

CLUA, Inc.  
June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2008  
7:00 pm, Kilby Cream

Start & End: Very loose time-frame. Attendance: ~40? (24 signed sheet)

#### **Joint meeting with Cecil Land Trust**

- CLUA Guest Speaker: Bill Kilby - Cecil County agricultural land preservation programs

The Cecil Land Trust meeting began at 6:30 p.m., and, after conducting their business went straight into a discussion of the Friends of Garrett Island, at about 6:50 p.m. CLUA members arrived during the discussion.

#### **Garrett Island:**

- Since Garrett Island was transferred to Federal Ownership in ... it has become a part of the Blackwater Refuge, and is administered by the National Wildlife Refuge Service (NWRS) under the terms of the Refuge Improvement Act of 1997.
- The Act recognizes "Big Six" permitted uses that may be allowed on specific refuge sites, based upon their location, condition and capability/capacity for management (to be able to control the frequency and purpose of visits):
  - Hunting
  - Fishing
  - Environmental Education
  - Wildlife Observation
  - Wildlife Photography
  - Interpretive Education
- Ms. Suzanne Baird, the Blackwater NWRS manager, stated that since it is so far from her other responsibilities, and since she does not have any staff to assign to the Island, she has had to keep it closed, a default condition she would like to change.
- She is working with MD State agencies to work out some kind of management structure, and is very interested in working with citizens groups, hence her presence at this meeting.
- She urges the formation of a "Friends of Garrett Island" group that could engage in fundraising, advocacy, and potentially in the management of the resource. A similar organization is in place at Blackwater.
- Chuck Doty, a resident of Aberdeen and visitor to the island for 34 of the past 35 years, supported this suggestion.
- Cecil Land Trust will continue to support this effort.
- Apparently Friends of Garrett Island: See <http://www.garrettisland.org/>, a Perryville-based group, was not represented at this meeting.

#### **Bill Kilby - Cecil County agricultural land preservation programs. "How land preservation works"**

- Some experts in the group:
  - Sandra Edwards of Eastern shore Land Conservancy (ESLC), which works in six Eastern Shore counties, coming up into Cecil County as far as the Canal and manages the ~5000 acre Sassafras Rural Legacy Area
  - Becky Howie of Maryland Environmental Trust (MET), a quasi-governmental organization working in partnership with 55 individual land trusts throughout the state.

- There are several land preservation programs, and two major processes: Donations and Purchases.
  - Donated Easements: This farm (the Strohmeier Lane property on which Kilby Cream is located) is a donated easement. The Kilbys have given away their development rights in return for tax incentives. Depending upon the situation, this may be a more attractive route than selling these easements. The paperwork is certainly a lot easier. Farmers can get a 100% deduction from taxes for 15 years; non-farmers can get 50% deduction.
  - Sold Easements, mainly through the Maryland Ag Land Preservation Fund (MALPF) program. A landowner offers to sell an easement (their development rights) at a specific price. Appraisers assess the value of the easement, taking into consideration its proximity to other eased lands with the intention of building large contiguous blocks of farmland around Cecil. These opportunities are ranked and, as funding comes available, the transaction may take place.
- Cecil Land Trust administers the 16000 acre Fair Hill Rural Legacy Area, which has access to preferential funding from the State.
  - FHRLA includes the Fair Hill Natural Resources Management Area, some 5600 acres.
  - Over the past nine years, the CLT has contacted all significant land owners in the FHRLA and currently has 33 blocks of land on its priority list. See map.
  - The FHRLA has recently reached a major milestone, in that CLT has surpassed the halfway mark on protected properties.
  - 22% of the area is developed or slated for development. This leaves 4500 acres still available for preservation
  - CLT is currently focused on building contiguous properties in the Calvert area and the Little Elk Creek.
  - The Land Trust submits an annual funding request and works with the individual land owners to reach agreement on easements (working on both donations and purchases). Priorities can change during the negotiations.
  - MET helps with writing the easements, which typically contain wording to allow on-farm value-added activities (such as the ice-cream operation) to promote agricultural viability
- How can CLUA help the CLT
  - Through the political process. Make land preservation a priority
  - Through financial support. CLT is seeking a yearly commitment to afford much needed permanent office staff (right now, it has all been voluntary)
  - Through outreach. Talk to friends who own land and encourage them to preserve it.
    - Minimum size for a donated easement is ~25 acres, perhaps less if it is contiguous to an already eased property.
    - Forest lands are just as important as farmed lands
    - In RLAs, the cultural and historical character of the area is also a consideration
- CLT history ... waiting on handout
- CLT is the younger, uglier brother to the ESLC. Sandra Edwards, Lauree Free and Wendy Moon are active in both organizations and provide a bridge. There is no competition for easements. There is competition for funding.

## Update on new Comprehensive Plan — COC members

**Ken Wiggins:** There are linkages among the seven subcommittees; In **Land Use**, we're considering two additional districts: An Ag District and a Metro District, to streamline the process to allow new towns along the transit corridor, per Vernon's vision. In **Economic Development**, our big question is whether we have enough commercial and industrial land set aside.

**Ed Cairns:** In Infrastructure and Transportation, we're focused on mass transit rather than road building.

**Diana Broomell:** In Ag, Preservation & Minerals, we're developing a list of value-added farm uses (agribusiness) and will have speakers on the subject from Newcastle & Lancaster counties at our August meeting.

