

# **South Shore Estuary Reserve Council Meeting**

**October 4, 2018, 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.  
Brookhaven Town Hall  
One Independence Hill, Farmingville, NY**

## **Final Minutes**

### **Attending:**

**NYS Department of State, Office of Planning, Development and Community Infrastructure**

### **South Shore Estuary Reserve Office:**

Jeremy Campbell  
Sherry Forgash  
Christie Pfoertner

### **Council Members:**

Dan Fucci, representing Nassau County Executive, Laura Curran  
Lauretta Fischer, representing Suffolk County Executive, Steven Bellone  
Jim Browne, representing Town of Hempstead Supervisor, Laura Gillen  
Maryann Webb, representing Town of Oyster Bay Supervisor, Joseph S. Saladino  
Rich Groh, representing Town of Babylon Supervisor, Richard H. Schaffer  
Robert Hayes, representing Town of Islip Supervisor, Angie Carpenter  
Edward Romaine, Town of Brookhaven Supervisor  
Anthony Graves, representing Town of Brookhaven Supervisor, Edward Romaine  
Peter Fountaine, representing Town of Brookhaven  
Maureen Dolan Murphy, representing Reserve Council Citizens Advisory Committee  
Lane Smith, representing Reserve Council Technical Advisory Committee  
Robert Grover, representing Great South Bay Audubon  
Tom Wilson, representing SUNY School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences, Dean Paul Shepson  
Chris Clapp, representing The Nature Conservancy  
Michael Eagan, representing Captree Boatmen's Association

### **Council Advisors:**

Charles DeQuillfeldt, representing NYS Department of Environmental Conservation Commissioner, Basil Seggos  
Gregg Williams, representing NYS Department of Transportation Acting Commissioner, Paul A. Karas

### **Guests/Other Interested Parties:**

Pat Aitken, Peconic Estuary Protection Committee  
Cassie Bauer, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation  
David Berg, L.I. Regional Planning Council  
Michael Bilecki, Fire Island National Seashore, NPS  
Elizabeth Cole, L.I. Regional Planning Council  
George Costa, CAC Member, Art Flick Trout Unlimited  
Nelle D'Aversa, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation  
Rob DiGiovanni, CAC Member, Atlantic Marine Conservation Society  
Adrienne Esposito, Citizens Campaign for the Environment  
Kathleen Fallon, NY Sea Grant  
Alexa Fournier, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation  
George Hoffman, Fire Island Association  
Alexa Mannos, Town of Babylon  
Tara Schneider-Moran, Town of Hempstead  
Mel Morris, Brookhaven National Laboratories

Enrico Nardone, Seatuck Environmental Association  
Melissa Parrott, Central Pine Barrens Commission  
Breanna Perso, Town of Babylon  
Kaitlin Shehinian, Town of Babylon  
Lou Siegel, NYS Marine Education Association  
Nancy Solomon, Long Island Traditions  
John Tanacredi, Molloy College/CERCOM

**Presenters:**

Mark Finkbeiner, NOAA Office for Coastal Management  
Craig Strong, Town of Brookhaven Shellfish Program  
Ken Zegel, Suffolk County Dept. of Health Services

**Welcome and Introductions**

**J. Campbell** called the Council meeting to order at 10:06 a.m. He welcomed and thanked all for attending; thanked the Town of Brookhaven for hosting today's Reserve Council meeting; Introductions were made.

**Town of Brookhaven Supervisor, Edward Romaine**, made several opening remarks; described the geography of the Town; thanked the SSER Council for all their good work. Some highlights of the Town's efforts include:

- The Town performs a shellfish survey every two years, and this year's numbers were not good; they raise over 2 million seed clams in the Town's hatchery that are planted each year; they also grow and plant seagrass. The Town has opened areas to oyster farmers.
- Brookhaven has adopted legislation requiring the installation of an Innovative/Alternative Onsite Wastewater Treatment System (I/A OWTS) (denitrification) if a structure is within 500 feet of any waterbody.
- When the Sandy-created breach occurred at Old Inlet, the Town was opposed to closing the breach, provided the mainland was not in jeopardy of flooding; they monitored this situation, and leaving the breach open proved to be good for water quality in the bay.
- The Town purchased parcels in Mastic Beach and demolished damaged structures, letting the land revert to its natural state.
- The Town is against dumping in Long Island Sound.
- They have built fish ladders on Lower Lake and Swan Lake.
- The Town Supervisor is prepared to view any regulations or requirements that will improve the Bay.

