

MARYLAND
BOAT ACT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (BAAC)
MEETING SUMMARY

October 7, 2020

Attendees: BAAC Chair Thornell Jones and Vice Chair Jon Sheller, BAAC members Russ Dwyer, Joe Hellner, Bob Nickel, Steve Kling, Amy Craig, and Ramona Trovato. Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Asst. Secretary –Aquatic Resources Bill Anderson, BAAC Liaison Mike Simonsen, DNR Fishing and Boating Services members Jeannine Moaney, Karen Knotts, and Ann Williams. Guests and members of the public were also in attendance during the meeting.

Call to Order: Mr. Jones called the meeting to order and asked the members to introduce themselves. He then explained the role of the BAAC.

Ground Rules: Mr. Jones went over the rules for the virtual public meeting.

Presentation of 2020 Boating Regulatory Requests: Mr. Simonsen discussed the following requests.

- A. **Harris Creek/Talbot County:** The request is for a 6-knot speed limit at all times in Upper Harris Creek, east of Cummings Creek.

Petitioner Mr. Chase Sanders shared he has lived in the immediate area for 20 years and is worried about someone getting hurt due to excessive speed, especially while operating personal water craft (PWC). Mr. Sanders explained that the DNR survey buoy was very helpful and that the buoy’s presence helped in slowing down boating traffic.

Natural Resources Police (NRP) Officer Hellwig stated he has not noticed very many PWC, mostly just recreational and commercial fishing boats in this waterway area. He mentioned there have been commercial violations in the area. Mr. Hellner asked what type of commercial violations? Officer Hellwig stated most were conservation related – too many small crabs and oysters. Mr. Dwyer mentioned he has talked to some watermen, and they have not had any problems in this waterway area. Mr. Sheller visited the area and advised that in his opinion, a speed limit is not needed at this time.

Mr. Simonsen shared that communications from constituents during the DNR survey period showed none “In Favor” or “Opposed”. Mr. Dwyer made a motion for “No Change” and Mr. Nickel seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous for “No Change”.

- B. **Tred Avon River/Talbot County:** The request is for a 6-knot speed limit at all times beginning at the entrance/intersection into Jacks Creek continuing upriver and ending in the vicinity of the Easton Point Landing/boat ramp by BEACON RED #22.

Petitioner Ms. Paris spoke about the increased boating traffic in this waterway area and presented a video supporting her position. Proponent Mr. Sean Mallin stated he witnessed an accident in 2019. Mr. Nickel questioned whether Mr. Mallin reported it to the NRP, and Mr. Mallin explained he did not.

During the meeting's public comment period, two citizens spoke "In Favor" and seven citizens spoke in "Opposing" the petition request.

Mr. Nickel questioned how many violations were there in the past year. NRP Officer Hellwig shared he did not have a specific number. Mr. Dwyer mentioned that NRP used to provide reports. Mr. Dwyer questioned Officer Hellwig on how long ago was he asked to provide this information. Officer Hellwig shared that it was around July 4, 2020, but he never got a chance to acquire the report. Mr. Dwyer then questioned Officer Hellwig if there were other NRP officers to assist him? Officer Hellwig replied yes.

Mr. Dwyer made a motion of "No Change" and Mr. Hellner seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous of "No Change". Ms. Trovato shared concerns that the NRP Officer's information was so limited.

- C. **Deep Creek Lake/North Glade Cove/Garrett County:** A regulatory request forwarded by the Deep Creek Lake – Policy Review Board (PRB) for a minimum wake zone (6-knots or below at all times) from the mouth of North Glade Cove to the head of the waterway.

Over the last two years, this regulatory request was previously discussed by the Deep Creek Lake – PRB. Per policy, PRB board member Mr. Huffman formed a subcommittee, which included PRB member Bob Sutton, NRP Sgt. Mike Friend, and DNR staff members Eric Null and Michael Grant.

Mr. Sutton shared that the PRB forwarded this new regulation request based on the fact that the North Glade Cove waterway contains the largest homeowners association marina on Deep Creek Lake. Mr. Sutton stated that Sky Valley Homeowners Association Marina is home to 154 boats, 25 PWCs and 200 kayaks. He said there are an additional 25 powerboats on neighboring properties inside North Glade Cove and the area is commonly used by inner tube and raft type users during hot summer days. Mr. Sutton explained there are many obstacles and he feels that an accident is waiting to happen. Mr. Sutton shared his observation that the presence of the DNR survey buoy substantially slowed traffic into the North Glade Cove area. He also mentioned that Sky Valley Homeowners Association has spent \$20K each of the last four to five years in repairing damage

to docks that are hinge pinned together. Mr. Sutton also claimed that Sky Valley Homeowners Association is on track toward spending an additional \$100K in shoreline repair and restoration.

On behalf of the NRP, Mr. Simonsen read the NRP Officer's submitted report.

Mr. Hellner made a motion to "Approve" the regulatory request from the PRB and Mr. Kling seconded the motion. The BAAC voted six "In Favor", one "Opposed" and one "Abstained". The vote by the BAAC, passed to "Approve" the PRB regulatory request.

Old Business: Regarding the request by the U.S. Naval Academy Sailing Department for a 6-knot speed limit at all times, 220 yards from the U.S. Naval Academy, NRP Officer Jason Hayes for Area 3 – Anne Arundel County, explained this petition was discussed at the October 1, 2020 BAAC public meeting. Officer Hayes shared he had changed his position, because of the public comments of concern that were shared during that meeting. Officer Hayes, for the record, explained there should not be a 6-knots all time speed limit from the Rte. 450 Bridge to the Spa Creek entrance due to safety concerns of all waterway users. Chair - Mr. Jones shared it was the recommendation of the BAAC for "No Change" and thanked Officer Hayes for updating his statements for the record.

Regarding the Tred Avon River/Talbot County regulation change request – Mr. Dwyer mentioned he would like the NRP next time, to be more prepared for providing information and statistics.

Adjourned: 8:15 p.m. / Amended Version