

**Environment Committee
Meeting Summary
September 29, 2008**

Present: Margaret Wirtenberg*, Weston; Robert Byrnes*, Greenwich; Anna Duleep, Norwalk; Paul Settelmeyer, SWRPA chairman; Floyd Lapp, SWRPA (via telephone); Nicole Davis, SWRPA;
*Committee co-chairs

Dr. Wirtenberg called the meeting to order at 2:34 pm.

I. Dr. Lapp made a motion to approve the minutes from the previous meeting on July 28, 2008. The motion was seconded by Mr. Byrnes and passed unanimously.

II. Watershed Planning

A. Dr. Lapp updated the committee on the status of the ACOE reconnaissance study. He reported that since Congressman Shays' announcement in August to have a reconnaissance study of the rivers of South Western CT, the congressman is still working to have the legislation passed by congress. Dr. Lapp summarized that since congress has adjourned for the remainder of the year the legislation will have to wait until next year. If the congressman is re-elected he will hopefully move early next year to have the legislation passes, which means the study, should be completed early in 2010. He concluded that this would mean an additional 2 years before the results were available. Mr. Byrnes questioned the delay of the study being funded and Mr. Settelmeyer clarified.

B. Ms. Davis updated the committee on the success of the FEMA Grants meeting hosted by SWRPA in August. Approximately 30 people attended, and all eight municipalities were represented. She summarized the information that was presented, and commented that SWRPA was currently working with FEMA and the DEP to setup a training in the region that would cover the e-grants system, benefit cost analysis, and creating a strong application.

C. Ms. Davis stated that SWRPA would be applying for money from FEMA to update the 2005 Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan for the region. She mentioned that FEMA requires the plan be updated every 5-years, and that an approved plan is required in order to be considered for FEMA Grants.

D. Ms. Davis summarized the proposed watershed planning program for CT. She stated that SWRPA had recently held 2 meeting to discuss regional watershed planning. The first meeting was with municipal representatives and the second included both municipal representatives and local watershed organizations. A lot of valuable information on work currently being done in each of the watershed of interest was present, which has help to define the course of action needed to ensure watershed management plans are created for each watershed in the region.

Mr. Settelmeyer commented on the apparent lack of communication between municipalities and with SWRPA regarding watershed and flood related projects. He suggested that municipalities send us a courtesy copy of studies and grant applications so we know what is going on in the region, rather than finding out after the fact.

Ms Davis updated the committee on the intention to apply for funding through the DEP's 319 grants program. She summarized the program and concluded that SWRPA will be applying for funding to create watershed management plans for 4 for the regions watershed: the Mianus, Noroton Goodwives, and Fivemile. She stated that SWRPA would like to ask the board to provide support and matching funds for the grant. Mr. Settelmeyer commented that the

accounts have been showing profits so SWRPA should be willing to approve \$12,000 or \$3,000 per watershed. Dr. Wirtenberg and Mr. Byrnes said they would carry the motion forward to the board.

Dr. Wirtenberg expressed concerns for the communities not benefiting from the study. She suggested that we clearly indicate which communities get what. Mr. Settlemeyer stated that this is the first time for a request to fund a specific project. Ms. Duleep commented that the study will be applicable to each town, and Mr. Settlemeyer and Mr. Byrnes both agreed that the project would benefit the greater good. Dr. Wirtenberg agreed and clarified that she wanted make sure that the question could be answered if raised by the board.

Action to bring the resolution to the board was moved by Mr. Byrnes, seconded by Ms. Duleep and unanimously approved.

III. Ms. Davis stated that she had brought the idea of energy conservation up at the September Purchasing Co-op meeting and there appeared to be little interest from the municipalities present. Therefore, she suggested taking energy conservation off the table for the time being. Dr. Lapp agreed that would be best for now. The committee agreed.

IV. Ms. Davis updated the committee on recent interest in the Norwalk Island Canoe/Kayak Trail Guide. Ms. Jean Trapani of Westport had recently attended a paddling conference in Port Townsend Washington, where she presented the trail.

Mr. Settlemeyer inquired if the original funding source for the trail guide would prohibit looking to corporate sponsors to help reprint the guide. He mentioned First County Bank had a program that might be willing to sponsor the reprint. Ms. Davis stated that to the best of her knowledge there was no reason corporate sponsors could not be used.

V. Mr. Settlemeyer suggested the committee consider bringing something to the legislative committee. He commented that recommending the expansions of grants programs may be an option. He stated that the Legislative committee is working to ring the MPO and SWRPA agendas together and that any suggestions should be brought to the next legislative meeting.

Ms. Davis commented that the time of the Environment Committee meetings had been an issue for some committee members and asked if there was a more convenient time. Several alternatives were explored, including before the agency meeting and early morning, but mid afternoon seemed to be the best option. The next meeting was scheduled for November 10 at 4:00pm.

VI. Mr. Byrnes motioned to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Ms. Duleep and passed unanimously.

Prepared by Nicole Davis, South Western Regional Planning Agency