



**HOUSATONIC RIVER ESTUARY COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, November 23, 2010
USCG Base (Birdseye Boat Ramp)
Stratford, CT**

1. CALL OF THE MEETING/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairman Gesullo called the meeting to order at 7:15 P.M.
All in attendance pledged allegiance to the flag.

ATTENDANCE

Bob Gesullo, Chairman, Shelton
Lori Romick, Vice-Chairman, Milford
Bill Rohland, Commissioner, Derby
Bill Rock, Commissioner, Stratford
Jason Blake, Commissioner, Orange
Scott Corner, Commissioner-At-Large, Stratford

2. Public Portion or Guests

None

3. APPROVAL OF THE September 23, 2010 MEETING MINUTES

Commissioner Rohland MOVED to accept the minutes from the September 23, 2010 meeting. Vice-Chairman Romick SECONDED the motion. All were in favor, MOTION PASSED.

4. Finance Report

Commissioner Blake reported that the account balance currently is \$6,470, with no proposed budget expenditures.

Vice-Chairman Romick commented that she sent a letter to the City of Milford requesting \$1000 donations. I emailed a copy of my letter to the Commissioners. Chairman Gesullo said that he got a letter from the City of Shelton regarding an ordinance regarding requiring financial accounting for outside organizations. The letter states that they require a detailed annual report or financial accounting. They also sent the form for me to fill out.

Vice-Chair Romick said she got a quadruplicate form requiring specific numbers. According to Milford our funds will be coming from an approved grant from the Mayors office. I have to submit a budget request to the Finance Dept.

Chairman Gesullo said that he thinks the annual report is our annual letter but the letter doesn't have any financial accounting. Commissioner Blake said he could add a table to the letter.

Commissioner Rock suggested that addendum only go to the interested parties; not to everyone that would get our annual report.

Vice-Chair Romick wondered if we need to report what each town contributes.

The Commissioners discussed what should be on the report regarding income/expenses.

Commissioner Blake said that he would prepare a 2011 budget draft.

5. Web page report

Commissioner Rohland reported that everything is current. He will post the September minutes since they have been approved.

Vice-Chair Romick thanked Commissioner Rohland for posting the Housatonic River Estuary guide on the website.

6. Review and approve year-end report for towns distribution

Chairman Gesullo said that all the Commissioners should have received and reviewed the year-end report.

Vice-Chair Romick asked for any revisions to the draft and contact info.

Vice-Chair Romick asked Stratford if their Mayor would consider donating to the Commission this year. Commissioner Corner said that Stratford's contribution is the pump-out boat, which costs us \$10,000/year. Chairman Gesullo suggested that it could be listed as an "in-kind" donation.

Commissioner Corner said this pump-out boat covers Stratford, Milford, Shelton, Derby; the whole river plus Milford harbor.

The Commissioners agreed to include this on the annual report.

The Commissioners spent some time reviewing and making modifications.

Marianne said she would mail these to all towns Mayor/First Selectmen plus the towns state representatives.

Vice-Chair Romick said she would send a copy to Susan Peterson at the DEP.

Marianne will mail a copy to Commissioner Rock so he can present it to his Commission.

The annual report is attached.

7. Commissioner's Remarks

Vice-Chair Romick sent an email to Mary Rose Palumbo (IWC Administrator, Milford). She responded that they were trying to coordinate a walk along the river next to Baldwin Station (where trees were cut along the riverbank by the Sikorsky bridge). She also said she had visited the site many times and found the area stable. Once they have their walk she will report back to me.

Commissioner Rohland said there is a lot of dead shrubbery. Vice-Chair Romick said that Ms. Palumbo was going to have them replant.

Vice-Chair Romick emailed the Commissioners the Coastal Area Management Review 3-page summary. DEP is going under a review of this. They have specific areas they look at and have prioritized projects, funding efforts listed in the report. I think this summary will be helpful to us so we have a little bit of basis for either supporting or wanting to deny a project. This was just for informational purposes for the Commission.

Commissioner Rohland said he would put a link to the DEP Coastal Water Management page.

Vice-Chair Romick reported that Dr. Mark Beekey, Sacred Heart University Professor, in charge of the new Masters program for Environmental Science Management (we sent a letter last year in support), contacted me in response to my request for a study of floating debris in the river, said he is interested. He said that they are on their way to building their first cohort of graduate students. They have 8 applicants. He wants to know if we have a preliminary proposal or plan of study for conducting the research on the debris. He wants to know if we could meet to go over the project and discuss the funding. I told him we would be available to talk about access points and the DEP could also help with some of the information. He also wanted to know if we would be willing to work with them on a grant (co-write).

