

Peconic Estuary Protection Committee
Meeting Summary – June 5, 2019

Suffolk County Community College, Main Street, Riverhead
10:00am - 12:00 pm

ATTENDEES

Committee Member Representatives

Town of Riverhead | Drew Dillingham (Committee Chair)
Town of Brookhaven | Veronica King (Vice Chair)
Town of Southold | Michael Collins

Additional Participants

Peconic Estuary Protection Committee | Patricia Aitken, Coordinator
Scott Curatolo-Wegeman | Cornell Cooperative Extension
Jason Blizzard, Town of Riverhead Engineering Aide
Elizabeth Hornstein, Peconic Estuary Program
Sarah Schaefer, Peconic Estuary Program
Joyce Novak, Peconic Estuary Program
Lauren Scheer, Peconic Estuary Program
John Hochheimer, Tetra Tech (On phone for QAPP Development Discussion)

The meeting was called to order at 10:10

I. Review and Approval of 4/3/19 Meeting Summary

The meeting summary will be emailed to committee members for approval via electronic vote.

II. QAPP Development – Conference Call with Tetra Tech

Sarah Schaefer introduced John Hochheimer of Tetra Tech (on phone) and gave an overview of the purpose of this call, which is to reacquaint all with the project and scope, to initiate a discussion regarding who would be on the Technical Review Committee, and to decide on the next steps to be taken. The contract is written very broadly in order to allow latitude in development of the QAPP. The original intent of the initiation of water quality monitoring was to gain information for municipalities to inform the TMDLs and MS4 permit. In the time since the RFP was issued and a contract awarded and signed, the pathogen TMDL was rescinded, and a new MS4 permit is under development. These developments could take the QAPP into a different direction, and perhaps the QAPP can be used to inform municipal objectives and activities in addition to the original intent. Sarah briefly explained the Coastwise project, (further discussion below) which will help to better define water quality monitoring strategy development.

Sarah asked the municipal representatives present to clarify their municipality's goals for the QAPP. Michael Collins (Southold) expressed that for purposes of the QAPP, the Town is not interested in

monitoring to reopen shellfish beds, but rather would be interested in testing for pollutants that would be reflected on 303d list, for freshwater, etc. He said that Southold would also want to be able to sample sediments. The two main interests would be to verify or refute water body classifications, and if pollutants are verified, to use water quality monitoring to develop solutions to water quality impairments.

Drew Dillingham said that Riverhead would like to test for pathogens. Michael pointed out that unless testing is done by a DEC lab, DEC will not accept any water quality monitoring and suggested that testing could be done for nitrogen and phosphorous. Phosphorous has been banned in Suffolk County, but there is a historical sediment load, which is why sediment testing is necessary. In order to address this historical load, information is needed regarding how deep the loading is and to quantify the amount. Testing will be needed in the creeks leading into Flanders Bay and up the Peconic River to determine loading and to define the problem, with a goal of eliminating the nitrogen TMDL from Riverhead.

Veronica (Town of Brookhaven) asked John if he will be able to follow the aggressive schedule as set forth in the contract. John replied that he believed so. A meeting will be held with the DEC and EPA in about a month. Sarah remarked that the contract runs through August 31, 2020 and has to be completed by the end of 2020. John will contact the EPA to determine who will be the QA/QC contact person for this project.

Veronica pointed out that the RFP included a substantial list of parameters and questioned if anything was missed and that should be added. John explained that QAPPs are structured so that general terms, conditions, and requirements are in the main body of QAPP. A separate section for parameters would have Standard Operating Procedures developed for each parameter. That would allow for parameters to be added or modified without necessitating the development of a new QAPP.

A discussion was held as to who should be on the Technical Review Committee. Representatives from the DEC, EPA and Suffolk County will be determined. Pat Aitken, Veronica King, and Scott Curatolo-Wegeman from Cornell will be on the TCR from the PEPC. Members can be added if anyone else wants to join. Scott will send the QAPP that Cornell is using for their water quality monitoring to John.

John noted the sampling that is currently being done, including sampling done by DEC for shellfishing, nitrogen sampling done by Suffolk County, and pathogen testing in freshwaters (but only for areas classified as bathing beaches). The summary of testing being done by Coastwise includes some areas being sampled for metals, however this sampling is not consistent and is only done in limited areas. Elizabeth will obtain the QAPPs used by NYSDEC. The QAPP being developed for the PEP will not cover DEC testing. John will look for SPDES permits in Suffolk County for pollutants and will cross reference this with the list supplied by Coastwise. Sarah will get the EPA approval page from the Suffolk County QAPP to John.

Sarah will convene a Technical Review Committee meeting in approximately one month. She will be in contact with the municipalities with any follow up questions.

After the call ended, there was a discussion as to how to quantify nitrogen loading in creeks. It was suggested the way to do so was to define the surface and subsurface flow, develop a model, and to do sampling at outfalls.

