

**Environment Committee  
Meeting Summary  
June 11, 2009**

**Present:** Robert Byrnes\*, Greenwich; Leigh Grant\*, Anna Duleep, Norwalk; Reese Hutchison, Darien; Jeff Jacobs, Westport; Paul Settelmeyer, SWRPA Chairman; Floyd Lapp, and Nicole Davis, SWRPA;  
\*Committee co-chairs

Mr. Byrnes called the meeting to order at 7:42 A.M.

I. Mr. Byrnes asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the April meeting. A motion was made by Ms. Grant, which was seconded by Mr. Settelmeyer and carried unanimously.

**II. Reconnaissance Study Update**

Dr. Lapp indicated that the status of the study was unchanged; the ACOE reconnaissance study had been added to the 2009 appropriations list by Congressman Himes. He summarized what the reconnaissance study would accomplish and provided an overview of why Westchester County was able to get the resolution passed through congress so quickly. Dr. Lapp commented that if the appropriation were to pass, a study would commence in 10-12 months.

Mr. Jacobs asked how the money was distributed, which lead to a discussion on the process of passing an appropriation in congress. Further discussion ensued on the benefits of a having the ACOE come in to conduct a reconnaissance. Mr. Settelmeyer provided insight into the usefulness of the Westchester County study, which included the Byram River in Greenwich. Ms. Grant also commented that many people were unhappy about the ACOE coming in and working on a river, but that overall this study was advantageous.

**III. Status of Grants**

Mr. Byrnes asked Ms. Davis to remind the committee, which grants were still outstanding. She began by providing a summary of the FEMA Predisaster Mitigation Grant. She indicated that no official word had been given regarding the status of the grant. However, the contact person at the DEP handling the FEMA grants indicated that DEP had not been formally contacted but felt confident that SWRPA's project would be funded. Mr. Settelmeyer commented that SWRPA should be cautiously optimistic about receiving the grants, and asked for clarification on the specifics of the grant. Mr. Jacobs questioned the structure of the Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan and a discussion followed on what should be included the update. Mr. Hutchison inquired after the status of the revised FEMA flood maps, and the committee discussed changes to the new maps and how they may affect the region.

Ms. Davis then provided an overview of the 319 Grant, and alluded to how it related to the 604b planning money SWRPA was awarded from the DEP. She stated the SWRPA has been approved for two separate awards for watershed based management planning. The first award would be for \$35,000 to work with the city of Norwalk and Norwalk River Watershed groups to convert the Norwalk Watershed plan to include the 9 elements

required for a watershed based management plan. Ms. Davis explained the work that had previously been done in the Norwalk River Watershed by the Norwalk River Initiative and Norwalk River Association. Ms. Davis then explained the second award, which would cover the Saugatuck/Aspetuck, Fivemile and Mianus River Watershed. She provided an overview of the groups that were currently involved in each watershed and the extent of work that would be required needed to develop Watershed based management plans for all three watersheds. Dr. Lapp commented that all the work would be done in house utilizing the unique skills possessed by the SWRPA staff.

Ms. Duleep informed the committee that SWRPA had been brought up at a recent meeting in the City of Norwalk and that she had discussed the watershed planning program with a report at the Norwalk Hour. She commented that the reporter had expressed interest and may be contacting SWRPA for a follow up. The committee discussed the advantages of the work that had been done in the watersheds, working with existing watershed groups and other stakeholders that should be engaged in the development of watershed plans

The Committee continued to discuss the watershed planning program and what would be required from the grants. Mr. Settlemeyer commented that he would like to have written confirmation of the award for the next agency meeting; he also suggested that the committee invite someone from the Byram River watershed to a fall meeting to discuss their process and how they have been handling watershed planning.

#### **IV. October Environment Summit**

Mr. Byrnes and Ms. Grant presented the idea of holding the environment summit as a speaker series rather than a one day summit. He asked the committee for suggestion and a discussion ensued. Mr. Jacobs offered his perspective on the advantages of having a one day summit verses a speaker series. The group agreed that based on the range of topics that had been explored, and the target audience, a speaker series would be a better format. Mr. Jacobs and Mr. Settlemeyer both felt that a short series of three lectures be set up for the fall. The committee discussed potential formats and agreed that a possible "brown bag" style series should be planned for October, November, and December, with the possibility of a second series in the spring.

#### **V. Other Business**

Ms. Davis commented that she had been contacted by the Fairfield County Convention & Visitor Bureau about reprinting the Norwalk Island Canoe and Kayak Guide. She stated they had expressed interest in doing an initial reprinting of the guide, followed by a possible update, giving SWRPA credit for the original document. Unfortunately, their funding status for next year was unclear so the project was put on hold. However, there is a possibility that the Norwalk Maritime Associate would take over the reprint.

Ms. Davis proposed that for the next meeting the committee take a field trip. The group discussed possible options and decided to hold the next meeting as a regular meeting and hold the August meeting as a field trip, allowing for more time to prepare. The next meeting was scheduled for July 8<sup>th</sup> at 7:30A.M.

*Approved July 8, 2009*

Ms. Davis asked the committee if they were interest in pursuing energy initiatives and conservation at the regional level. After a short discussion it was decided that this topic would be better dealt with at the local level.

Prepared by Nicole Davis,  
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