



New York - New Jersey
Harbor Estuary Program

CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

of the New York – New Jersey
Harbor Estuary Program

www.HarborEstuary.org

Harbor Estuary Program Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting

April 29, 2009 10 am – 2:30 pm
Future City, Inc.
1045 E. Jersey Street, Elizabeth, NJ

MINUTES

Introductions

Michelle Doran McBean welcomed attendees, who then introduced themselves.

Review and Approval of Amendments to CAC By-Laws

Gabriela Munoz read the proposed changes to CAC bylaws (circulated before the meeting). All amendments were unanimously approved as written.

Bob Alpern mentioned that Charles Warren represents CAC and the Science and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) in the Policy Committee, so it was agreed to reach out to him to attend the CAC meetings. (Follow up: Charles Warren was added to the CAC Google Group list)

It was also discussed the need for a CAC liaison to HEP's working groups and to the Long Island Sound Study.

Rather than amending the bylaws, it was decided to address these issues as part of the normal CAC functions.

Roundtable Discussion—CAC Priorities

Roland Lewis led a roundtable discussion to define CAC's priorities for the next year and how to implement and fund them.

Attendees presented and discussed several issues, a list of possible focus topics was created, and each member was granted three votes. The following is the voting list and number of votes for each topic:

1. Local Government (6 votes)
 - a. Engagement in CAC
 - b. Facilitate CAC goals
2. Public Access & Navigation (6 votes)
3. Wetlands restoration (6 votes)
4. Waterfront park design (2 votes)

Citizens Advisory Committee Co-Chairs

Michelle Doran McBean, Future City, Inc. ✦ 908-659-0689
Roland Lewis, Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance ✦ 212-935-9831

5. Waterfront improvement district (1 vote)
6. Green infrastructure (3 votes)
7. Integrate through stewardship (3 votes)
8. Offshore island (4 votes)
9. Marine Reserves—Top 10 endangered sites: communicate the concrete (5 votes)
10. Scorecard for Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (7 votes)
 - a. Agencies
 - b. NYAS Harbor Project

Based on the number of votes, topics 1, 2, 3, and 10 were selected, and further discussion ensued to lay out a work plan to accomplish these tasks.

1. Local Government

It was suggested to designate CAC delegates to attend local officials meetings and hearings.

Mayor J. Christian Bollwage noted that it is important to make CAC's issues interesting to elected officials. There is much potential in waterfront redevelopment once the estuary is clean and that could make it appealing. He also suggested attending the League of Municipalities, which meets yearly, and having a seminar and a Mayor in the panel to raise CAC's profile. He also suggested that CAC hold their meetings in different NJ cities. These ideas were very well received.

Maggie Flanagan noted that the situation in NY is different, and another strategy may be needed. Although other municipalities are part of the Estuary's core area (Yonkers, Dobbs Ferry, Piermont, and a few others), NY City makes up the greater part and its structure is complex.

Roland indicated that the CAC as a whole should participate in the effort to attend NJ's League of Municipality event. A task force was formed, integrated by Michelle, Capt. Bill Sheehan, Debbie Mans, and Bob Alpern. They will talk with Kerry Kirk Pflugh about this issue and communicate with Mayor Bollwage.

2. Public Access & Navigation

Rob Buchanan noted that the Public Access Work Group (PAWG) was made separate from CAC because these issues were acknowledged to be very important. CAC still has presence in the PAWG but it was agreed that a CAC member should be assigned to bring important CAC issues to the PAWG and report back to CAC. Rob Buchanan accepted to be the liaison.

The other two selected topics were addressed later as part of the discussion on CAC's communication process.

Budget Discussion

Bob Nyman explained how the current draft budget for 2010 was put together. Briefly, the Management Committee first discussed and decided which of the Action Plan priorities would be eligible for funding this year. Management Committee members, Work Group and Committee chairs, and HEP staff were invited to submit proposals for specific projects within those categories. The Management Committee provided some initial input on the budget requests. A

conference call is scheduled for April 30th to finalize the budget and Roland and Michelle will participate.

Communication Process and Expansion of Outreach

3. Marine Reserves—Top 10 endangered sites: communicate the concrete
Debbie Mans suggested that CAC members could nominate sites that would integrate a consolidated CAC list. CAC member organizations have their media contacts and could be responsible for disseminating the message and bringing people to any events held at these sites.

Roland proposed that one of the organizations should chair the effort, better define it, and bring it to the next CAC meeting.

Bob Nyman indicated that depending on its nature, this could be a HEP or CAC project.

One suggestion was to have tours of these sites. *Capt. Bill* proposed that we could rather focus on what are the top-10 threats to Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP) completion (political, socio-economical, etc.)

Because of insufficient time, it was decided to add this as an agenda item and continue the discussion during next meeting to better define the project and how to carry it out.

4. Scorecard for Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan

Bob Nyman noted that usually a single group—rather than a committee—develops grades and that this is a delicate issue.

Capt. Bill suggested that this could be brought to Town Hall meetings: explain what are HEP's goals and what has been done. This would be a platform for public discussion and to understand what people's main concerns are today.

Gabriela noted that HEP has prepared a CCMP Implementation Tracking Report as part of this year's EPA Implementation Review of HEP. This report is likely not comprehensive, but it compiles activities by HEP partners that help advance CCMP implementation. The tracking report was posted online at <http://www.harborestuary.org/ccmp.htm> and everybody is welcome to review it and submit any missing information. HEP intends to update this document as new information arrives.

Bob Nyman asked whether CAC should consider blogs and social networking websites for this effort.

Capt. Bill indicated that he prefers face-to-face interaction and that CAC should consider holding a round of public meetings, as was done in 2002.

