bay.

The organization focuses on water quality issues. Science, public education and outreach and advocacy are among the areas that the organization provides information to the public about. Data provided by the Friends of Casco Bay is used by many organizations, and is used to upgrade water classification for regions on the Bay.

Citizen stewards who are volunteers, provide water quality monitoring around the Bay. Samples are taken at 35 sites around the Bay. Surface samples are taken twice a day - 7:00am and 3:00pm. A Casco Bay Health Index is created from the data collected by the volunteers. Sampling is done year round at 10 profile sites around the Bay on a monthly basis. The monitoring identifies what areas need a closer look and deeper sampling.

Nitrogen levels are of concern to the Bay. Ms. Cerullo explained what happens when nitrogen levels are too high, and identified where excess nitrogen comes from, including storm water runoff and sewage treatment plants, as well as pet waste, fertilizers and livestock. Too much nitrogen leads to a rise of slime. Excess nitrogen creates algae blooms, leading to carbon dioxide being released in the water due to algae decay. Coastal waters also suffer from acidification; this is being studied by the organization, using baby clams to study the effect that acidity has on young clams and other growing things.

Bayscaping is a program created by the organization. The elements of the program include water quality monitoring, education and recognizing those who keep pesticides and chemicals out of the Bay.

A report has been issued by the organization called the Changing Casco Bay. It will be updated at the annual meeting being held later in January. Ms. Cerullo expressed appreciation to the District for being a valued partner to the Friends of Casco Bay.

Ms. Frignoca then addressed the Board and explained what will be happening in the Bay in the coming months as far as testing is concerned, and described the data that will be collected in the Bay. She asked what kinds of monitoring the District was doing in the Presumpscot River; Mr. Miller explained other organizations monitor the Presumpscot, the District does not monitor the River.

Ms. Frignoca asked the Board to identify the issues it was concerned about. President Cote stated that running the treatment plant in Portland is a concern to the Board as Portland has a high sewer rate, and there are economic concerns to running the plant in Portland and passing on increased fees. He expressed a preference for reducing nitrogen levels by controlling the flow of contaminants into the Bay as opposed to the having to make plant improvements, putting pressure on municipalities to respond. Both Ms. Cerullo and Ms. Frignoca indicated that remediation by stopping storm water flow is preferable to forcing municipalities to deal with plant improvements. Nitrogen limits will begin to be addressed in upcoming NPDES permits, but as of yet, there has not been a nitrogen criteria established by either EPA or DEP.

Maine has been trying to create a matrix to set levels, taking into consideration the levels of nitrogen and the characteristics of the receiving waters.

Trustee Libby noted that the City is reviewing its comprehensive plan, and is anticipating an increase in population of 15,000 by 2030. The goal is to keep Portland 25% of the population of Cumberland County. He asked if they knew about the history of the industries on the Portland peninsula, and said there were studies that exist delineating the toxins released in the area by businesses. Ms. Cerullo said she was very familiar with the studies and has created an educational activity using the historical studies.

Trustee Levinsky asked what had been noticed about the traffic in the harbor, and asked what had changed in the last 10 years, and how it impacted the Bay. Ms. Cerullo indicated more kayakers are in the Bay, as are small sail boats training sailors. Fewer ships are coming in to the oil terminal in South Portland. Cruise ships are no longer allowed to dump gray water when they come into port. There is also a sizeable increase in the number of people using pump out facilities on their private vessels as well.

Ms. Frignoca thanked the Board for inviting them to speak to the Board.

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Executive Session with Peter Bennett, Esq. regarding Labor Union Negotiations.

Pursuant to 1 M.R.S. Section 405 6(D), the Board went into executive session to discuss the status of labor union contract negotiations with counsel.

A motion was made by Trustee Dreger and seconded by Trustee Lunt to go into executive session to discuss labor negotiations with attorney Bennett.

The Executive Session began at 7:30 p.m. and ended at 8:00 p.m.

The meeting was then adjourned.

Submitted by,

Donna Katsiaficas
Clerk