**Approval of April 11, 2018 Council Meeting Minutes**

**Motion** by Anthony Graves to approve the April 11, 2018 Council Meeting Minutes; seconded by Maureen Dolan Murphy; carried.

**Town of Brookhaven Programs**

Anthony Graves, Town of Brookhaven Environmental Protection Division

- Fish ladder installed on Upper Lake on the Carmans River and other restoration work; \$4.5 million.
- Work now in progress on Lower Lake; removal of 270 years of accumulated sediments; including removal of invasive vegetation.
- Work done in partnership with non-profits, Friends of Bellport Bay and Moriches Bay Friends.
- Have been conducting a biennial shellfish survey for approximately 25-30 years.
- Offer oyster farming leases; the Town has recently signed its first leases.

- Perform eelgrass restoration.
- Involved in the wastewater issues on Fire Island.
- A. Graves thanked DOS SSER for funding the Local Assistance grants; the Town has one to expand its shellfish production area.

### **Town of Brookhaven Shellfish Program**

#### **Craig Strong, Manager, Town of Brookhaven Shellfish Program**

Craig Strong was involved with the Bluepoints Company since 1972; he was then full-time between 1976-2004. FLUPSYs were in use at Bluepoints; he showed the group a sample of an upweller, and samples of seed clams. Craig also works with the Town's eelgrass production program; the Town recently received a 2-year grant through the SSER Local Assistance Grant Program for eelgrass propagation. The project will collect eelgrass, clean it, maintain it until seed matures, then plant the seeds in several areas in the South Shore Estuary. There are 11 units producing eelgrass seed; seeds are given to the Town's partners in the program. Chris Clapp noted that Craig Strong produces the best and cleanest seeds.

The Town has also produced 1.5 million clam seed and 1.5 million oyster seed this past year; 380,000 clams were planted this year. The Town received a \$400,000 State grant to improve and expand its shellfish hatchery. Most of the shellfish planted are planted in Moriches and Bellport bays.

### **Submerged Aquatic Vegetation Mapping Project**

#### **Mark Finkbeiner, NOAA, Office for Coastal Management**

M. Finkbeiner from NOAA (GIS background in remote sensing since 1996), gave a presentation on the "*Benthic Mapping of Long Island's South Shore Estuaries*" project. This is a New York project with partners including: Governor's Office of Storm Recovery (GOSR); NY Department of State; NOAA Office for Coastal Management; Dewberry, Inc.; South Shore Estuary Reserve; NY Department of Environmental Conservation; Fire Island National Seashore; Stony Brook University. The project mapping area equals 498 square miles. The last aerial mapping of eelgrass was completed in 2002 and provided a habitat baseline for the first SSER Comprehensive Management Plan. It was focused on eelgrass but also included other inter- and sub-tidal habitats. This 2018 eelgrass benthic mapping project includes changes since 2002 and impacts of Superstorm Sandy.

This remote sensing project will be done in partnership with GOSR, every 5 years, depending on funding availability and water clarity at the project time of year. Most agreed this benthic mapping should be done on a 5-year cycle. All partners will have copies of the data results.

This project involved three flights during the first and final week in May 2018; good data was recorded. Dewberry, Inc. is currently in the delineation process of the data. (Habitat delineation, habitat classification, and analysis of change between 2002 and 2018.) A draft benthic habitat mapping is anticipated to be complete by the end of October, final benthic data products by January 2019, with the final product by the end of March 2019. Links will be posted on the SSER and Gateway sites.

Mike Bilecki commented about the National Park Service's *Artist in Residence Program*. A videographer with this program was present during the project and made some recordings. She was interested in connecting science with people. She has agreed to give her video to the NPS.