III. Coastwise Water Quality Monitoring Strategy Development and PEP Organizational Assessment

Sarah gave background on the Coastwise organization and explained that the group was retained to develop a draft summary of the currently existing water quality monitoring programs in the estuary and to conduct an organizational assessment of the Peconic Estuary Program. Coastwise reviewed the draft CCMP to assess what monitoring might be added or changed to inform the CCMP. They will summarize the results of meeting with the agencies currently monitoring water quality in the estuary, and if this is not done by the time the CCMP is completed, this summary will be included as an addendum. This assessment will not be a document that obliges actions, rather, it will be informative.

In the course of doing an organizational assessment, Coastwise will be looking at the composition of current PEP committees, the vision of these committees, asking what roles committee members might want to play, assessing the membership of committees to ascertain if additional members are needed, and to see how the current structure of the committees should be reorganized. A survey will be sent to all committee members for thoughts, concerns, opinions, etc. A phone line will be provided as an additional contact method. The aim of this assessment is for the PEP to be better positioned to achieve goals. Joyce said that the PEP is going through a transition, and she is asking for very frank answers to the survey, and that critical responses are welcome. She would like to build the PEP in a more efficient and powerful way. Michael asked what are the top two/three things she would like to achieve in this process. Joyce said she felt there is a mandate for water quality and is looking at other Estuary programs for what they are doing. She asked what the Protection Committee would like to see as the focus of the PEP, what data is needed by the municipalities, and what do the east end towns need. She would like PEP to be an organization not bound by what it had been in the past and would like to provide guidance for east end towns. She feels that the municipalities should really be at the helm of driving the PEP and that the Local Government Committee should shape policy. The PEP is not required to have all the committees it does and consolidating committees and then expanding membership on those committee could be considered.

IV. Update on Solute Transport Model

Sarah gave a quick update on the Solute Transport Model. The USGS is developing modeling and is requesting that municipalities inform them what information they would like to be able to have, or what modelling they want done – for example, nitrogen loading if full buildout is done, for phased installation of new septic systems, etc. Please get these requests to Sarah and she will inform the USGS.

V. DEC Mapping

The Town of Riverhead is using an app from ESRI that allows direct input from the field to update the status of outfalls, etc. This led to a discussion of the grant opportunities provided by the CFA to obtain funding for mapping and vac trucks.

VI. Budget

The current balance for the PEPC is \$129,114.53, with an additional \$1,800 expected to be received from NYSDOT. (In 2018, NYSDOT payment was received in late June).

Committee expenses for 2019 are anticipated to be:

Coordinator:	\$45,000
Printing:	1,000
Supplies and equipment:	20,000
Total Expense:	\$66,000

These expenses will be adjusted as the Committee decides on programs and initiatives to support.

VII. Outreach Initiatives

a. Summer Social Media Campaign/Municipal Outreach

The summer social outreach began the week of Memorial Day on Facebook and Twitter and will continue through Labor Day. Postings will continue after Labor Day but perhaps not as intensively. Pat said she will develop a social media post for each municipality as well and requested that each municipality let her know if there is something they would like featured. Posts will be sent to municipalities for their approval. There was discussion of possibly printing the cards for distribution, but a decision was not reached. Other protection committees on Long Island have expressed interest in using PEPC materials.

b. Signage at Riverhead Aquarium

Pat and Lauren Scheer of the Peconic Estuary Program met with a representative of the LI Aquarium to discuss placing educational signage regarding the Peconic Estuary at the aquarium. There is currently nothing about the Peconic Estuary there and it is a prime location to provide outreach. It was agreed that the PEPC will provide funding for a sign to be placed there. Pat and Lauren will follow up with the aquarium, and Pat will find out what the Town of Southampton procurement procedures are.

VIII. Member updates

Michael said that the DEC has solicited info for the 2020 303d list, and still has not issued the 2018 list. Municipalities have until the end of September to submit comments for 2020 list. Michael has FOILED for reports and encouraged others to do so as well.

There was discussion regarding the funding received by the Town of Hempstead for their marine lab. Pat will follow up with Tara, to see if lab will be certified as shellfish lab, and if so, will the DEC shellfish unit support it.

Elizabeth reminded the Committee that state grants are available through the CFA . Southold and Riverhead will be applying for a VAC truck. Elizabeth offered any help that PEP can give to municipalities considering applying. Michael asked PEP to review application before it is being submitted and suggested that Southampton consider a vac truck purchase.

Stormwater Project database - Pat and Elizabeth will do a database of all completed projects, which Elizabeth needs for reporting, and will also provide a "wish list" of projects that will be a priority for the municipalities that PEP can then work with municipalities to initiate the projects.

Meeting adjourned at 11:50

Next Meetings 7/31 (NOTE CHANGE OF DATE), 10/2, 12/4