



**HOUSATONIC RIVER ESTUARY COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES**

Thursday, January 22, 2009

Shelton Community Center

41 Church Street, Shelton CT 06484

1. CALL OF THE MEETING/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairman Gesullo called the meeting to order at 7:15 P.M.

ATTENDANCE

Robert Gesullo, Chairman, Shelton

Lori Romick, Vice-Chairman, Milford

Scott Corner, (sitting in for Bill Rock) Commissioner, Stratford

Also in attendance:

Marianne Chaya, Clerk, HREC

Note: There was not a quorum for this meeting

2. PUBLIC PORTION OR GUEST

None

3. APPROVAL OF THE November 20, 2008 MEETING MINUTES

Since there was not a quorum there could not be a motion to approve the minutes.

Vice-Chairman Romick asked Marianne if she could make a slight revision to the November minutes changing the word "developer" to "landscaper the association hired" in reference to the tree cutting in Milford.

Marianne said she would revise the minutes and re-post them.

4. FINANCE REPORT

Chairman Gesullo reported that Jason Blake, who is not here tonight, called him with the financial status over the phone.

There has been a small change to the balance and remains around \$1700.

Ansonia and Orange still have not made their contributions.

We need to get started on locking in the 2009 contributions from each town.

The way this money was initially given to us is that we went to each town's Mayor/Selectman. I did have to go to the Board of Aldermen in Shelton and Milford for approval.

Chairman Gesullo commented that in each town you could go before each town's Board of Appropriation & Taxation and ask for money. I sat in a meeting in Shelton and found that there were several groups asking for funding. Maybe this is the way we should be going to get our future town contributions.

HREC Minutes should be considered a draft version until approved at the next regular meeting.

HREC Minutes submitted to the respective town's Town Clerk's office for legal posting requirements.

Tape recording of the meeting is available at Shelton City/Town Clerk's office.

Mr. Corner said he felt that now is the time to start asking for money because each town is getting ready to put their budget together.

Mr. Corner suggested that Chairman Gesullo send an email to Commissioner Rock to have him ask Stratford for a contribution to this Commission.

The Commissioners discussed the uses for the money – clerical, river cleanup, etc. They also discussed getting grant money and that they would have to partner with a non-profit group. We don't want to become a non-profit organization.

Chairman Gesullo said that now is the time to start asking for the funding from each town and he would go with each Commissioner if necessary. He will write up a communication for each of the town's requesting funding for the 2009-2010 budgets.

5. COMMISSIONER'S REPORTS – REMARKS AND/OR OUTREACH EFFORTS

Chairman Gesullo asked Mr. Corner how much it cost his group to get their name on the t-shirts for the river cleanup. Mr. Corner said he thought it was about \$250.

The river cleanup this year will be either the last weekend in April or as late as mid-May.

Vice-Chairman Romick said she wanted to make sure this year to take pictures of all the plastic bottles they scoop up from the cleanup. This is to send on to hopefully make an impact on the bottle bill legislation.

Mr. Corner said he wanted to make a point about all the debris washing down the river to Stratford. He said he sees it all the time when he goes over to the Valley Yacht Club. It all winds up in between the bridges. It is getting worse and worse. Somehow we have to get a handle on this. Last year we took out 20 tons of garbage, and what was there today looked like 20 tons. We are seeing tires, logs, cut trees, etc. He also mentioned the cleanup that is done as an ongoing basis at high tide.

The Commissioners discussed this Commission getting more involved in this type of endeavor of cleaning up the river.

6. DEP POSITION LETTER AND THE JAN 26 PUBLIC HEARING ON THE DENIAL FOR PERMITTING FOR CHROMIUM PROCESS - SHELTON

This issue is about Chromium Process Co. on the river in Shelton on Canal Street. The permits are up for renewal and the DEP wants to deny them the permits.

Chairman Gesullo commented that he doesn't know the history of this company; all he knows is what the DEP forwarded on. Our letter was to purely defend the river.