Chairman Gesullo asked if they were looking for seed money? Yes. Regarding the grant, we would not get the funding, they would, correct? Yes.

Vice-Chair Romick asked the Commissioners if they would be in favor of supporting them in this project? She reminded the Commissioners that this was our project; we asked them. We wanted to do a study to find out where the debris is coming from, what debris can we keep out via nets and booms. Maybe we can work on local ordinances to keep the cut trees from rolling into the river, etc.

The Commissioners talked about the feasibility of the project with SHU and discussed a meeting date and time. Vice-Chair Romick said that the cost is going to depend on how much in-kind service we can provide, such as use of a boat. Chairman Gesullo suggested using some of the other river organizations to help as well.

Commissioner Blake commented that he thinks the source of the debris is not from any of our towns, possibly from Stevenson Dam. Others agreed and talked about the need for a maintenance program if that is the case.

Commissioner Rock commented that not only do we need to meet with the students to tell them what we are looking for; we really need to get an idea from them what they are looking for from us.

The Commissioners agreed that February 14th or 15th would be a good time to meet with SHU at the university.

Tape 1, Side B

Commissioner Rock talked about the issue of the no-wake zone in Stratford. He and the Commissioners talked about the issue and where the best places to mark.

Commissioner Rock mentioned that he has compiled the 2010 State of Harbor Commission report that he will distribute to various Commissioners.

Commissioner Rock talked about what has been done regarding dredging and the amount of work his Commission has done for the DEP and the DOT. He said that what remains to be done is the funding, which is about \$400,000. We then found out that the DEP is requesting about \$1M in tests. He said that they have

already determined that the dredge material is suitable for beach nourishment. Progress is being made in this effort, even though it is slow.

Chairman Gesullo asked about what the Waterfront Commission is doing regarding the speed situation at the no-wake buoys. He said that he had written a letter to the DEP. I received a verbal reply, they told me it had been considered for a long time to make the entire thing one-speed bump. It was determined that it would add 8 minutes to the trip (to exit or come into the river). He also said that when it comes to the dock down here, they could put a private buoy there, the DEP doesn't have to do it. Private property owners can put up a no-wake buoy.

Commissioner Rohland said that they have a no-wake signs on the dock. The issue is no one pays attention to them because out in the channel they can't see the signs.

Chairman Gesullo said that the confusion is where it starts and ends. He said that the DEP said I would get a written response but in the meantime they encourage you to work with the local communities to put that kind of pressure on. Commissioner Corner mentioned that he talked with Eleanor Mariani @ the DEP regarding this. They said they would work on it and as long as you all agree, it'll happen.

Commissioner Rock said that he was told to document incidents. Chairman Gesullo said that he was told the DEP is not ignoring the letter we sent. He also encouraged us to work with each town. Commissioner Rock said that we need to have an organized presentation to be seriously considered.

Commissioner Rohland said he would get some letters for Commissioner Rock. The Commissioners talked about the need to clarify where the zones are. They discussed various locations.

8. Discussion and approval for meeting times/dates/locations for 2011

The Commissioners determined the meeting schedule for 2011 as follows:

Every other month, the last Tuesday @ 6:30 P.M.

January 25 – Shelton

March 29 – Stratford USCG base

May 31 – Milford

July 26 – Shelton

September 27 – Stratford USCG base or Town Hall

November 29 – Milford

9. New Business

Chairman Gesullo asked the Commission how they felt about taking on Kim Anglace as their clerk and they all felt she would do just fine. Chairman Gesullo said he would call her the next day to welcome her to the Commission.

Chairman Gesullo and the Commissioners thanked Marianne for working for the Commission since its inception.

Commissioner Corner said they are looking to do the river cleanup the first weekend in May. He said we are trying to get a meeting going in December to start the planning. The problem we have is donations. We have to get to the

corporate sponsors ASAP. It takes months to get the funds. Our budget goal is about \$6000. We also get material donations such as bags, gloves, food, drinks, etc. What helped last cleanup was that Stratford had their clean sweep the same day and what ever they didn't need I was able to take. What really worked well in lieu of bags were compound buckets, like what sheetrock workers use.

10. Old Business

None

11. Adjournment

Vice-Chairman Romick MOVED to adjourn. SECONDED by Commissioner Blake. All were in favor, meeting adjourned at 8:40P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Marianne Chaya
Clerk, HREC

2010 HREC Year-end Summary Report

This report is intended to summarize the 2010 activities of Housatonic River Estuary Commission (HREC), which is authorized under the State of Connecticut General Statute Sec.25-170 (Chapter 483b) to work collectively with each of these towns as the stewards for the river for which each of these towns share borders.

