

**South Shore Estuary Reserve Council  
CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

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**MEETING MINUTES**

March 13, 2007

Long Island Maritime Museum, West Sayville, New York

Chair: Maureen Dolan Murphy

**CAC Members Present:** Allan Aronoff (Brookhaven League of Women Voters/CAC Vice Chair); Pam Burford (Fire Island Association); Henry Dam (Suffolk Alliance of Sportsmen); Ed Davis (Great South Bay Audubon); Robert DeBona (Mastic Beach Property Owners Association); Linda Freilich (for Mike Cafaro) (Sierra Club); Joe Kayal (Independent); Lesley Kane (Islip Town Leaseholders Association) Gil Kelley (Association of Marine Industries); Curt Matzinger (South Shore Waterfowlers); Maureen Dolan Murphy (Citizens Campaign for the Environment); Kevin McAllister (Peconic Baykeeper); Florence Sharkey (Brookhaven Baymen's Association); Ben Sohm (South Shore Bayhouse Owners Association); Rich Troy (South Bay Cruising Club); Dave Thompson (Trout Unlimited); and Rob Weltner (Operation SPLASH).

**CAC Members Absent:** Ducks Unlimited; Students for Environmental Quality; South Shore Audubon Society; NY Seafood Council

**South Shore Estuary Reserve Staff Present:** Jeff Fullmer (Director); Clare O'Reilly (Program Administrative Manager); and, Lou Siegel (Science Coordinator).

**Guests Present:** Keenan Boyle; Todd Brice; Ana Brice; Phil Blindenhofer (Association of Marine Industries); Carl LoBue, Kelly Hines, Nicole Maher, and Chris Clapp (The Nature Conservancy); Stephen Jones and Mark DeAngelis (Long Island Maritime Museum); Mike Duffy (South Bay Cruising Club); Kevin Morgan and John P. O'Donnell (Great South Bay Environmental, Inc.); Ernie Rosano and Elizabeth Mikucki-Fleury (Environmental Resources Management); Marie Thorpe and Luke Thorpe (Monumental Enterprises); and Nancy Kearney (Town of Oyster Bay).

**1. Introductions**

M. Dolan Murphy called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m., and CAC members and guests introduced themselves. M. Dolan Murphy reported a change in the meeting agenda order as reflected below.

**2. Approval of CAC Meeting Minutes**

J. Kayal motioned to approve the January 9, 2007 meeting minutes. P. Burford seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

**3. Presentations**

K. McAllister reported a Baykeeper initiative to advance the nomination and federal designation of a vessel no-discharge zone in the waters of South Shore Estuary. He said that given recent pump-out boat advocacy efforts, Peconic Baykeeper feels that the time is right to pursue this effort in the Reserve. The process includes demonstrating the need for greater protection, confirming that there are an adequate number of pump-out facilities for the boating population, and building public support for this initiative. He reported the Towns of Brookhaven and Islip have agreed to have the Baykeeper work on their behalf in preparing a petition to the federal government for the vessel no-discharge zone in their waters.

Baykeeper is looking to build widespread support for this effort by working with other towns and villages and organizations. K. McAllister expects that this effort will serve as a catalyst for additional pump-out boats in the Reserve. At this time, it is unclear if the entire Reserve will qualify for this designation. He acknowledged that waste from boats is a small input of pollution compared to other sources, but that it is important to work on reducing all pollution sources. The Town of Brookhaven and the Town of Islip will hold a joint press conference on March 16 announcing their support for this initiative.

Carl LoBue of The Nature Conservancy (TNC) gave a presentation on his organization's work to develop an Ecosystem Based Management Plan for the Great South Bay as a pilot project which TNC was contracted by the Department of State to perform. Discussion followed the presentation:

- Which sea grass areas were healthier than other areas in the Reserve? C. LoBue replied that research of sea grass beds in the Reserve found that there are healthy sea grass beds in South Oyster Bay, less sea grass in the eastern parts of the Great South Bay, and very little sea grass left in the central part of Great South Bay. TNC is investigating the potential for sea grass to grow better on natural shorelines versus hardened shorelines.
- When will the plan be done? C. LoBue replied that he expected a more complete package will be provided to DOS sometime later this year. J. Fullmer added that preparation of the plan was identified in the Oceans and Great Lakes Ecosystem Conservation legislation as a demonstration project. The Oceans and Great Lakes Ecosystem Conservation Council will be investigating applying ecosystem based management principles and practices in coastal areas throughout New York State. Ecosystem based management is consistent with recommendations included in the Reserve Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP).