This Board wanted me to write a letter stating our position on the pollution to the river. We sent it to the DEP in support of their position, based on the reported findings by DEP. Those findings will be brought up at the hearing. Chairman

Gesullo said he is considering going to the hearing in Hartford. He mentioned that Mayor Lauretti stated he would be attending the hearing as well. Vice-Chairman Romick explained the process of a permit being taken away and the impacts. She also mentioned that her feeling is that this issue will be self-resolved and the costs would be at the taxpayer's expense. Mr. Corner explained to the Commissioners about a meeting he set up back in December for the marina and yacht club owners/operators to discuss the enforcement of the power washing regulations for the boats. The regulations are in effect now but they are going to enforce in the near future. The boat has to be boomed or the water has to be recaptured after it is washed. He explained the different ways they will have to capture the water. The Commissioners discussed this issue in length.

7. NEW BUSINESS

Chairman Gesullo commented that he wants our Commission to be able to support the river cleanups in a bigger way. Vice-Chairman Romick reported that she has been appointed to the Long Island Sound Council as Milford's representative. The Council has representatives both political and town appointed, and the Governor's appointee from every coastal town in the state. We have our own statutes and own sections. We take recommendations for anything that has to do with the Long Island Sound that goes up to the legislature for bill proposals. She mentioned that Commissioner Rock has been on this Council for years. Ms. Romick also reported that there is a Long Island Sound citizen's summit on Friday, March 6, at the Bridgeport Holiday Inn. The following is some of the correspondence Vice-Chairman Romick brought to the meeting to share with the Commissioners:

The legislation is back in for a 100' buffer along all the watersheds in the state. There is also legislation in process to work on storm water changes to tighten up. The newsletter from Rivers Alliance mentions that there is a new program from the DEP for towns – for economically sound development. This is being called a smart growth program to encourage towns to better manage projects and developments.

A newspaper article regarding the Riverwalk in Ansonia. The new harbor rules are in place for Milford. The Commissioners discussed a few of the new rules.

Another newspaper article regarding the Shelton canal. Baldwin Station tree cutting - development status – the Inland Wetlands officer has requested that the homeowners association to provide her with a detailed written plan of remediation for the spring. Do we want to go ahead with a letter stating that we are keeping an eye on this and we want to support them on their efforts on remediation? This letter would point out that we want to protect the river, protect sedimentation from coming into the river in respect to dredging issues, etc. Or should we wait and see what they propose? The Commissioners suggested waiting to see what the proposal is first.

Mr. Corner asked if this area was in the tidal wetlands? Vice-Chairman Romick answered no; it's inland wetlands because it's attached to the river. Tidal wetland areas are where the highest point the tide reaches, and you have wetness and specific plantings. That determines that delineation. This area is trees on a slope. What is left is leaf litter. They discussed the specifics of the area.

Mr. Corner reported that Stratford is next on the list for dredging the river. He stated that they probably are not going to dredge the 600K yards but may only do 300K yards because there is no commercial traffic. The dredging is from the mouth of the river up to the Route 1 bridge (Devon). This will be just short of the power plant.

8. NEXT MEETING DATE/LOCATION

The next meeting location will be Milford.

The Commissioners discussed Commissioner Rock's request to not have the meetings on Thursday's due to a business conflict. Marianne suggested calling the next meeting as a "special" if it falls on a different date, and at that meeting revise/adopt the meeting dates.

The Commissioners discussed what "day of the week" would be better since it seems obvious by the attendance tonight that the 4th Thursday of the month is bad for most of the Commissioners.

Vice-Chairman Romick mentioned that Commissioner-at-large Jeff Snyder has moved to Rhode Island.

The Commissioners discussed of possibly needing to replace the Commissioner-at-large at some point and Chairman Gesullo said he would email Jeff.

Chairman Gesullo commented that we have to address the issue of the absent Commissioners – are they going to make these meetings or not? What about alternate members?

Chairman Gesullo stated that he would send a communication regarding the attendance of this meeting.

The decision regarding the next meeting is that the next one would be called as a special meeting, perhaps Wednesday, March 25, in Milford.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Vice-Chairman Romick MOVED to adjourn. SECONDED by Commissioner Corner. All were in favor, the meeting adjourned at 8:25 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Marianne Chaya
Clerk, HREC