



**Mobile Bay National Estuary Program
Business Resources Committee
August 10, 2022, 2:00 pm – 3:30 pm
118 N. Royal Street/Virtual,
MBNEP conference room/Zoom**



Agenda

Meeting Objectives:

- a) BRC Growth and Goals

1. Welcome and Introductions

BRC Co-Chairs:

Eliska Morgan, Thompson Engineering

Frank Smith, Wilkins Miller Wealth Management

2. Review and Approval of Minutes

3. New Business

- a) BRC Growth and Goals Discussion

4. Adjourn

Minutes

In Attendance

Eliska Morgan, Thompson Engineering
Frank Smith, Wilkins Miller
Beth Thomas, Alabama Power
Renie Kennemer, Thompson Engineering
Ellie Mallon, Osprey Initiative
Jeanette Kelson, WSP
Colette Boehm, Colette Boehm Freelance
Kellie Hope, Business Council of Alabama
Ashley Jones-Davis
Beth Thomas, Alabama Power
Jennifer Denson, Partners for Environmental Progress
Rusty Grice, Auburn University Shellfish Lab
Casey Gay Williams, Eastern Shore Chamber of Commerce

Staff

Henry Perkins

Takeaways

- The BRC has been updated on the status of various projects, including Growing the Gulf Coast, the Coastal Alabama Fisheries Fund, OystersAlabama.com, Growing the Gulf Coast, Alternative Packaging, and the Causeway Cleanup.

Eliska Morgan called the meeting to order at 3:05, and the minutes were approved by the committee without objection.

New Business

BRC Growth and Goals Discussion

Henry Perkins introduced the topic. The BRC has been heavily project focused, and not all members are necessarily engaged by this. In order to better serve the mission of the BRC, the BRC should determine what form it would like to take in the future.

A poll had been issued to members before this meeting to gauge current happiness with the program, and the results were discussed. Members were generally satisfied with the current work of the BRC, though there was feedback that the BRC should be a resource for the business community at large.

Eliska noted that in the past year the program had become more project driven than education or resource focused because there wasn't a clear benefit to the business community prior to the projects. She reiterated a need for direction if we were going to get back to being a resource.

Renie Kenner said that defining BRC goals alongside broader organization goals would be good for setting a direction, that it still wasn't clear what we should be doing.

Eliska noted that the goals are set in the CCMP, though there is a CCMP rewrite upcoming next year.

Henry noted that this made it an ideal time to define and reestablish BRC goals, to set a direction.

Ashley Jones Davis noted that the BRC wasn't in place when the original CCMP was created which could be why the goals are unclear, and asked if we need to be the storytellers and advocates for the business community. Do we need to be a voice or project based? They are different areas of focus.

Eliska noted the need for the BRC initially was to distinguish the NEP from Baykeeper and the Coastal Foundation, that this is a different type of organization and the goal was to educate those businesses to what the organization is and does. After that was accomplished with a subset of businesses, the question became well, we're all here, what now? Thus projects.

Ashley Jones Davis suggested a mini strategic planning session to hash these ideas out, looking back at the CCMP and the original mission of the BRC. Eliska agreed that this was a good idea.

Beth Thomas talked about the importance of understanding what the BRC could be for different sized businesses – i.e. a 5 person team cannot accomplish what Alabama Power can.

Henry Perkins noted the next question in the poll, are members satisfied with their ability to personally engage with the BRC and ongoing activities.

Casey Gay Williams said that she feels like the BRC has done more in the last 18 months than in all the time before then, and she is happy to be engaged as a part of it. That what made it reciprocal was supporting the mission, and that there are ways for business interests to dovetail with environmental interests.

Renie Kennemer thought revisiting our accomplishments as a group would be helpful, to discuss what worked and what didn't and why.

Eliska reiterated the need for a half day work session, something moderated and non-virtual.

Henry mentioned that the last meeting was very report heavy, and that he'd received some negative feedback about that. Maybe that info would be better put in a newsletter.

Rusty Grice mentioned the resources Sea Grant has available for people, and that the BRC to him is about networking and connecting with people. That this functions like a chamber but with an environmental focus.

Casey mentioned recruiting members from chambers, and representatives from each chamber. They are useful for getting info out to the business community.

Frank moved to adjourn the meeting at 2:50.