C. LoBue also provided the CAC with an update on The Nature Conservancy's Bluepoints Bottomlands hard clam restoration project. Discussion followed the presentation including questions and comments about the correlation between clam populations and inlet closures, food sources and quality, clam populations in waters impaired by pollution, and future spawning potential.

Steve Jones, Vice Chairman of the Long Island Maritime Museum Board of Trustees, and Mark DeAngelis, Board member, gave a presentation about the status of the waterfront area on the museum property, which is owned by Suffolk County and leased by the museum. They discussed the past need to conduct frequent dredging of the boat basin and channel leading to the bay to allow vessel access, problems associated with wind directed sediments and erosion based on the original construction of the channels, and impairments to the tidal marshes from ditching. They said that LIMM wanted to address these waterfront issues in a more holistic and long term manner. They discussed proposals to install innovative shoreline stabilization structures, restore a marine railway, and perform marsh restoration in areas with mosquito ditching. The museum is currently working on a proposal to the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and other agencies, and wanted the CAC to be aware of its development. Discussion and questions followed the presentation including the current status of the planning process, involvement of other government agencies, permitting, funding and partnerships.

- J. Fullmer commented that the proposed project is a good example of the need to address different resources and conditions, and that the CMP has identified maritime centers including West Sayville and recommendations for maritime centers including maritime center action plan development, which could be considered as the museum develops their plan. M. DeAngelis said that the museum property has unique conditions, and it is the only remaining former estate on the south shore with these conditions.

- M. Dolan Murphy suggested that the CAC discuss how they can help the museum move forward with this plan at the next meeting. J. Kayal suggested that this idea be shared with the Reserve Council. J. Kayal proposed making a motion to have the museum give a presentation to the Reserve Council on their proposed plan, and to ask the Council to take action on this issue. C. LoBue said that from his perspective as a Reserve Council member, formal approval for this type of project is needed from DEC and Suffolk County, not from the Council, and that the museum should consider using language from the CMP in support of their project. There was agreement that the topic could be conveyed to the Reserve Council for informational purposes, perhaps as part of the CAC Chair's report.
- C. Matzinger suggested that the museum should partner with Ducks Unlimited, which has significant experience with marsh restoration projects. N. Maher added that she is a member of the Suffolk County Wetlands Stewardship Committee, and that the West Sayville marsh area was identified as a priority area for marsh restoration.

#### **4. Reports**

##### **SSER Office Update**

J. Fullmer updated CAC members on Reserve Office activities since the last meeting:

- The next Council meeting is tentatively scheduled for April 25<sup>th</sup> from 1-4 PM, location to be determined.
- The Browns River/Greens Creek Watershed Management Plan was adopted by the Town of Islip in February. This is the first adopted watershed management plan in the Reserve, and it contains recommendations for water quality improvements, habitat restoration, and education and outreach initiatives. The Town of Islip will be starting work on a watershed management plan for Great Cove soon.
- The Swan River Watershed Management Plan is nearly complete. A public information meeting was held on March 1 at the Swan River Civic Association building. The final plan will be considered for adoption by the Town of Brookhaven town board.
- Water quality brochures on non-point source pollution best management practices were updated by the office and copies are available.
- Proceedings from the Stormwater Treatment Technologies Workshop held in October 2006 were prepared and distributed to workshop attendees and Council members. Copies are available and it will be posted on the Reserve website soon. J. Fullmer asked the CAC to help distribute the proceedings when local governments ask about emerging technologies.
- J. Fullmer participated in a press event with the Supervisor of the Town of Babylon and town board members to announce the Town's free Pooper Scooper program to encourage residents to reduce non point source pollution inputs from pet waste when they adopt pets. He displayed one of the pooper scoopers that the town was distributing through its animal shelter.
- The Department of State hired a consultant to collect information from municipalities in the Reserve on the status of their drainage infrastructure mapping efforts. Reserve municipal partners are encouraged to map their drainage infrastructure to understand how stormwater moves. The consultant has nearly collected all of the information, and will prepare maps and a draft report

with recommendations later this spring.