The Commission is composed of one representative from each town who is appointed to this Commission by the City Executives (Mayor or First Selectman) to serve a term of two years. The commission may study any issues relating to the Housatonic River and may make such recommendations as may be necessary to maintain, protect and restore the resources of the estuary of the Housatonic River. The commission shall consider the adverse impact any action proposed for the Housatonic River estuary that may impact its' resources. *This is a forum in which the these communities regardless of their own local or similar efforts, come together without borders to collectively work together for one common goal, the stewardship of the Housatonic River.*

The following is a summary of accomplishments completed during 2010 supporting the mission statement of this commission since its' establishment in 2007:

- Actively participated for the third year in the Housatonic River Clean-up. The Commission received a "Certificate of Achievement" from Shelton Mayor Mark Lauretti for efforts with the clean-up. This participation allows commission members to see "first-hand" the

amount and types of debris coming down the river. Subsequent actions include requests to the legislature for statutory changes such as those expanding the “bottle bill.” Commission members saw a substantial reduction in the amount of plastic beverage bottles removed during this year’s clean-up. HREC strongly supports the river clean-up and its’ volunteers.

- The HREC established a website for easier communication with parties having interests and concerns for the river. Derby Commissioner Rohland is responsible for updating information monthly.
(www.TheHREC.org)
- HREC commissioners continued their outreach efforts by attending and participating in related meetings with the CT Maritime Commission, the CT DEP, CT Sea Grant, and the Long Island Sound Assembly. Several commission members now serve on various other related commissions and provide valuable information and communication between the groups.
- The Commission invited guests two meetings this year.
 - Harbormaster Ray Swift from Milford and Ross Hatfield from Stratford attended the March meeting to discuss several harbor related matters.
 - Former Senator, “Doc” Gunther attended the May meeting to discuss river dredging and the possible state establishment of a Port Authority.
- The Commission drafted a letter of support for shoreline recreational use of the McCallum property.
- HREC submitted comments to the DEP regarding the changes to the water use regulations in CT. It was recommended that companies drawing water from the State’s rivers to be required to use water conservation, water reclamation and other best management practices to reduce the overall use of this precious resource.
- The Commission drafted a letter of support to Sacred Heart University for their developing Masters Program in Environmental Science Analysis and Management. They are submitting a grant application to the National Science Foundation to develop this program and provide funding for the first two cohorts of graduate students. They requested to work with the Housatonic River Estuary Commission to develop research projects that graduate students could work on with the focus of this masters program to be the Housatonic River Watershed.
- The Commission wrote a letter to the US Army Corps of Engineers supporting the use of the vessel “Currituck” for dredging of the river and subsequent beach nourishment in support of the Town of Stratford’s efforts.
- Voted in Scott Corner to replace Jeff Snyder, former Commissioner Member-at-large, who moved out of state during 2009.
- Continues to support changes in the current boating regulations to require kayakers to wear PFD’s all year long, not just October thorough

May, due to the multiple summer-time incidents that occurred during 2009. Commission members worked on an identification program for kayaks as well as advocating boating safety.

The commission has established a small annual stipend funding (operating budget) for recoding fees and ancillary expenses and has requested that each participating town support the Commission with these small expenses. ***“We would like to express our gratefulness to the towns of Shelton, Milford and Orange for their ongoing support “*** We also acknowledge the support from the Town of Stratford for its contribution in-kind of its pump-out boat to all river towns (Milford, Stratford, Orange, Shelton, Seymour, Derby and Ansonia) keeping the river cleaner.

Plans for 2011 include:

- Collaboration with a university such as Sacred Heart, to develop a study to determine the entry points of floatable debris in the river and possible means of removing/stopping its entry. The commission is able to provide access to vessels to travel up the river and survey pollution sources.
- Participate in the annual river clean up to be scheduled in May.
- Improve communication with our local and legislative leaders.
- Continue to monitor the soil and erosion control measures at the Baldwin Station housing in Milford after many trees were removed from the property leaving the riverbank vulnerable to erosion resulting in additional sediments that will need to be dredged from the river in the future costing additional tax dollars to area residents.

The commission is dedicated to its mission and truly appreciates the support of the local leaders of the towns it represents. Please feel free to contact your town Commissioner as listed below, for any issues relating to the River.

Respectfully submitted,

Bob Gesullo, Chairman, Shelton, commissioner@TheHREC.org

Lori Romick, Vice Chair, Milford, lromick@optonline.net, 203-214-4637

Jason Blake, Treasurer, Orange, 203-671-3155

William Rock, Stratford, commissioner@TheHREC.org

William Rohland, Derby, commissioner@TheHREC.org

William Urban, Ansonia, 203-735-2341

Scott Corner (Member-at-Large)