Lisa Baron noted that there will be public meetings for the Comprehensive Restoration Plan and that these could be held as CAC meetings.

Stewardship Grants

Gabriela briefly explained this year's plans to release a request for proposals (RFP) for stewardship grants, together with habitat restoration. She asked for input on specific topics CAC would like to focus on, and on ideas to ensure widespread distribution of the RFP, especially in NJ.

Maggie Flanagan expressed concern about linking stewardship grants with habitat restoration because of few opportunities in the urban environment. (Follow up: the grant will be open to joint applications but those will not be assigned additional score in the review).

Roland brought up a letter sent by Kirk Barrett, where he requested feedback for rejected grants.

Gabriela indicated that given the number of applications, it is not possible to provide written comments to all rejected applications. Rejection letters encouraged applicants to call HEP staff for feedback, but not many of them took advantage of this. HEP also made efforts to assist applicants by holding an informational meeting and being available for feedback before and after submission. *Michelle* commended the time and effort the reviewing panel and HEP put into the grants program.

Gabriela invited all attendees to submit any further suggestions about the RFP at any time.

State of the Estuary Report

Gabriela summarized the plans to develop an update to the Health of the Harbor report released in 2004, and ask for input on content and other aspects (see background materials for the meeting). The format will be similar to that used by the Long Island Sound Study (newspaper insert) and will be distributed to the general public and schools. It was noted that budget constraints prevent us from distributing the report as a newspaper insert, and HEP is looking into several options for distribution.

Robin Kriesberg mentioned that Yale did a study of how different audiences reacted to the Long Island Sound Study report (e.g., whether it was too technical) that may be useful for us.

Don Chesley noted that Metro (the free NYC daily newspaper) has solicited contributing pieces and some of the already published ones were on environmental issues, including climate change and oysters.

Bart Chezar suggested writing Op-Ed pieces in several papers, summarizing the report.

Nellie pointed out that different audiences would be reached by different avenues. Some options are social networking, annual conferences, and the NJ Science Teachers Association. She also advised considering what we want the target audience to do.

John Dobosiewicz thought it would be better to first have a product and then reflect on teaching applications. Teachers need directions to tie the information to the curriculum and we cannot expect to "turn teacher's light bulbs" by just distributing the report to teachers.

Maggie Flanagan indicated that distributing the report to schools could be another way of reaching the general population through their children.

Capt Bill noted that a more adequate target would be the Alliance for NJ Environmental Education, which holds a 3-day event every winter where attendees earn education credits.

Another option, noted later on by *Nick Joanow* is the NJ Education Association, which holds an annual Convention for professional development.

STEW-MAP Collaboration

Gabriela gave a brief presentation on US Forest Service's Stewardship Mapping and Assessment Project (STEW-MAP) and the possibility of a collaboration with CAC to expand the database to better cover NJ organizations.

Bob Alpern expressed concern about whether the STEW-MAP would be kept up-to-date.

The group suggested circulating a list of organizations already covered by STEW-MAP to identify which ones are missing.

A next step will be to better define what exactly would the USFS need from the CAC and HEP.

If possible, Lindsay Campbell from the USFS will attend next CAC meeting and give a presentation.

Comprehensive Restoration Plan

Lisa Baron presented on the just-released Draft Comprehensive Restoration Plan (CRP) for the Hudson-Raritan Estuary.

The CRP was the result of collaboration among scientists, agencies, and non-profit organizations. It is intended to be the region's blueprint for habitat restoration, to coordinate and track progress of restoration efforts, and to be considered by EVERYONE as their own plan.

The CRP identifies 11 target ecosystem characteristics (TECs) that are short- and long-term restoration goals to create "a mosaic of habitats that provide society with new and increased benefits from the estuary environment." Several maps identify candidate sites where different TECs can be implemented, including HEP priority sites, USACE sites (both of which are now merged) and sites identified by the region's many environmental stewards. The CRP also estimates costs to achieve restoration goals and possible funding sources, which highlight the need for collaboration to maximize benefits for the region. A more technical volume contains detailed information on how to actually conduct restoration projects, including planning, siting, permitting, monitoring, and other guidance.

This will be a living document that will be updated as new sites are identified and restored, and lessons learned.

The USACE is planning a series of public meetings where the public and all interested parties are encouraged to bring their comments, including sites they consider should be included as candidates.

Next CAC Meeting

The next meeting was scheduled for July 29 in the morning, in NY.

The meeting was adjourned at around 2:30 pm.

ATTENDEES

Robert Alpern
Lisa Baron, USACE
J. Christian Bollwage, Mayor of Elizabeth City
Rob Buchanan, Village Community Boathouse
Don Chesley, Stevens Institute of Technology
Bart Chezar, Gowanus Dredgers
John Dobosiewicz, Kean University
Michelle Doran McBean, Future City, Inc.
Maggie Flanagan, South Street Seaport Museum
Dana Haig, NJ Watershed Ambassador
Nick Joanow, BTRA
Robin Kriesberg, Bronx River Alliance
Roland Lewis, Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance
Debbie Mans, NY/NJ Baykeeper
Gabriela Munoz, NY-NJ Harbor Estuary Program
Robert Nyman, US EPA Region 2
Kevin Reilly, NY-NJ Harbor Estuary Program
Gabriel Rodriguez, NJ Congressional District 13
Manuel Russ, CAC NYCDEP Pollution Prevention
Bill Sheehan, Hackensack Riverkeeper
Clay Sherman, NJ DEP DWM
Susan Marie Terra, NJ Watershed Ambassador
Nellie Tsipoura, New Jersey Audubon Society
Cortney Worrall, Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance