**Peconic Estuary Protection Committee**

**Meeting Summary – April 12, 2022**

**Held Via Microsoft Teams**

**ATTENDEES**

**Committee Member Representatives**

Town of Brookhaven | Veronica King (Committee Vice Chair)

Suffolk County | Frank Castelli

Suffolk County | Michael Iorio, Water Quality Improvement Unit

Town of Southold | Michael Collins

Town of Southampton | Tom Houghton

Village of Sag Harbor | Mary Ann Eddy

NYS Dept of Transportation | Gregg Williams

**Additional Participants**

Peconic Estuary Protection Committee | Patricia Aitken, Coordinator

The meeting was called to order at 10:05, attendees were reminded that the meeting was being recorded

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

Minutes of the February 2 meeting were reviewed and approved.

**II. MS4 Permit**

There was discussion regarding the permit which is scheduled to go into effect on April 27. None of the attendees have filed a NOI, as they might be filing for a permit that may never go into effect. Further discussion revolved around outreach to legislators informing them of the implications of the impact of the permit and requesting their assistance in dealing with the impacts of the permit. It was suggested to schedule the meetings after the middle of May, as the permit would either be out or would have been extended by then. Meetings could be cancelled if necessary, if the DEC implements a multi-month delay on the permit, although there is doubt that this will happen.

Outreach will also be conducted to some of the NGOs on Long Island, such as Citizens Campaign, Group for the East End to inform them of the impact of the permit. This effort would be to assure the NGOs that the municipalities support clean water efforts, but that the provisions of the permit are not possible to implement and that the permit is forcing municipalities to use limited resources in actions that don’t actually result in water quality improvements. Michael said that in 2012 when Southold re-wrote their management plan they invited in the NGOs and none of them pushed back. He expressed that having meetings with NGOs will be valuable no matter what happens.

Pat will contact the other coordinators of the protection committees and see if they want to coordinate a response and outreach. She will develop a one page top ten bullet point highlights of the impacts to be given to legislators and NGOs.

Michael suggested that when/if permit goes into effect, the committee should work together to deal with compliance issues – identify each municipality’s strengths and weaknesses, and how support can be given to each other and resources shared. This could be a topic for discussion at the next committee meeting, which would hopefully have a good attendance.

**III. Joint Protection Committee Meeting May 12**

There will be a joint protection meeting on May 12. Pat will circulate the agenda to members of the Protection Committee. Assemblyman Steve Englebright and Peter Scully will be speaking at the meeting, which will be held via Zoom at 7:00 pm on May 12.

**IV. Outreach**

The sign will finally be installed at the Aquarium after a two year delay in the installation. Pat is working with the Peconic Estuary Partnership to set up a photo opportunity in mid-May for the installation.

**V. Member Updates**

Michael asked if any members have heard of any legal actions contemplated against the DEC with regard to the permit. Pat has not heard of anything to date. Michael said he would not initiate action, but would serve as a witness. Pat will see what she can learn about any action contemplated by any of the coaltions.

Michael reported that criteria for urbanized areas was finalized on March 23. The criteria is now housing density and impervious surfaces. He is not really certain what the impact will be, he believes that the biggest impact will be on the North Fork and the eastern part of the South Fork. Final census data and maps should come out in mid-July.

Pat reported that June 1 meeting will have to be rescheduled as she will be away. Veronica said that the meeting can be held off until the meeting in August. Pat said she will schedule meeting with legislators, NGOs and will keep the board informed.

Frank hopes to get solicitations for applications out within about a month. Veronica will not be asking for HMGP funding, but the County is contemplating doing so. Michael is over-funded at the moment, so he is not seeking any funding at this point, and is fully committed for the next three to five years.

Frank is contemplating a GIS based new LIDAR data for elevelation, and also some additional wetlands restoration activities in Seatuck or at Beaver Dam Creek. Back up power generation using hydrogen fuel is also contemplated at County facilities in Yaphank. Veronica and Michael offered support letter for the LIDAR project. Michael said a county wide GIS clearinghouse would be very helpful, even if all the reporting would not be in the same format. With the new permit, all the reporting has to be digital in the next three to five years. Veronica asked if Michael makes information about regulated infrastructure and SPDES sewershed publicly available. He is working on making more information available, but at this point is determining ownership, as it is a matter of policy that he does not post information about other municipality’s infrastructure. There were also concerns about accuracy of the mapping. EPF funding could potentially be used for this.

Meeting was adjourned at 10.50 am.