

**HOUSATONIC RIVER ESTUARY COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
7:00 P.M., Thursday, May 22, 2008
Craft Room 3, Shelton Community Center
Shelton, CT**

1. CALL OF THE MEETING/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 P.M. by Chairman Gesullo.
All in attendance pledged allegiance to the flag.

ATTENDANCE

Robert Gesullo, Chairman, Shelton
Lori Romick, Vice-Chairman, Milford
Phil Marcucio, Commissioner, Derby
Jason Blake, Commissioner, Orange
Bill Urban, Commissioner, Ansonia
Scott Corner, Representative Commissioner, Stratford

Absent:

Jeff Snyder, Member-at-large, Naugatuck

Also in attendance:

Marianne Chaya, Clerk, HREC

2. PUBLIC PORTION OR GUEST

None

3. APPROVAL OF THE APRIL 24, 2008 MEETING MINUTES

Commissioner Urban MOVED to accept the minutes from the April 24, 2008 meeting. SECONDED by Vice-Chairman Romick. All were in favor; MOTION PASSED.

4. WELCOME STRATFORD'S REPRESENTATIVE

Chairman Gesullo welcomed Stratford's representative, Scott Corner. Bill Rock was unable to attend and sent Scott Corner in his place. Scott and Bill are from the Waterfront and Harbor Commission and they would be sending representatives to this Commission. A letter from the town of Stratford's Mayor was presented to the Commission.

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

Chairman Gesullo explained to Mr. Corner how each town is contributing seed money (\$1000) towards any expenses for the Commission and how we would use a trust and agency account that is managed by the City of Shelton. So far Shelton and Milford have paid the \$1000 each and Derby asked where to send the money. Commissioner Blake said the money was coming from Orange. Mr. Corner said he would request the money from Stratford and was concerned if it were too late for the new fiscal year. He also said the representation from Stratford has yet to be approved the town council.

Commissioner Blake asked for a monthly statement of the account. Chairman Gesullo stated that Sharon Scanlon (Finance) would run a report as soon as the deposits are made.

Marianne has been given an account number to charge for the invoices for the clerical work. When an invoice is submitted Sharon will transfer that amount from the trust and agency account over to this account for payment.

Commissioner Marcucio asked how often we would be sending a financial statement to each town. Chairman Gesullo said the bylaws state we would send one at the end of the year. Commissioner Marcucio asked if we could send it twice a year and to make sure the Mayor as well as finance has a copy.

After discussion they felt it would be best to send the report to each town March 1st and September 1st.

The Commissioners discussed the process of getting grant money as needed and the need the \$1000 from each town at this point, but at some point later in time there would probably be a need for additional funds. It would be addressed at a later time.

Chairman Gesullo gave the copies of the check requests and invoices to date to Commissioner Blake. Reimbursement will be made to Vice-Chairman Romick for the donation to the Housatonic River cleanup day.

6. COMMISSIONER'S REMARKS & OUTREACH EFFORTS

Chairman Gesullo discussed the use of outreach efforts each Commissioner uses and the benefits. He also discussed his attendance at the CT Maritime Commission meeting.

Commissioner Blake commented that he has been asked to serve on the Orange dredging committee. He discussed the need for dredging the ponds in town as well.

Chairman Gesullo reminded everyone about the hearing regarding the canal filling in Shelton and he would attend the meeting to get the facts of how and if it would affect the river.

Vice-Chairman Romick explained to Mr. Corner the Commissioner's efforts to meet various area organizations to get the word out about this Commission.

Commissioner Blake suggested having this Commission formulate an opinion about how we feel about dredging since it is becoming a big issue for all 6 towns. Commissioner Marcucio asked why is the river silting up so much?

Commissioner Blake commented that he remembered in year's past that there used to be continuous dredging. The ponds used to be dredged yearly.

Commissioner Urban discussed the issue may not have been the frequency of dredging as much as how it was dredged.

Scott Corner discussed some of the dredging issues in Stratford. One particular issue is if the Devon power plant should reopen the river would have to be dredged to 200' wide, 22' deep. This would be needed to barge in the diesel fuel.

Tape 1, Side B

There also was discussion of where the dredging material would go.

The Commissioners also discussed the clamming and oyster harvesting in the river.

The Commissioners went back to discussion of the need for dredging the ponds, clean up and maintenance in their towns. Vice-Chairman Romick said she would email her contacts that could assist Commissioner Blake for his research for the dredging committee. She suggested John Goucher (DEP) would be the best contact for the dredging efforts.

The Commissioners discussed how this Commission could assist each town in their issues as they come up and the availability of grant money from the state. Commissioner Marcucio urged the idea of sending a letter to the state representatives requesting money for maintenance. He also suggested going to the state with agenda items.