**Rupert Rossetti:** In **Water Resources**, which is a new element as a result of 20006 HB 1141, we are charged with assessing whether our rate of growth will exceed our drinking water supplies or our wastewater treatment capacity and with assessing how our pattern and type of development affects the non-point source amount of nutrients and sediment entering receiving waters, be they freshwater streams or the Bay itself. We are due to deliver our current state assessment to the full Committee at our July Meeting. In September, the full committee will develop future growth scenarios and WRE will plug these back into our models to ensure that we have sufficient water and wastewater capacity and that we select a scenario that minimizes any adverse impacts from non-point source loadings.

## CLUA Business Items

### Endorsement of County Commissioner Candidates

#### Recommendations from Political Committee:

- **First District:** We recommend that CLUA endorse and support **Jim Mullin** for county commissioner.  
Jim has a history of active involvement with CLUA, has significant leadership in preserving open space, and is committed to managing and limiting growth in the county. His background in land appraisal can inform county land purchase decisions. He has the ability to work cooperatively for solutions based on good land use and stewardship principles.
- **Fifth District:** We recommend that CLUA endorse and support **Sharon Weygand** for county commissioner.  
Sharon showed strong support for CLUA's land use positions. Her experience and background in local government provide a track record of environmental commitment and creatively getting results with combinations of public and private grant revenue sources.

Nancy Valentine gave a brief report regarding the Political Committee review process, which was chaired by Ron Hartman and included Paul Hughes (who provided the interview venue), Nancy Valentine, Diana Broomell, Charles Herzog, and Ted Patterson.

- Each candidate answered a questionnaire designed to determine the candidate's alignment with 12 CLUA Policies.

- This was followed by a set of interviews which focused more upon how effective a leader they would be, and how capable and ready they are to take up the role.
- Transcripts are available on the CLUA website.

Motion to approve the recommendations of the Political Committee was made, seconded and carried unanimously, and the committee was congratulated on their thorough and timely work.

Next steps:

- Outcome will be posted on the CLUA website [www.cecillanduse.org/](http://www.cecillanduse.org/) along with transcripts of interviews from all 4 candidates
- Candidates can reference our endorsement
- George will write a letter to the Whig after web site update
- Board to meet to discuss funding support and a potential candidates forum in the Fall
- Members are encouraged to do everything they can to support these candidates
- Anyone who would like their donations to CLUA to be restricted to lobbying, outreach and education rather than Political Action should let Wendy Moon or George Kaplan know. We will have a sequestered fund set up for political activities.

#### **Update on Fly Ash**

- Commissioners to vote on whether to restrict use in county on July 8, 1 p.m.
- Jeanette Hillyer has called a wide array of governmental agencies and politicians, including the Governor, MDE, Sen. Mikulski, etc. She expressed concern that MDE would grant the permit. Jeannette said that they might bring the stuff in by barge, which would require a dredging of Furnace Bay.
- George Kaplan has done some research and observed that:
  - The quarry is right on the edge of Furnace Bay
  - Fly ash has leaked into the local environment from two places in Maryland where it was deposited.
    - Anne Arundel County - into wells
    - Charles County - into a Potomac inlet (swamp)
  - MDE has recently released new regulations making Fly Ash an industrial solid waste and requiring liners in disposal pits
  - They are gambling that the liners will last for hundreds of years
  - Of all the places where a fly ash dump site has been located, this is the only one that borders tidal waters, in fact, half of it is in the Critical Area
  - The County Commissioners plan to vote on July 8 to prohibit the use of fly ash in the county in landfills and for mine reclamation
- Cynthia Rossetti, CLT. This is reminiscent of what happened at Woodlawn in the 1970s. The State forced the county to accept Bridgestone Firestone's vinyl chloride at the Woodlawn dump, then the county became liable for the clean-up when it became a superfund site!
- Next steps:
  - Fill the Elk Room up on 8<sup>th</sup> July, 1 p.m., County Admin Building
  - Write to your Federal and State representatives and cc the County Commissioners

#### **Code Home Rule Schedule:**

- June 5 and 17 - Public Hearings held
- July 22 - Resolution to be introduced at Commissioners' meeting to put Code Home Rule on November ballot

- August 5 - Commissioners' vote on resolution (4 yes votes required)
- August 18 - Deadline for resolution to reach Election Board
- November 4 - General Election, voters decide
- More information at <http://cecillanduse.org/resources/Code4Cecil.html>

Next Steps:

- Ken Wiggins has volunteered to put together a tri-fold flyer

Announcements:

- Cecil County Fair: July 18–26 — political booths need volunteers
- **July Newsletter deadline coming up.** Send material to Ken Wiggins at [milheritage@aol.com](mailto:milheritage@aol.com)
- **Next CLUA Meeting: Wednesday, July 30, 7 p.m., North East library**
- Fundraiser Picnic will be on September 13<sup>th</sup> at Kilby Cream
- Rupert Rossetti attended DNR's Future Search, a two-day strategic planning session. The outcome was the formation of a set of DNR / Stakeholder subcommittees to set a future direction for:
  - Growth Management
  - Green / Blue Infrastructure / Land & Water Resource Stewardship
    - Rupert a member
  - Public Awareness and Support
  - Habitat Restoration
    - Jim Mullin now a member
  - Work Force

Anyone who would like to become a member of one of these committees please let Rupert know at [RupertRossetti@aol.com](mailto:RupertRossetti@aol.com). Jim Mullin, in his role as the Executive Secretary of the MD Oystermen Association, has been added to the Habitat Restoration committee.
- The State-level environmental groups, led by CBF and the League of Conservation Voters, would like to hold an Upper Shore Growth Forum to help shape their 2009 legislative agenda. Anyone interested in participating, or in helping to organize this forum, please contact Rupert at [RupertRossetti@aol.com](mailto:RupertRossetti@aol.com).