

***HOUSATONIC RIVER ESTUARY COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES***

***7:00 P.M., Thursday, April 24, 2008
Craft Room 1, Shelton Community Center
Shelton, CT***

1. CALL OF THE MEETING/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The meeting was called to order at 7:40 P.M. by Chairman Gesullo.
All in attendance pledged allegiance to the flag.

2. ATTENDANCE

Robert Gesullo, Chairman, Shelton
Lori Romick, Vice-Chairman, Milford
Phil Marcucio, Commissioner, Derby
Jeff Snyder, Member-at-large, Naugatuck

Absent:

Bill Urban, Commissioner, Ansonia
Jason Blake, Commissioner, Orange

Also in attendance:

Marianne Chaya, Clerk, HREC

3. PUBLIC PORTION OR GUEST

None

4. APPROVAL OF THE MARCH 27, 2008 MEETING MINUTES

Vice-Chairman Romick MOVED to accept the minutes from the March 27, 2008 meetings. SECONDED by Commissioner Snyder. A voice vote was taken; all were in favor. MOTION PASSED.

5. DISCUSSION OF THE TRUST & AGENCY ACCOUNT - CITY OF SHELTON

Chairman Gesullo reported that the Shelton Board of Aldermen approved this account. We did this to avoid setting up a bank account as a non-profit organization and would put us under some controls that we didn't want to do. This trust & agency was suggested and the City of Shelton would manage for us. They would cut checks, as we deemed necessary. I talked with Sharon Scanlon in Finance and she said they are ready to go now and would need a copy of the bylaws. I did tell her that we had some residual funds left in the general fund from the initial seed money from Shelton. I was hoping to turn everything over to Commissioner Blake tonight but he is not here. When each town sends their seed money for this Commission, it needs to be made out to the City of Shelton

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 Town Clerk's office.

Trust & Agency Account. Vice-Chairman Romick said that Milford would electronically do this.

Chairman Gesullo commented that he noticed that anything over \$100 he had to sign for. Vice-Chairman Romick said she thought that he didn't need to sign for it but just to approve.

Commissioner Marcucio and Chairman Gesullo discussed what would be necessary for getting the funds from Derby. They discussed the letter to be sent to each town for their contribution to this Commission. Vice-Chairman Romick said she would email her copy of the letter to Chairman Gesullo for him to revise as necessary and forward on to each Commissioner.

6. COMMISSIONER'S REMARKS & OUTREACH EFFORTS

Chairman Gesullo asked if the people in Derby knew that Commissioner Marcucio is Derby's representative to this Commission. Commissioner Marcucio said that the Mayor, Inland/Wetlands Commission and the town's engineer are aware. Discussion ensued.

Vice-Chairman Romick reported that she went to the NEMO (Non-point education for municipal officials) meeting that was held in Westport. I talked with John Rosen, who gave the presentation, who said this is really a town's set of tools for development. They go over specific types of development that have low runoff reduction in paved surfaces – going over different types of surfaces that will absorb rainwater before it gets into the rivers. I talked with him and said that I would come back before this group. I know that Milford and Orange have had this presentation and the other towns have not. I think it would be good if we had a centralized location and invite all the towns in the area. This would be for any of the Commissions, Public Works, municipal employees and members of the public are invited. Local land developers and landscapers could come to learn. They also talk about different projects, such as rain gardening, around the home to reduce runoff around the home.

Commissioner Marcucio talked about the problems in Derby with runoff and that P&Z are fighting it all the way. P&Z have their concerns about safety and don't want to reduce the width of new roads. They recently did a project with rain-guard and the problem they have now is maintenance. The reason they used them is so they didn't have to put in underground detention. What is happening is they get filled up with silt. These are the type of issues that keep coming up along with issues with homeowners and the lack of maintenance.

Vice-Chairman Romick said what she got out of it was that the buffer idea seems to be the best. The NEMO people suggested maybe be send a letter to each Mayor/Selectman requesting that any town property that abuts water or storm drains that go to water to be a 25' buffer zone of grass that is not cut. She also mentioned the end results of not having this type of buffer. They also suggest encouraging catch basin management in a timely basis.

There was discussion of the difficulty of getting all the Commissions to follow through with the practices. They also discussed getting all the Commissions to

attend this type of seminar where the people from NEMO could hear the challenges from all the boards.

Vice-Chairman Romick mentioned she also went to a GIS training.

After discussion of the NEMO workshops the Commissioners wanted time to absorb the information Vice-Chairman Romick presented to see what we could do about the promotion of the workshops at a regional roundtable.

Chairman Gesullo asked what is the difference between a watershed and an estuary? Vice-Chairman Romick answered that a watershed has no salt. The watershed feeds into the estuary.

Vice-Chairman Romick presented the summary Susan Peterson (DEP) sent to her. Ms. Peterson also sent her information on grants that are coming up that we could apply for. Someone has to write the grant and do the work, which includes quarterly reporting.

Chairman Gesullo asked if there was a way they could go after grant money for a start-up Commission without measurement goals? Vice-Chairman Romick said she didn't think so but we could go after display money for things like going to fairs and festivals (i.e., Oyster Festival or River fest) and set up a display. If we were to do any type of water quality monitoring with the Friends of the Housatonic River, there is plenty of grant money for that.

Chairman Gesullo said he'd like to get grant money for purposes of giving it to other people, such as groups doing something good to the river. He said that he has been going to several town finance meetings where groups go to the towns asking for grant money.