Any questions please contact Mark Finkbeiner at: [Mark.Finkbeiner@NOAA.GOV](mailto:Mark.Finkbeiner@NOAA.GOV)

### **SSER Citizens Advisory Committee Report / Council Stewardship Award**

#### **Maureen Dolan Murphy, Chair CAC, Citizens Campaign for the Environment**

- New members on the CAC are Rob DiGiovanni from the Atlantic Marine Conservation Society, and Kaitlyn Jackson from Fire Island National Seashore.

- CAC meetings were held in May, July, and September; presentations/descriptions were given on offshore drilling, plastics pollution, FINS update, Long Island Shellfish Restoration Project & Artificial Reef Program, Seatuck's shell-recycling program.
- Regarding plastics pollution, Suffolk County has an initiative to ban the use of plastic straws.
- The Baykeeper, Sean O'Neill, gave update on a microplastics study.
- The CAC is part of the FINS wastewater solution workgroup (Fire Island Sewer Solution).

Adrienne Esposito reported that at the Patchogue River cleanup, only one plastic bag was found. She noted that the new group, Fire Island Sewer Solution, is comprised of federal (USGS, FINS), State, county, town, village, non-GMOs and residential members. Ocean Beach is looking into upgrading its STP technology and capacity. According to USGS, 80% of sewage outflow is released into the bays, not the ocean. An administrative closure exists in the area around the Ocean Beach outfall. J. Campbell said a study is needed to identify the issues and solutions so residents can make informed decisions.

#### 2018 Council Stewardship Award

Maureen thanked Mike Eagan for the offer of his vessel, *The Lauren Kristy*, for the boat tour to be held on October 10. The Award Review Committee met and reviewed all the nominations received, ranked them and selected two. She distributed the descriptions of the two winners for the Council to read.

**Motion** by Bob Grover, to approve the two selected winners for the 2018 SSER Council Stewardship Award; seconded by Rich Groh; carried.

### **SSER Technical Advisory Committee**

#### Lane Smith, Chair TAC, NY Sea Grant

- The TAC is in the process of reorganizing
- An initial meeting was held Tuesday, October 2 at the L.I. Maritime Museum; approximately 20 attended. L. Smith gave a summary of the meeting:
  - The members discussed the CMP and its priorities
  - The role of the TAC in the CMP implementation
  - A draft of policies and rules for membership
- The TAC will meet every other month, alternating with the CAC meetings.
- C. deQuillfeldt requested that someone from the DEC also sit on the TAC.

### **South Shore Estuary Reserve Office Report**

#### Christie Pfoertner, South Shore Estuary Reserve Office

- The SSER participated in the following functions:
  - South Shore Blueway Festival, held June 16 at Hewlett Point Park in the Town of Hempstead; SSER had info table set up.
  - Town of Babylon Earth Day.
  - Horseshoe crab monitoring.
  - Marine Mini-Camps and Marine Nature Study.
  - Estuary Day at Seatuck, held on September 15.
  - Beach Cleanup with SPLASH and Massapequa High School, at Jones Beach Field #10 on September 22.

#### Jeremy Campbell, SSER/NYS DOS Office of Planning, Development and Community Infrastructure

- Attended Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) meetings on the Offshore Wind Master Plan. There is a public comment period on ocean drilling.

- He attended the NY Seafood Round Table to promote marketing. The first meeting was last month in Brooklyn. Future meetings to be held in East Setauket, Riverhead and the Hudson Valley.
- Governor Cuomo has awarded \$10 million in Downtown Revitalization Initiative funds to the Town of Islip.
- Seatuck has received \$100,510 through NYSDEC to design a fish passage on Bellmore Creek.
- DOS is hiring 2 full-time positions for the SSER Office; posted on Indeed.com.
- The SSER CMP is now in the final approval stage.
- Jeremy reminded all that there would be another round of SSER small grants coming out in the future (Local Assistance Grants).

### **Long Island Nitrogen Action Plan (LINAP) Reports**

#### **Dan Fucci, Nassau County Department of Public Works**

Dan Fucci described the Bay Park STP (now named the South Shore Water Reclamation Facility) diversion project; treated effluent will be diverted from the STP, through an old existing concrete conduit that once carried drinking water to New York City, and to the Cedar Creek ocean outfall pipe. This will end effluent being discharged into Reynolds Channel, and decrease nitrogen into bay waters.

