**Peconic Estuary Protection Committee**

**Meeting Summary – February 2, 2022**

**Held Via Microsoft Teams**

**ATTENDEES**

**Committee Member Representatives**

Town of Riverhead | Drew Dillingham (Committee Chair)

Town of Brookhaven | Veronica King (Committee Vice Chair)

Suffolk County | Frank Castelli

Suffolk County | Michael Iorio, Water Quality Improvement Unit (guest)

Town of Southold | Michael Collins

Town of Shelter Island | Joe Finora

Village of Sag Harbor | Mary Ann Eddy

NYS Dept of Transportation | Gregg Williams

**Additional Participants**

Legislator Al Kupski

Gwynn Schroeder | Office of Legislator Krupski

Joyce Novak | Peconic Estuary Partnership

Valerie Vigona | Peconic Estuary Partnership

Corey Humphrey | Suffolk County Soil and Water District

Scott Curatolo-Wegeman |Cornell Cooperative Extension

Peter Vielbig | Bay Constable, Town of Shelter Island (guest)

Valerie Virgona | Peconic Estuary Partnership (Outreach Coordinator)

Sara Cernedas-Martin | Peconic Estuary Partnership (Water Quality Manager)

Peconic Estuary Protection Committee | Patricia Aitken, Coordinator

The meeting was called to order at 10:00, attendees were reminded that the meeting was being recorded

**I.**  **Minutes Review**

Minutes of the October 6 meeting were reviewed and approved.

II.  **Request for Assistance from Shelter Island Bay Constable**

The meeting went out of order from the agenda in order to allow Peter Vielbig, Bay Constable from Shelter Island, to ask for assistance and advice in securing funding for a pumpout boat. Veronica King and Frank Castelli had suggestions and resources to be pursued, and asked Peter to contact them directly for links to grant applications and other resources.

**III. New Employees at Peconic Estuary Partnership**

Introductions were made between the Committee and two new employees of the PEP - Valerie Virgona, Outreach Coordinator and Sara Cernadas-Martin, Water Quality Manager

**IV. Outreach**

Pat is continuing to work with Paul. Signs for Shelter Island and Sag Harbor are in progress. The NYSDOT, North Haven and Greeport will follow.

The Aquarium sign, which was delayed due to Covid related shutdowns and personnel transitions at the PEP, is now on track for being installed as originally planned. Valerie is working with the aquarium to get details on production, fabrication and installation costs which will be funded by the PEPC. A press event will be held to mark the installation.

**V. Dues**

Pat reported that the balance in the PEPC committee account is $176,000 and recommended that the collection of dues be suspended for 2022.

*Veronica King made the motion that the Peconic Estuary Protection Committee membership fees are suspended for the 2022 calendar year.  Drew Dillingham seconded, all agreed.*

Pat will send a formal written notification to all members of the Committee, and to Eileen Quinn at the Town of Southampton.

**IV. 303(d) List**

Michael commented that the 303(d) list has many Southold waterbodies listed as impaired, even though there is no basis to do so. He expressed that the DEC re-wrote the CALM methodology to be so broad that there are no standards.

The newly issued permit will be using the 2018 303(d) list, rather than the 2020 303(d) list.

**V. MS4 Permit**

The DEC released the new MS4 permit on January 12.

Michael cautioned all members to look closely at Appendix C, which he observed has de-listed waterbodies included on it.

The new permit is extremely burdensome, especially with regard to record keeping. It will be extremely difficult, especially for smaller villages and municipalities without full time staff, to fulfill. Larger municipalities will also find it difficult to comply with the requirements.

Pat highlighted a liability issue for the Protection Committees, as the certification language used in the new draft permit places a liability on the committees for individual member municipality’s compliance. If the language remains as written it may result in the dissolution of protection committees. Pat is communicating with the other committees on LI and statewide to coordinate a response to this and other issues raised in the permit.

Each municipality will submit their own comments and the protection committee will submit comments pertinent to committee operations. Pat requested that members send copies of their comments to her.

Veronica observed that the SWPP is now becoming a log, with constant updating required. She wants to discuss with other municipalities what their top concerns are. Pat will poll the members for availability and will set up a meeting.

Michael said the only way a municipality can be subject to the MS4s is if a municipality is an urbanized area or if the municipality is subject to the Peconic Estuary Nitrogen TMDL. If a municipality can cut outfalls, it can apply to be removed from the MS4 permit.

Corey Humphrey mentioned that funding from the SCSWCD has assisted in cutting outfalls in Southold.

Valeria said the PEP has received money from the infrastructure funds and is looking for a big project to fund.

Veronica asked if other members had received a request from the Attorney General’s office for GIS data for their stormwater management systems. Her concern is that included in the request is “available connections from private property” which she believes is a red flag that the DEC may be planning to initiate something.

Michael said this may be a routine part of MCM5.

Veronica also pointed out that municipalities have to submit a NOI 30 days before the effective date of the permit, but there is no indication when the effective date will be.

Gregg Williams said that the NYSDOT comments are being coordinated by the Albany office. The DOT has 900 outfalls in Nassau and Suffolk, and the DOT is starting in Nassau and working east.

A consultant is working on new pathogen TMDLs. The focus will be on six or seven waterbodies, Michael expressed doubt that the TMDLS will be completed in the near future.

Legislator Krupski asked why the DOT is starting in Nassau. Gregg responded that the DOT is putting together priority lists assessing DOT impacts. Gregg said the DOT is always available or willing to partner in a project, as in Meetinghouse Creek.

**VI. Member Updates**

Valeria – the PEP is assisting the Village of Sag Harbor with their stormwater management program, including building raingardens. Four outfalls are being removed at Goose Creek in the Town of Southold. A stormwater wetland is being built at Meetinghouse Creek in Riverhead.

Corey Humphrey said that there is an Ag Non Point Source funding opportunity open and funding for a cover crop program will be coming in late 2022- 2023.

He asked for judges to participate in the LI Envirothon to be held on April 27 at the USDAN Center.

Veronica asked Pat to set up a meeting for the week of February 28 for a roundtable discussion on the MS4 Permit.

Veronica made a motion to adjourn the meeting at XXXX, Drew seconded, all agreed.