- The Reserve Office continues to participate in the Forge River Task Force, by attending meetings in January and February and assisting the Town of Brookhaven with the preparation of meeting summaries. The Reserve Office will be working with the Town on preparation of a watershed management plan for the Forge River, which will be funded by an Environmental Protection Fund grant awarded by New York State in 2006. There was also a recent article in Newsday which discussed water quality issues in the Forge River.
- Water Quality Improvement Project awards were recently announced for several Reserve municipalities, and a press release describing these awards was distributed.

C. O'Reilly reported on the following Reserve Office activities:

- An advisory group for the upcoming barrier assessment project has met, and begun to create a list of suggested data collection categories that should be included in the assessment.
- The Reserve Council Diadromous Fish Workgroup will once again conduct a volunteer monitoring survey for alewives this spring, and asked CAC members to help with volunteer recruitment. The survey will include the Carmans River, Connetquot River, Swan River, Beaver Dam Creek, Browns River, Carlls River, and Howells Creek. Training sessions will be held at the end of March at Dowling College.

L. Siegel reported on the following Reserve Office activities:

- The Stewardship Certificate Program is underway, and the Reserve Office has begun handing out applications and distributing materials at several forums. The program was announced on various websites, and a link to the application is posted on the SSER website. The Reserve Office has spoken with Theodore Roosevelt Nature Center at Jones Beach State Park about presenting certificates to students involved in their programs at the center. L. Siegel asked the CAC to assist in spreading the word about this program.
- The South Shore Estuary Learning Facilitator Program (sSELF) is a program to assist schools and groups in stewardship activities, and is funded by a grant received from the Environmental Resources Management Foundation by the New York State Marine Educators Association (NYSMEA) in cooperation with the Reserve Office. Reserve Office staff met recently with the science research and ecology teachers at Patchogue Medford High School about developing a monitoring and stewardship program in the Swan River watershed. Reserve Office staff also met with Debbie Diamond and Betty Arink of the Long Island Maritime Museum about the education programs offered by the museum, and possibly establishing a monitoring program at the museum and the potential of recognizing the oyster sloop *Priscilla* as the floating ambassador of the SSER as discussed at the last CAC meeting. J. Fullmer suggested that the Reserve Office could draft a resolution for CAC consideration to submit to the Council. The Reserve Office will work with the museum on this proposal, and a draft proposal will be included in the CAC meeting packet for the next meeting in May.
- The Reserve Office, R. Weltner, and the Friends of Baldwin Lakes Civic Association met with representatives of the Nassau County Department of Public Works to discuss the presence of floatable debris in Lofts Pond and Silver Lake, which are part of the Parsonage Creek watershed

that empties into Hempstead Bay. Nassau County Department of Public Works received an Environmental Protection Fund award to rehabilitate the ponds, but floatable debris are still a major issue. Representatives toured the ponds and recharge basin in the watershed, and are discussing trawling for floatable debris. The Reserve Office looks forward to continued cooperation between the stakeholders.

- Reserve Office staff distributed outreach materials at the New York Sportfishing Federation show at the Freeport Recreation Center, the Nassau County Science Teachers Association meeting in Rockville Centre, the Waterfront Center Conference at SUNY Maritime College, and the Paddlesport Symposium at Connetquot High School.

### **Formal Education Work Group Update**

The Formal Education Work Group met in early February. Tom McCavera, a professional videographer, and Andy St. Angelo, an art director, gave a presentation on the steps necessary to develop a video presentation about the Reserve. The work group also discussed conducting a survey of marine science teachers about what activities they are conducting in the Reserve, and develop a partnership between marine educators and the work group. The next work group meeting will be in two months.