The County will have (in process of obtaining) an Intermunicipal Agreement (IMA) with the City of Long Beach, to convert the City's STP to a pump station. Sewage from the City of Long Beach would then be transported to the South Shore Water Reclamation Facility for treatment. The County will also have an IMA (not complete as yet) with Point Lookout to do a survey on whether to transport its sewage to the City of Long Beach pump station. Funding to implement this has become an issue. The Nassau County Legislature has approved \$1 million to do a study.

Superstorm Sandy had damaged the Bay Park STP; the final settling tanks have been rehabilitated.

The County's goal is a reduction in nitrogen to 13mg/L; a reduction in total nitrogen of 80%.

The County is planning to offer 50% of the replacement cost for an Innovative/Alternative Onsite Wastewater Treatment System. The County does not currently issue building permits for this work.

#### **Ken Zegel, Suffolk County Department of Health Services, Office of Ecology**

Ken Zegel gave a PowerPoint presentation on Suffolk County's Reclaim Our Waters Initiative and an update on LINAP. Suffolk's implementation of its Innovative/Alternative Onsite Wastewater Treatment System (I/A OWTS) program was an evolution through several stages:

- Pilot Program and Demo Sites – several different manufacturers of the I/A OWTS were selected; and several different types of I/A OWTS technologies were selected to install at 4 different demo sites.
- Contractors are required to be licensed to install these systems.
- Article 19 enacted - Management of I/A OWTS.
- Code amendments and updates of outdated regulations to allow systems to be installed.
- Identify priority areas.
- Identify funding mechanisms.

Suffolk County has a Septic Improvement Program for residents who wish to install a I/A OWTS. To assist homeowners, the County offers grants of up to \$11,000 and low interest loans of up to \$10,000 (3% interest over 15 years) to help pay for the systems. The County will fund \$10M over 5 years, or \$2M a year on the program.

Most of the systems that have been installed have met nitrogen reduction goals of 19mg/L over 6 months. Thirty-eight (38) installations have been completed to date.

The State Septic System Replacement Fund, has \$75M available over 5 years; the site must be located in a priority area. Suffolk County receives \$10,025,000 or 67% of its entire first year allocation. The Fund stipulates specific eligibility criteria; there are ineligible costs associated with the program. The program funds are to install I/A OWTS that reduce nitrogen by 50% or more.

Suffolk County's Coastal Resiliency Initiative has identified four potential (4) project areas:

- North Babylon/West Babylon-Carlls River
- Great River-Connetquot River
- Patchogue River
- Mastic/Shirley-Forge River

Adrienne Esposito noted that Federal and State funds will pay for sewer infrastructure on Long Island. To be connected to the sewer system, people must vote on it, and will pay a sewer tax. The vote is January 22, and only those residents within the sewer district can vote.

Jeremy Campbell noted that the sewer tax will be approximately \$400/year, which is less costly than other areas of New York.

(Maureen Dolan Murphy requested that someone from Suffolk County Department of Health Services attend a future CAC meeting to speak about the sewer program.)

Proposed changes to the SC sanitary code include Phase I & II for grandfathering for commercial properties and permit requirements for retrofits and replacements; and cites the requirement for installation of a I/A OWTS.

The County will complete a Subwatershed Wastewater Plan (SWP) which will serve to support Phase II policy decisions and as a blueprint for wastewater upgrades. The Plan will show priority areas; develop nitrogen load rates/receiving water residence times. The County has already completed many tasks of this subwatershed plan; it is expected to have the Draft SWP posted for public and stakeholders meeting by winter 2018/19; a Draft GEIS posted by spring 2019; and a Draft Final EIS findings statement adopted by legislature and final SWP posted by summer 2019.

For more information contact: [Justin.Jobin@suffolkcountyny.gov](mailto:Justin.Jobin@suffolkcountyny.gov) or 631-852-5809.

