

Peconic Estuary Protection Committee Meeting Summary – June 2, 2021

Held Via Microsoft Teams

ATTENDEES

Committee Member Representatives

Town of Brookhaven | Veronica King (Committee Vice Chair)
Suffolk County | Frank Castelli
Town of Southampton | Christine Fetten
Village of Sag Harbor | Mary Ann Eddy

Additional Participants

Councilman John Bouvier | Town of Southampton
Peconic Estuary Protection Committee | Patricia Aitken, Coordinator
Sarah Schaefer | Peconic Estuary Partnership
Elizabeth Hornstein | Peconic Estuary Partnership
Corey Humphrey | Suffolk County Soil and Water Conservation District

The meeting was called to order at 10:05

I. Joint Protection Committee Meeting

Pat gave a summary of the Annual Joint Protection Committee Meeting which was held on May 20, 2021 via Zoom. The meeting was recorded and can be watched on the Hempstead Harbor Protection Committee youtube page at: <https://youtu.be/P6kT0HTpSd8> Topics discussed at the Joint Protection Committee meeting included:

- Nassau County's Nine Element Plan Update – Dan Fucci (Nassau County)
- Oyster Gardening in Oyster Bay and Cold Spring Harbor – Rob Crafa (Oyster Bay / Cold Spring Harbor Protection Committee)
- Bioextraction Using Kelp – Dr. Aaren Freeman (Adelphi)
- Oyster Bay's Hatchery, FLUPSYs, & Bioextraction Monitoring – Steve Koester (Town of Oyster Bay) and Carol DiPaolo and Michelle McAllister (Coalition to Save Hempstead Harbor)

II. WQIP Potential Projects

The WQIP grant program is open until July 30, 2021. Pat encouraged members to apply for funding through this program. Christine Fetten asked if funding would be available for a planning grant to increase coastal resiliency in the Flanders area, and that public engagement would be a necessary element of that planning activity.

Corey Humphrey said that the Soil and Water District is seeking to get the NYS Blue Book and Soil and Erosion Control Training Course translated by a certified trainer into Spanish. He will be reaching out to municipalities and partner agencies for letters of support.

John Bouvier has been working with Legislator Fred Thiele to designate Kelp as an aquaculture product and to introduce a resolution to use aquaculture as a part of Ag and Markets. It is suggested to use CPF funding to grant development rights for Kelp. He has been speaking with West Robbins Oyster Company regarding land based uses of aquaculture.

III. QMP/QAPP Sampling Projects

There was a discussion regarding sampling in ponds and lakes in Suffolk County. John Bouvier said he had been in conversations with Carla Rich, a resident involved in water quality sampling in Big Fresh Pond. They would like to establish a baseline so that trends could be tracked, and to monitor for phosphorous and nitrogen and other water quality indicators. He had looked for information on monitoring in lakes and ponds on the NYS Citizens Statewide Lake Assessment Program and the NY State Federation of Lake Associations, but the last date information was available for was 2018. There was discussion regarding this, and the consensus was that utilizing the QMP/QAPP was desirable, and that ascertaining who is monitoring, what waterbodies are being monitored and when the monitoring is being done. MaryAnn Eddy said that the Gobler Lab will be doing studies in the ponds in Sag Harbor as part of the Sag Harbor Water Quality Initiative.

John Bouvier further made the point that phosphorus is causing water quality impairments and questioned if the new IA/OWTS being installed are doing anything to reduce phosphorus, and if not, then it would be desirable that they do so.

IV. Signage

Pat said that she will be speaking with Paul Singer this afternoon regarding the signage project. Christine Fetten said that the Town of Southampton will be seeking to have their sign designed to be used at Round Pond. MaryAnn Eddy said that Sag Harbor wants to have bi-lingual watershed signage in Sag Harbor and asked to see what had been developed so far.

V. Member Updates

Pat reported on behalf of Michael Collins of the Town of Southold that the MS4 permit is being reviewed at the DEC, and it is anticipated it will be released for public comment in the fall. The implementation schedule will be staggered and will not be reduced below three years. It is not anticipated there will be a list of changes from the previous permit, and that the focus of the permit will be on mapping.

There was no reaction from other protection committees regarding the draft letter to be sent to Sue Van Patten regarding the new CALM methodology. Michael said he had been in contact with another person at the DEC regarding CALM, and to wait another week or so before sending the letter.

Sarah Schaefer of the PEP said that the Solute Transport Model is close to completion, and she requested that if any municipality has a special area of interest they want information or modeling for that they let her know. She will send an email to members requesting that information.

There was a discussion regarding holding upcoming meetings in a virtual or in-person format. There was consensus that holding virtual meetings was very convenient, but that in-person meetings are desirable. It was agreed that while most of the meetings would be virtual, one meeting per year would be in person. Therefore, the August 4 meeting will be virtual, October 6 will be in person, and December 1 will be virtual.