Scott Corner discussed some of the problems with what to do with the dredging materials in the past. He also talked about the new dredging endeavor at Pootatuck Yacht Club and the permitting problems with the consulting firm they used.

The discussion turned to the cost of dredging and it was pointed out that the Army Corp is responsible for all the dredging that leads into Long Island Sound. They also are responsible for all waters where there is commercial traffic.

Commissioner Urban brought up an issue that came up at his last Conservation Commission meeting. They received a letter concerning a return after nearly a decade of a proposal to put two dynamite bunkers along the banks of the Naugatuck River. These would be opposite the American Brass Company plant. The contractor went through the court system and it was remanded to Planning & Zoning. When this was first brought up they never forwarded it to the Army Corps. FERC gave their blessing to build a power plant where the American Brass Co. is. The two storage tanks will store ammonia and chlorine. His concern was why it didn't go to the Army Corps because they own the flood control works. They know about high explosives. There is also the concern about the transportation of these explosives through Ansonia and Derby. Commissioner Urban said another thing he was really surprised about is concerning the upgrade of the Ansonia sewage plant was sent to the Corps and they never commented on it. His concern was that the lack of comment might be something to monitor.

Commissioner Urban talked about the dredging of Bridgeport harbor and the disposal of the material.

Tape 2, Side A

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

Vice-Chairman Romick discussed the events of the day and the fact that had a good turnout and it was done during high tide. The problem was that it was very cold water up to their knees almost the whole time. She went out on a boat with the Valley Yacht Club who emailed pictures to her (from the Dock shopping center area) and she forwarded them on to the Commissioners via email. The amazing thing was the huge number of water bottles. The people she worked with said that they wanted her to come back to the Commission to urge the expansion of the bottle bill. Right now the bottle bill is for carbonated beverages. The expansion would cover juice and water bottles. Commissioner Urban said he remembered when the first bottle bill was passed it took 10 years to pass. Vice-Chairman Romick said she would draft a letter to send to the legislation noting support from this Commission.

Chairman Gesullo said he was at the Sunnyside boat ramp for the day's events. Scott Corner explained that he was one of the organizers of the river cleanup day. We had approximately 200 people volunteer for the cleanup, 100 from Stratford, 50 in Milford and 50 in Shelton. At the Birdseye boat ramp they collected about 10 ½ tons, Milford had about 7 tons & Shelton about 4 or 5 tons of garbage. We raised just under \$5000 in cash plus donations from Subway, Dunkin Donuts, pizza shops, and bagels from a Westport bagel shop. Stratford assigned public works to remove all the garbage plus 2 cops were assigned to Scott for the day. He discussed where all the garbage comes from – starting from the Derby dam and working it's way down. The day after the cleanup after the high tide and the east winds, the boat ramp was a foot deep of garbage. Public works went in and scraped it all up.

Chairman Gesullo said he talked with a lot of people who were at the boat ramp that did not even know the cleanup was going on. Scott said that each town had representatives to get the word out. He knew it was on Channel 8 news and it was in the newspaper.

Mr. Corner said this cleanup has been done many times in the past but this is the first time in 7 years. There were 6 organizations that participated in this cleanup and this was the first time it was done in the three towns on the same day. The cleanup needed to be done early in the year due to the plant growth coming in. Commissioner Blake said that he would like to have Orange involved in the next cleanup.

8. MOTION TO CHANGE BY-LAWS, ARTICLE 3, TO CHANGE NUMBER OF MEETINGS PER YEAR & SCHEDULE

Chairman Gesullo asked the Commissioners if they wanted to reduce the number of meetings but with the knowledge a special meeting could be called at any time. The Commissioners discussed their thoughts.

The Commissioners agreed on a bi-monthly schedule.

Vice-Chairman Romick MOVED to amend the bylaws to reflect the number of meetings would be 6 per year (every other month). The annual report would be done and approved at the November meeting. SECONDED by Commissioner Urban. All were in favor, MOTION PASSED.

The meeting dates would be July, September, November, January, March, and May.

9. OLD BUSINESS/NEW BUSINESS

Vice-Chairman Romick commented that she heard the Housatonic Valley Association wanted to do a "River Day" at Osborndale Park. If anyone hears anything about it to let her know. They also wanted to talk about the low impact development strategy along the shore. She suggested this might be a good place to set up a booth to advertise us.

Chairman Gesullo passed out samples of business cards he designed for each Commissioner.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Vice-Chairman Romick MOVED to adjourn. SECONDED by Commissioner Blake. All were in favor, MEETING ADJOURNED at 9:12 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Marianne Chaya
Clerk, HREC