Commissioner Snyder suggested once we start getting some money from each town we could then go to the state representatives asking for matching funds. DEP could also be a source of matching funds.

7. REPORT FROM THE CT MARITIME COMMISSIONERS APRIL MEETING

Chairman Gesullo reported on his attendance at the CT Maritime Commission meeting that Doc Gunther invited him to go to on April 16. Prior to going to this Bill Rock, President of the Stratford Harbor Management Commission, called me to help with his presentation. I had all the charts of the river, from the mouth to the Derby dam. We noticed the differences in depth throughout the river and the problems at the bends where it is filling in. The problem is after you pass the power plant in Devon, there is not a lot of commercial return there. We could see from the aerial photos of how it is silting in from the sides, particularly at the mouth of the river. The problem is it is not only getting narrower as well as the depth. Bill gave his presentation at the meeting where there were various board members of DEP, regional planning groups, DOT, etc. It was clear to me that most of the people don't get along with each other.

Gary Montano, representing Milford, was there and discussed the dredging in Milford harbor. He talked about the issue of New Haven running into Milford, Milford is running into Stratford, and Stratford is running into Bridgeport. He talked about the \$140K they spent on dredging and it is already silting over. He talked about the fact that this is not only today's issue it's ongoing.

Chairman Gesullo mentioned the different Commissioners that attended the meeting and that they made a statement that they are now the sole responsibility for getting dredging done in the state. I was relieved in the regard that it would be them for us to talk to regarding the dredging issue.

I gave a presentation of who we are and what we do, how we got started and now we are ready to do some work. I did mention the towns we represent minus Stratford. Bill Rock stood up and said that he and Bob work well together; it's just a political thing they are trying to get solved. There were two people on that Board that thought our Commission was very useful in that we represent a pool of towns. One of the discussions was the problem of communicating with all the Commissions.

The dredging of the Housatonic River was probably about #10 on their list of priorities. One of the discussion items was the firing up of the Devon power plant. They want to use diesel and the only way that will happen is to barge it in. They may have to do some dredging or smoothing out incrementally up to the power plant.

I was happy that I went and felt that at least some of the people on the Board were very interested in our Commission.

There was discussion of the role of that Commission.

Tape 1, Side B

Commissioner Snyder discussed the problems with obtaining funding needed for the dredging, obtaining the permits and performance bonds.

8. HOUSATONIC RIVER CLEAN-UP DAY (SATURDAY, MAY 3)

Chairman Gesullo said he emailed the Commissioners regarding this endeavor and read the bulletin. This cleanup starts at the mouth of river and travel north to the Derby dam. Commissioner Snyder mentioned he was going to have his boat available for the day. They will need as many boats as possible to shuttle people to and from the banks and bringing the garbage back after they collect it. The collection sites are Sunnyside boat ramp, Birdseye and Devon boat ramp. Vice-Chairman Romick mentioned that there is no parking at the Devon boat ramp. Chairman Gesullo read in the bulletin that last year the cleanup effort brought in 100 tons of garbage.

Commissioner Snyder stated that he knows Rob Darby, a teacher at Shelton High School, who is going to have a bunch of students volunteering as well. Vice-Chairman Romick said she asked what they needed and they said at this point they need pickup trucks.

Chairman Gesullo read that they needed donations of money and materials. Donations of \$25 or more would be listed on the billboard at the Birdseye boat ramp.

Vice-Chairman Romick will send \$25 and a letter for the Commission. She will include in the letter that the Commissioners would be volunteering as well.

Commissioner Marcucio MOVED to send \$25 Clean Sound as a gesture of good faith for the Housatonic River cleanup effort. SECONDED by Vice-Chairman Romick. All were in favor, MOTION PASSED.

9. OLD BUSINESS/NEW BUSINESS

Vice-Chairman Romick presented samples of the business cards she created. Chairman Gesullo showed the Commissioners the one he created. They spent time discussing the cards – what they wanted on the cards and who would do it.

10. NEXT MEETING DATE/PLACE

The Commissioners discussed whether they needed to meet every month or not. Commissioner Marcucio said next month may present a problem for him to attend. Vice-Chairman Romick mentioned that she might be able to get John Goucher from DEP to come to the next meeting. He is the Milford & Stratford Housatonic river coordinator. He is the lower river coordinator and involved with the Iroquois compressor station.

The public meeting for the canal will be on June 25.

Commissioner Snyder asked about the status of getting Stratford on this Commission and using Bill Rock to help. Chairman Gesullo said he has been talking with Bill concerning this.

Commissioner Snyder discussed the need for Shelton to develop a harbor management commission and perhaps this Commission could help this process along. He suggested getting copies of the Stratford and Milford Harbor Management plan to use as a template for Shelton. Chairman Gesullo said that every time he brings this up to the Mayor he shoots it down. He thinks that with the approval of Beacon Point this would be in our best interest to establish the waterfront commission – this may be just the beginning of waterfront development. Commissioner Snyder suggested going to P&Z and IWC to suggest the creation of a waterfront commission.

The next meeting date is Thursday, May 22nd in Shelton (Community Center).

11. ADJOURNMENT

Vice-Chairman Romick MOVED to adjourn. SECONDED by Commissioner Marcucio. All were in favor, MEETING ADJOURNED at 9:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Marianne Chaya
Clerk, Housatonic River Estuary Commission