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Description automatically generated**Peconic Estuary Protection Committee**

**Meeting Summary – June 7, 2023**

**Held at Cornell Cooperative Extension Offices**

**Griffing Avenue, Riverhead**

**ATTENDEES**

**Committee Member Representatives**

Town of Riverhead | Drew Dillingham (Committee Chair)

Town of Riverhead | Jason Blizzard

Town of Brookhaven | Veronica King (Committee Vice Chair)

Town of Southampton | Tom Houghton

Village of Sag Harbor | MaryAnn Eddy

**Additional Participants**

Corey Humphrey | Suffolk County Soil and Water Conservation District, District Manager

Eileen Keenan | Peconic Estuary Protection Committee, Coordinator

Valerie Virgona | Peconic Estuary Partnership, Outreach Coordinator

Sara Cernadas-Martin| Peconic Estuary Partnership, Water Quality Program Manager

The meeting was called to order at 10:15, attendees were reminded that the meeting was being recorded for purposes of transcribing the minutes, all attendees introduced themselves.

1. Eileen Keenan introduced herself as the new PEPC Coordinator and expressed enthusiasm for the opportunity to work with the Committee.
2. The April Meeting Summary was accepted. It will be posted to the website.
3. The proposed Coordinator Work Plan was accepted.
4. Eileen Keenan explained that watershed management goals are the same as those covered by the MS4 regulations and recommended using the PEPC QAPP for collection of water quality data to increase MS4 effectiveness. Consideration of outfall eliminations was also discussed as a means of protecting water quality and improving MS4 program efficiency. It was noted that greater transparency and cooperation by DEC is needed in order for local governments to better track construction permitting.
5. A joint Protection Committee was held on May 11, 2023. Eileen Keenan reported that representatives of the Peconic Estuary Protection Committee, the Hempstead Harbor Protection Committee, the Manhasset Bay Protection Committee, the Oyster Bay/Cold Spring Harbor Protection Committee, and the Setauket Harbor Task Force discussed ideas for collaborative grant applications to fund a multimedia outreach campaign. The Committee representatives recognized that the economic benefits of water quality should be stressed in grant applications. Attendees agreed that they will advocate for incorporation of environmental reviews in any New York State housing proposals.
6. The Committee was advised that Corey Humphrey, Scott Curatolo-Wagemann, and Joyce Novak have accepted the PEPC invitation to serve as Advisory Members. Such members are non-voting and do not pay dues
7. Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) Resources were discussed. Applications are due July 28, 2023. Eileen Keenan provided a synthesis of the various funding programs offered through the CFA as well as links to additional information online. Miscellaneous potential projects and mutual support for funding applications were discussed. Corey Humphrey indicated that the District can provide assistance with grant applications, matching, and administration.
8. The NYSDEC is soliciting data for the 2024 303d List. Water quality data may be used to update the  [303(d) List of Impaired Waters](https://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/31290.html). Municipalities whose storm sewer systems discharge to waters on the 303(d) List are subject to more stringent MS4 requirements. It would be helpful for the Peconic municipalities to use their QAPP to obtain the water quality data necessary to verify that DEC classifications of waterbodies in their jurisdiction are accurate. It is anticipated that the next MS4 permit issued by DEC will include particularly burdensome requirements pertaining to 303(d) listed waterbodies.
9. There was discussion regarding the Signage Project. Completed and approved posters can be accessed via the Google Drive and the website. Tom Houghton requested that Eileen Keenan reach out to the sign designer Paul Singer regarding any outstanding billing under the existing contract. If so, a contract extension will be needed. Signage fabrication and installation costs are not part of the existing contract. Member municipalities were encouraged to obtain fabrication and installation services in-house or with local printers. Printing specifications and instructions will be obtained from Paul Singer.
10. Comprehensive resiliency planning for sea level rise and the challenges associated with implementation of the NYSDEC Climate Smart Communities Program were discussed.
11. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 6.