L. Kane said that the CAC Education Subcommittee has interviewed a film maker, Luke Thorpe, who was present at the meeting. He distributed information about his work to the CAC, and L. Kane requested that he provide a presentation at the next Formal Education Work Group meeting.

### **Pump-out Boat Update**

M. Dolan Murphy sent letters to the Town of Islip and the Town of Southampton requesting information about their pump-out boat programs. Copies of the letters and responses from the Town of Islip and the Town of Southampton were distributed in the CAC mailing packet. N. Kearney said that the Town of Oyster Bay has a pump-out boat on the south shore as well, and M. Dolan Murphy said she will send a letter to the Town of Oyster Bay requesting information from them as well.

### **Western Bays Water Quality Work Group Update**

M. Dolan Murphy suggested that the Western Bays discussion be tabled for the next meeting. She asked if the CAC would like her to reach out to Peter Scully, Director of DEC Region 1, to talk about the TMDL process in the Western Bays. The Western Bays are listed on the 303d list for pathogens and nitrogen. CAC members indicated they would be interested in having DEC participate at the next meeting, and more time will be included for discussion at the next meeting.

### **Great South Bay Environmental, Inc. Report - CAC Review**

Great South Bay Environmental, Inc. distributed a report at the last meeting for the CAC to read and review. R. Weltner provided a synopsis of the report, and reported that Great South Bay Environmental, Inc. has submitted a proposal for funding from the Nassau County Bond Act. The proposal is to adjust salinity in a “dead zone” in South Oyster Bay by increasing flushing. Great South Bay Environmental, Inc. and Operation SPLASH have been doing research and communicated with the USACE, DEC, EPA, Town of Oyster Bay, New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, and New York Sea Grant (NYSG), seeking support for their proposal and to identify additional funding sources. The proposal requests \$18 million dollars for water quality monitoring in the first year, construction in

the second and third year, and water quality monitoring in the fourth year. The applicants are seeking CAC support of their proposal. Discussion ensued. Questions and comments were raised about what other government entities the proposal had been presented to and their reaction, coordination of proposal review, potential for mechanical failure, consistency with current research on ocean-bay water exchange and the recommendations of the Reserve CMP. M. Dolan asked if the CAC wanted to have a future presentation on the subject from Great South Bay Environmental. There was agreement that a presentation should be arranged.

B. Sohm proposed that a half hour of time at the next CAC meeting be provided for a presentation by Luke Thorpe, a film maker identified by the CAC Education Subcommittee. M. Dolan Murphy suggested that the Education Subcommittee meet after the CAC meeting to discuss. She explained that the process that was developed and agreed upon was for the CAC Education Subcommittee to make recommendations to the full CAC and the Council Formal Education Work Group, and the Council understands that the Formal Education Work Group is an appropriate venue in conjunction with the CAC to discuss the strategy and production an educational video about the Reserve. She added that if the CAC also wished to have a presentation on the subject that would be fine. B. Sohm reiterated his desire to have Mr. Thorpe make a presentation to the CAC and expressed his frustration with the process.

J. Kayal made a motion to have the CAC Chair and B. Sohm discuss the video process and a possible presentation by the film maker before the next meeting. M. Dolan Murphy seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

## **6. New Business**

T. Brice reported that he was seeking help from interested parties to conduct a clean up effort on the south shore and islands in the bay near Amityville. CAC members suggested he contact Operation SPLASH.

## **7. Announcements**

L. Siegel announced that Dowling College will be hosting an International Conference on the Biology, Ecology and Conservation of Horseshoe Crabs.

P. Burford announced that the Stewardship Award subcommittee is still seeking nominations. Nomination forms are available on the Reserve Council website.

C. LoBue announced that there is an upcoming Fire Island National Seashore General Management Plan meeting at Stony Brook University.

Ed Davis announced that CAC members should wear red on Fridays to support troops.

R. Weltner announced that Operation SPLASH held their first clean up with Sierra Club on March 9, and is looking forward to future efforts.

## **8. Adjournment**

P. Burford motioned to adjourn the meeting. J. Kayal seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 9:42 pm.