### **Roundtable Discussion**

- Lauretta Fischer, Suffolk County – County continues to buy properties in specific areas, especially tributaries to Great South Bay.
- Mike Bilecki, NPS – suggests getting the message out regarding septic and water quality may change the way people think about this problem.
- Lane Smith, NY Sea Grant – Proposals through the Long Island Sound Study Research Call for Proposals with Connecticut Sea Grant, were submitted and are undergoing peer review. Three projects that were selected under the NY Ocean Action Plan Research Call are scheduled to start in January. The biennial NY Sea Grant Research Call for Proposals will be released in January.
- Maureen Dolan Murphy, CAC Chair – gave brief re-cap of the Stewardship Award Boat Tour.
- Tom Wilson, SUNY SoMAS - October 5th 7:30pm, Michael Frisk, Ph.D. will present a lecture titled: "Discovering the cryptic habits of fish: How advances in fish tracking are revolutionizing our understanding of fish behavior and ecology" in the Duke Lecture Hall of Chancellor's Hall on the Stony Brook Southampton Campus.
- Gregg Williams, NYS DOT – DOT is in the last phase of the Ocean Parkway Bike Path, a 10-mile section. Total length of bike path when complete will be approximately 15 miles.  
In this project DOT will:
  - restore 2 Piping Plover foraging pools;
  - construct a Diamond Back Terrapin nesting site north of the Parkway and will install measures to block known terrapin crossings of the Parkway to minimize mortality;

- an Osprey nesting pole will be installed;
  - approximately 4 acres of coastal maritime shrubland will be restored;
  - public education signage on the barrier island geology, history and natural resources/sensitive habitats/rare species will be installed; and
  - butterfly/pollinator plantings will be installed throughout the corridor.
- Jim Browne, Hempstead Conservation & Waterways – they are working on the diamond back terrapin DOS funded project; getting lab back-up; getting funding for their Hofstra work.
- Charlie deQuillfeldt, NYS DEC Bureau of Marine Resources – Charlie announced that this is his last council meeting, as he will be retiring. DEC staff member, Cassie Bauer, will be representing the DEC as an advisory member.
- Rich Groh, Town of Babylon –
  - At Geiger Lake Park: Stormwater Treatment Wetland, wetland restoration, dredging of sediment from the stream and lake and connection to sewers was completed. \$900,000 in NYS Green Innovation Grant Program and \$1.25 million in Suffolk County Infrastructure and Water Quality Funding respectively, funded the work.
  - At Carll's River watershed: a Stormwater Treatment Wetland is proposed at NYS Route 27 on Town surplus land. This project will provide water quality benefits to prime trout habitat and flood reduction benefits. Once completed, the Town will transfer ownership of the stormwater wetland to the NYSDOT. The reconstruction of Elda Lake dam will have flood mitigation benefits and include a diadromous fish passage; the reconstruction of Southard's Pond Culvert will have flood mitigation benefits and include a diadromous fish passage; a culvert at Locust Ave. will be enlarged for flood mitigation; repairs will be made to an outfall/gate valve at Argyle Lake. These projects were funded with \$11 million in resiliency funding through GOSR.
- George Costa, Trout Unlimited Art Flick Chapter – the chapter focuses on education; they have worked with "A Day in the Life" program; with the Boys Scouts and Girl Scouts; Trout in the Classroom program where trout eggs that are reared at Cold Spring Harbor Labs are given to participating schools to raise trout. The chapter also educates youth about water quality issues on Long Island.
- Anthony Graves, Town of Brookhaven – using dredge spoil material on marsh islands to plant milkweed for Monarch Butterfly habitat.
- Nancy Solomon, Long Island Traditions – working with the baymen and the Waterfront Heros program, now through December 29. L.I. Traditions received a grant to do a documentary on bay houses.
- Enrico Nardone, Seatuck Environmental Association – Seatuck's oyster shell recovery program, "Half Shells for Habitat" recently completed a pilot program with five local restaurants and is ready to expand. New restaurants and volunteers are welcome. The program, in partnership with the Town of Brookhaven, seeks to divert used oyster shells from restaurant waste streams and recover them for use in oyster recovery and living shoreline efforts around Long Island.

Adjourn – Jeremy Campbell thanked all for attending; the meeting adjourned at 1:06 PM.