



New York - New Jersey
Harbor Estuary Program

CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

of the New York – New Jersey
Harbor Estuary Program

www.HarborEstuary.org

**Citizens Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
February 18, 2009, 10 am – 2 pm
EPA Offices
290 Broadway, New York, NY**

MINUTES

Introductions

Captain Bill Sheehan opened the meeting and welcomed attendees, who then introduced themselves.

Election of CAC Co-Chairs

Prior to the elections, Capt Sheehan invited co-chair candidates to make a brief presentation to the CAC. Roland Lewis, Zhennya Slootskin, and John Dobosiewicz (on behalf of Michelle Doran McBean) then expressed what they hoped to accomplish as co-chairs, and the challenges they expected. Presentations were followed by a Q&A session, during which CAC members had a chance to learn more about future co-chairs' plans. After this, the election took place. Michelle Doran Mc Bean (Future City, Inc.) and Roland Lewis (Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance) were elected as NJ and NY co-chairs, respectively (election results were announced after the lunch break).

Review and Approval of Amendments to CAC By-Laws

The proposed changes to CAC bylaws (which had been circulated prior to the meeting) were reviewed and discussed. Most changes were accepted as written, with one member opposed. A few modifications were proposed

1. In Article II, Section 1 and Article III, Section 5, clarify that **state and federal** government agencies shall be non-voting members
2. In Article II, Section 6, it was agreed to add a provision to allow for electing NY and NJ co-chairs on alternate years to allow for better continuity, and to limit the number of consecutive terms an officer can serve.

Any amendments to CAC bylaws need to be distributed to members a minimum of 30 days prior to being adopted. Therefore, it was resolved that give more thought to the exact language for item 2) and then circulate the proposed changes in time for next meeting.

2009 Calendar of Meetings

CAC members discussed and agreed that future CAC meetings should take place sufficiently ahead of Management Committee (MC) meetings to be able to include any relevant topics in the MC meeting agenda. The MC typically meets in February, May, August, and November. In

addition, it was suggested that at least one of the HEP CAC meetings each year should be held in conjunction with the Long Island Sound Study CAC, which meets in NYC twice a year. The next meeting was tentatively scheduled for April 29 at 10 am in NJ, at a place to be decided. It was decided that the remainder of 2009 meetings will be scheduled by the newly elected co-chairs, taking into consideration the timing and coordination issues brought by the CAC.

Collaboration with NJDEP Coastal Management Program

During lunch, Dorina Frizzera and Tali Engoltz (NJDEP Coastal Management Program) gave a presentation on the Hudson River Walkway and a possible CAC collaboration with NJDEP to promote the walkway through a series of events.

Dorina first gave an overview of the Coastal Management Program (CMP). She pointed out that although all of NJ is considered coastal for nonpoint source pollution abatement, the CMP has not been very active with HEP in the past. The Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) is going to be re-authorized and the CMP is looking for more cooperation and coordination with partners. NJDEP cannot lobby legislators but with citizens and community groups can, and NJ can share information with them.

Capt. Bill Sheehan reminded the CAC that the regulations that allow public access and the walkway are under attack. Certain facilities would be exempted from current requirements to provide public access to the water because of security concerns. He asked the CAC to consider adopting an official position.

Then Tali talked specifically about the Walkway. At this point, NJDEP is coordinating the completion of the Walkway, which will connect George Washington Bridge to Bayonne Bridge. Any redevelopment along it must build its section of the walkway, which takes the burden off NJDEP but results in piecemeal construction. In addition, developers do not necessarily build their segment once they obtain the permit. There is also the need to ensure that the built sections are maintained. The idea is carry out events to draw people to the walkway and bring awareness of the un-built sections. CMP is looking for partners to hold about 3 events (biking, walking, kayaking, swimming, etc). This is an opportunity to promote the walkway, the CMP and HEP.

CAC members offered several suggestions.

Interactive maps, showing points of interest, events, historic spots, restrooms, etc, would be very useful.

