

Peconic Estuary Program (PEP) Management Committee Meeting
September 8, 2011
9:30 – 12:00
CCE Building, 432 Griffing Ave
Riverhead, NY
Minutes

1. General Introductions

2. Amendments to minutes from 6/9/11 meeting

The 6/9/11 meeting summary should be revised to reflect:

- Kevin McDonald left the room and did not participate in the ¼% funding discussions
- Lynn Mendelman said Peconic Watershed not Peconics, page 2.

With amendments, the revised summary was approved.

3. Annual Workplan and Strategy Discussion

Rick Balla: Gave introduction and description of document.

Walter Dawydiak: Described the benefits of this document including a task list related to management modules, recording accomplishments per year, accountability, defined roles and responsibilities, wish list/priority list, reinvigorated TAC and LGC, and yearly preparation of annual report (first due in 2012).

Chris Lubicich: Further described document as a reaffirmation of responsibilities. Described the crux of the document as the list of items and what we expect to do in a 12 month period.

Lynn Mendelman: Said the document was easy to read and follow. Asked how to get information on specific contracts. Call Kim Shaw or follow link provided by Emily Fogarty.

Glynnis Berry: Thought the document was did a great job, especially addressing nutrients. Asked for a change on page 12, change to decentralized wastewater cluster and onsite disposal systems (6.1.4 second bullet).

Kevin McDonald: Said it was an iterative living document.

Jim Ammerman: Eileen Keenan should be listed as co-chair of Stormwater Workgroup, send this information to Emily.

The document was approved and adopted, subject to the above comments and pending any remaining minor/editorial comments provided in the next week.

Also based on the discussion, a detailed discussion of nutrient management will be on the agenda for the December 2012 Management Committee meeting (including work that has been done and implementation needs)

4. Habitat and Living Resources

Dredging

Management Committee will review summary document of meeting.

Assemblyman Dan Losquadro: Noted that all the dredge material at Orient was washed away with Hurricane Irene.

Kevin McDonald: Natural Resource Subcommittee (NRS) should make a policy for dredge material placements options, using a pilot project. NRS and TAC should be tasked with the pilot project with rigorous testing.

Dawn McReynolds: NRS should not make policy, let DEC handle policy. There is not enough staff or time for all dredging issues. Must pick priorities. Pilot project for dredge material placement is a good idea. Better understanding of fisheries has the potential to change dredge windows.

Glynnis Berry: Need to categorize dredging by source and use.

Town of Riverhead: Riverhead has prioritized 5 creeks for dredging.

Walter Dawydiak: Another outcome could be workplans with cost analysis and proposals for priority creeks.

Dawn McReynolds: Creating a list of priority creeks was not in the workshop.

Lynn Mendelman: We should streamline resources and work with a town (PEP).

Rick Balla: What is DEC timeframe for Action Agenda?

Dawn McReynolds: DEC will reach out to Dredging reviewers, timeframe is November.

Dick Mendelman: Remember to keep dredging vision, mission and strategy clear and documented.

Jim Ammerman: Announced an upcoming SeaGrant dredging workshop, Dick Mendelman said Peconic Estuary should send someone to this meeting.

Next Steps: Need to finalize dredge workshop summary. Priorities and next steps can be summarized in an Action Agenda. Comments on summary due by October 1 (1st cut by Management Committee, 2nd cut by subset of Dredge Workshop attendees; these attendees can be identified with the help of Dick Mendelman). By December, a new revised meeting summary and draft action agency will be prepared (DEC lead).

Eelgrass Implementation Report

Julie Nace: Provided summary and update. Discussion followed:

The passage of a Seagrass Protection Act in the NYS legislature failed.

Dan Losquadro: There were not enough resources to provide funding for this Act. The powers were perceived as being too broad for DEC, giving DEC too much power. What is the source of the eelgrass problem? Can DEC identify it?

Kevin McDonald: Suggested finding come from the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF). Need to address nutrients, and at what scale? Strategy needs to be based on research.

Walter Dawydiak: Could the PEP Local Government Committee (LGC) help with this Act? We should have an annual eelgrass report with a summary of money spent and strategies.

Discussion – Gap is that land use is not addressed. Act should be modeled after Southampton.

Rick Balla: The NYS Seagrass Task Force produced a report that detailed the need for new State legislation (see: http://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/fish_marine_pdf/finalseagrassreport.pdf) There was also an eelgrass experts meeting that developed recommendations See: <http://www.seagrant.sunysb.edu/Images/Uploads/PDFs/SeagrassMeeting07-Proceedings.pdf>)

Dick Mendelman: We should get the minutes from the Stonybrook LISS eelgrass meeting.

Rick Balla: Can DEC draft eelgrass management recommendations for this committee to consider/fund?

Dawn McReynolds: We should look at our eelgrass management plan, what's been done to date in PEP and work with Wayne Grothe and Chris.

Lynn Mendelman: We should retitle the Act.

Town of Riverhead: What are the causes of eelgrass depletion? Is there a pilot area to study turbidity? Group directed her to the PEP Call to Action fact sheets on the PEP website. (see page 7 of http://peconicestuary.org/pdf/CTAC_Meeting_Materials.pdf)

Next Steps: DEC will provide updated recommendations for eelgrass management and priorities for funding for the December Management Committee meeting. The PEP should also review whether it supports the (re-)introduction of NYS eelgrass protection legislation. The PEP should pursue the implementation of recommendations made for local government and others at the 2010 Call to Action Conference.

Ludwigia Control Program

Julie Nace: Provided an update on the status of past and present efforts to control this invasive species. Noted the many partnerships formed from this effort.

4. Technical Advisory Committee Update

Rick Balla: TAC was reconvened. They are reviewing Meetinghouse Creek Dredge Feasibility Study and Water Quality Trends. By-laws and conflict-of-interest information was distributed. Meetings will be the third Monday, every third month, with the next meeting on November 21. Should elect a chair that meeting. *(Note/Update: Future meetings will now be the 3rd Thursday of February, May, August and November.)*

5. Other Business

Program Office Update

Kim Shaw:

- Review of contracts; the contract for Citizens Advisory Committee services requires attention
- A press conference regarding the habitat restoration conceptual design work is scheduled for the 2nd week of October
- Decisions regarding County ¼ Percent Funds have been made, including work regarding Harmful Algal Blooms and alternative on-site disposal system management.
- Potential use of available Suffolk County Capitol Funds
 - 1 or 2 more Habitat Restoration Designs
 - 1 more subwatershed plan (Southampton) – conference call to make final decision.
- Lawn Care and Stormwater Pollution Prevention: Proposed brochures, signage, and guidelines associated with the homeowner rebate program moving forward.

Program Office Reorganization/Program Director

Chris Lubicich: Received 18 resumes for the Program Director position. Interviewed 6 people. Picked 2 final candidates. Final decision in the next week or two. Director should be on-board by the end of the month.

Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)

Kevin McDonald: CAC will resume meeting in the fall, will continue septic system discussion.
Jen Skilbred: CAC will meet in two weeks, begin planning for spring conference

6. New Business

Rick Balla: Next Management Committee meeting will be 2nd Thursday of December. Topics will include budget and priorities, nitrogen, eelgrass management and dredging. LGC needs follow up work. Suffolk County Exec Office has selected their representative on the Management Committee.