



**CALVERT MARINE MUSEUM  
COVE POINT LIGHT STATION COMMISSION  
Meeting Minutes  
Monday, May 10, 2021**

The regular meeting of the Calvert Marine Museum (CMM) Cove Point Light Station Commission was held on Monday, May 10, 2021, via ZOOM.

**PRESENT:** Henry Gabelnick – Vice Chair, Leslie Garcia, Brenda Hollweger, Reverend Albert Lane III, Valerie Miller, David Ware

**ABSENT:** Kathleen Porecki – CMM Office Specialist I

**STAFF:** Jeff Murray – CMM Director, Rachelle Green – CMM Deputy Director

**1. Call to Order**

Mr. Murray called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m.

**2. Welcome New Commission Members**

Mr. Murray welcomed new Commission members Burt Lane, Valerie Miller, Leslie Garcia, and David Ware. Each member introduced themselves and provided background information.

All commission members are required to complete a Financial Disclosure Statement for the year prior as a requirement to serving on the board.

Officer elections will be elected at the next meeting.

**3. Approval of Minutes**

**Action: Mr. Gabelnick made a motion, seconded by Ms. Hollweger, and moved to approve the November 18, 2019 Minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously.**

**Report from CMM Director – Jeffrey Murray**

Mr. Murray provided a brief history of Cove Point. The CPLH is an active aid to navigation on the Chesapeake Bay. The site was transferred to Calvert County in 2000. The Calvert County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) recently signed a second 20-year lease agreement for the Coast Guard to continue to have access rights to the lantern room.

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The spring of 2020, lead abatement was done, soil with lead paint was removed, and the fog bell building was repainted. The parking lot was repaved.

The broadband project is complete. A cable went across the Chesapeake Bay that came up at CPLH. It was supposed to provide backup communications around the bay for the U.S. Navy. The Coast Guard has not yet transferred the brick building to us.

Commission members requested a tour of the grounds.

#### 4. **Site Update** – Rachelle Green, Deputy Director

Ms. Green provided her work cell number so the group can call with any concerns.

She made significant improvements to the Visitor Center, grounds, and Keeper's House. The CMM Exhibits Department designed and installed a new sign on the main gate. It clearly states visitation hours, site map photo, history of the site, and a QR Code to connect to a video of the property in case we are not open when people visit. The electrical boxes and equipment will be buried once we identify funding.

- a. **Rentals** – The Keeper's Quarters were completely renovated and serve as rental units. Rentals are going well as a property where people can vacation and socially distance.
- b. **Improvements to Visitors Center** – The wainscoting and bathroom are freshly painted. Lighthouse photos will hang on the walls of the newly created flexible meeting space. This CPLSC can use the space to meet.
- c. **Improvements to the Keeper's House** – Ms. Green shared slides with photos of the interior updated with new couches, rugs, dishware, and back doors. We hired a professional landscaper to visit twice each year.
- d. **Landscaping** – Landscaping improvements were made around the rental property, visitor center, flagpole, and the raised septic area so it looks nice and neat. The next phase of the plan is to secure funding to replace the rusting and unattractive chain link fence that surrounds the property. Additional landscaping will be done in specific areas that have clumps of vegetation.
- e. **Public (open) hours for 2021 Season** – Cove Point is open to the public on Wednesdays and Sundays from 12 p.m. to 4 p.m., May through September. The Visitors Center is staffed by one volunteer and one CMM educator.

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Wednesdays and Sundays are check in / check out days for Keeper's House renters, and the properties are cleaned during this time frame. Last summer, both days were well attended. It also provides both a weekday and a weekend day for people who are visiting the area.

Mr. Murray will email the Volunteer Application to Commission members who want to volunteer to staff the Visitors Center. Please sign up with Volunteer Coordinator Sherry Reid.

#### 5. Discussion Regarding Potential Small Events at Cove Point

There were past events at Cove Point that were disruptive. A former resident complained to the BOCC, and we were no longer allowed to host weddings at Cove Point. Commission members expressed their belief that the former resident who complained did a disservice to people who want to hold events, as it would require a small amount of moderation to come to an agreement. This resident cut down many of his trees, which would have blocked the sound. Ms. Garcia suggested replanting trees to help block sound from residents.

Those living on Lighthouse Boulevard, especially those with young children, remain sensitive about people driving too fast, with no regard to the residents.

Mr. Murray asked for community support to pursue small weddings and events of 20-40 people at Cove Point, with two major requirements: No parking outside the gate; and audible music is not allowed. Live acoustic music, such as a small instrumental quartet, or recorded music that is not amplified loudly would be acceptable. The Commission discussed and is in full support of petitioning the BOCC for small weddings and events. Staff can set decibel levels for recorded music and will alert renters to decreased speed limits on the boulevard.

#### 6. Commissioner Comments

Long Range Site Plan – COVID derailed work on the site plan. Mr. Murray welcomed Commission member involvement going forward.

Landscaping – Ms. Garcia is a gardener and volunteered to walk the grounds with Ms. Green and discuss sustainable landscaping needs, identify plantings, and make a plan to engage visitors through beautiful gardens. Commission members asked to join. They will set a date and time.

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Beach Warning Signs – Six summers ago, several people drowned at Cove Point Beach due to strong currents under the surface of the water. One large and several small warning signs were posted. The large and some smaller signs washed away over time. That side of the beach also has a 100' drop, approximately 40' out. The Commission asked staff to replace 3 or 4 small warning signs and add an additional sign warning of the 100' drop in depth, and place signs on pathways to the beach, on county property.

Beach Access and Life Ring – A life ring is attached to the beach side of the fence on county property. The fence is locked with the combination available only to the renters. Volunteers used to know the code, but that changed, and they could no longer come to someone's rescue. Commission members think volunteers should have that code for emergencies.

Road Signs – The Commission would like road signage to be reworked so it is effective, attractive, and less invasive – possibly a totem. They do not want to road in to be littered with signs.

Mr. Murray will distribute the CPLSC Bylaws to new Commission members.

Mr. Gabelnick requested the flag is up every day, not just four hours during each of the two days. Staff will investigate getting a solar spotlight.

### 7. Next Meeting Date

The committee bylaws state the CPLS Commission meets four times a year, so the committee will start meeting quarterly instead of two times per year. The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for Monday, August 16, 2021, at 3:00 p.m. at Cove Point. Everyone will check in and confirm the date sometime in July.

### 8. Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:12 p.m.