With respect to the walkway design and specifications, Roland Lewis recommended checking the new NY zoning law, which borrowed from European cities. He also suggested thinking about destinations for people attending the events.

Barbara LaRocco noted that people like certificates of achievements, such as t-shirts stating a given activity was accomplished at the walkway, which would also continue to promote the walkway after the event.

It was also observed that there are several differences between the NY and NJ banks of the Hudson River: it is considered a Natural Heritage River and it is a designated no discharge zone in NY but not in NJ, and also because water quality standards are different (swimmable & fishable in NY), no swim can start in NJ. All these environmental issues can be brought up as well.

Ludger Balan indicated that there should be events in both the NY and NJ sides.

Other issues were brought up such as available parking space and the importance of not overlapping with other big events in the region to get significant public presence.

Roundtable Discussion

A roundtable discussion followed where all attendees had a chance to present issues and programs that are important to them, to help determine CAC priorities. The following were some of the broader issues brought up by CAC members:

The CAC only meets four times a year and there is a need to carry on activity in between. It was suggested to create a message board or some sort of discussion forum for the CAC and others involved with HEP so discussions and exchange of ideas could take place in between meetings. This should be easy to do through Google or similar services. It was also suggested to start every meeting with a summary of the previous one; however it was pointed out that meeting minutes are distributed and posted online prior to meetings.

CAC should have more visibility. E.g., the Regional Plan Association tracks places that used to be green. This is a visual reminder of what things looked like and how they could look like again.

CAC needs a stronger education agenda to get the message out to educators and the new generation of stewards.

There should be an effort to recruit CAC members, as stated in the bylaws. CAC should also create an infrastructure to invite community members to participate and provide input, e.g., by holding meetings at night and in an auditorium or large venues.

Although many CAC members have similar agendas, they do not always work together. Partnership and networking should be the key. CAC could be a catalyst.

The CAC needs an agenda with a purpose for the future that gives a sense of mission and vision. E.g., there are still natural areas but there is much habitat destruction under the radar.

HEP has no public face. There is currently no place to go to get an understanding of the value of the harbor and there are not enough voices on these issues. HEP could fill this void and provide knowledge and experience. It could provide also a website to submit ideas and opinions.

There was also discussion about CAC adopting positions and making them heard. Currently, CAC bylaws allow for adopting official positions by resolution (majority of votes).

Other members pointed out that they do use many HEP and CAC materials. These are useful resources for the community.

Roland Lewis summed up the discussion by reflecting on the need for marketing and branding. It has worked for some group, but in essence, the best brand is what we actually do. It is challenging to come up with consensus within a consortium but there is success and it is important to take some credit for it.

The meeting was adjourned at around 2 pm.

ATTENDEES

Robert Alpern
Claire Antonucci, NJ Marine Sciences Consortium
Ludger Balan, Urban Divers Estuary Conservancy
Lisa Baron, USACE
Rob Buchanan, Village Community Boathouse
David Burg, WildMetro
Don Chesley, Stevens Institute of Technology
John Dobosiewicz, Kean University
Tali Engoltz, NJDEP Coastal Management Program
Maggie Flanagan, South Street Seaport Museum
Edgar Freud, Coalition for a Livable Westside
Dorina Frizzera, NJDEP Coastal Management Program
Barbara LaRocco, Going Coastal, Inc.
Mary Leou, NYU Steinhardt School of Education
Roland Lewis, Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance
Katie Mosher-Smith, NY-NJ Baykeeper
Gabriela Munoz, NY-NJ Harbor Estuary Program
Robert Nyman, USEPA Region 2
Manuel Russ, CAC NYCDEP Pollution Prevention
Lisa Ryan, Hackensack Riverkeeper
Capt. Bill Sheehan, Hackensack Riverkeeper
Bill Shore, Nature Network
Zhennya Slootskin, Going Coastal, Inc.
Adina Taylor, Floating the Apple, Inc.
Cortney Worrall, Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance
Nina Zain, The River Project