

CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

TO THE SOUTH SHORE ESTUARY RESERVE COUNCIL

c/o South Shore Estuary Reserve Office, 250 Veterans Memorial Highway, #2A15, Hauppauge, NY 11788

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Maureen Dolan Murphy, Chair
Rob Weltner, Vice-Chair

CAC Meeting Minutes

March 12, 2019

7:00-9:00 p.m.

Seatuck Environmental Center
550 South Bay Ave, Islip, NY 11751

Present:

Marshall Brown, Save the Great South Bay
Allison DePerte, Atlantic Marine Conservation Society
Maureen Dunn, Seatuck Association
Lesley Kane, Islip Town Lease Holders Association
Jordan Christensen, Citizens Campaign for the Environment
Rob DiGiovanni, Atlantic Marine Conservation Society
Sean O'Neill, Peconic Baykeeper
Sally Kellogg, NYS DOS/Reserve Office
Christie Pfoertner, NYS DOS/Reserve Office
Judi Bird, League of Women Voters Brookhaven
Maureen Dolan Murphy, Chair CAC/Citizens Campaign for the Environment
Jeremy Campbell, NYS DOS/Reserve Coordinator
Rachel Neville, NYS DOS/Reserve Office
Kyle Rabin, LI Regional Planning Council/LINAP
Dave Schaper, NY Seafood Council
Ben Sohm, South Shore Bay House Owners
Tiffany Bowman, Patchogue Coalition Against the Cornerstone Development
Kaetlyn Jackson, National Park Service, Fire Island National Seashore
Lou Siegel, NYS Marine Education Association

1. Introductions

M. Dolan Murphy called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. and introductions were made.

2. Presentation: Local & State Plastic Legislation

J. Christensen chairs a plastics working group called Plastic Free Waters that works with other NGO's, non-profits, and educators on efforts to implement plastic reduction. There are three kinds of legislation in NY state:

1. Ban on single use plastic bags (average thickness of a banned single use plastic bag is 2.25 mil)
2. Fees placed on single use plastic or paper bags
3. Hybrid model: ban on plastic bags with a fee on paper bags

Exempt bags include produce and meat bags at grocery stores, dry cleaning bags, etc. for health and safety concerns. There have been bans on thin plastic bags in the past, but retailers just switch to paper or slightly thicker plastic bags to circumvent the ban. The hybrid option is the ideal solution. Fees incentivize people to remember their own bags but are viewed as burdensome to low income families. Since the plastic bag fee has been implemented in Suffolk County, there has been an 80% reduction in single use bags. Governor Cuomo has introduced a ban on plastics. Plastic Free Waters has reached out to try and encourage a plastic bag fee to be added, hoping for a state-wide fee. If a state-wide fee doesn't happen, municipalities could instate a fee for plastic bags. J. Christensen cited that cities which only banned plastic bags without creating a fee on other single use bags resulted in an increase in plastic use. J. Campbell asked about feasibility of biodegradable or compostable bags. J. Christensen replied that the Plastic Free Waters group has not found any bags that are truly biodegradable.

Compostable bags are possible but the state is currently lacking the infrastructure for that option. J. Campbell asked if there is any incentive to charging for bags. J. Christensen replied that a portion of the fee stays with the stores, some goes to the local municipality, and some goes to low income communities for environmental work.

Polystyrene has been locally banned in NYC, Town of Southampton, and Town of East Hampton. Plastic straws banned in Town of Southampton, Village of East Hampton and NYC. Suffolk County has introduced a county-wide ban on plastic straws and a ban on polystyrene. East Hampton bans the intentional release of balloons.

Update on legislative Changes:

- Offshore drilling bill would ban offshore drilling in state waters and prohibit any infrastructure associated with offshore drilling to go through state waters. The ban on offshore drilling passed in the Senate and Assembly and is now awaiting a signature from Governor Cuomo.
- \$2.5 billion allocated for water infrastructure was in the senate budget. These include improvements to septic systems, upgrades for sewage treatment plants, green infrastructure, with Suffolk County receiving \$10 million to replace current systems with nitrogen-reducing septic systems. These funds are to be spent over 5 years.
- Menhaden bill prohibits the taking of Menhaden or bunker, a “keystone species” in New York waters with a specific type of industrial fishing equipment called a purse seine. The bill has passed in the Senate and Assembly.
- Ocean Acidification: Passed the Senate on February 6, 2018 but is still in the Assembly. The bill will legislatively continue the Task Force, the New York Ocean Acidification Task Force is still meeting. Maureen Dunn will present an update at the next CAC meeting.

* Minutes, January 8, 2018

Motion by B. Sohm, to approve the January 8, 2018 CAC meeting minutes; seconded by D. Schaper, carried.

3. Suffolk County Sewer Referendum – Results

M. Dolan-Murphy discussed the results of the Suffolk County Sewer Referendum. There were three votes, Mastic and North Babylon passed but Great River did not. There was a clamoring for the funds after the referendum wasn't passed. Ultimately the funds will be kept on Long Island and given to Oakdale, which has a high water table and will use the money to connect residents to a sewer system.

M. Brown discussed an upcoming Save the Great South Bay project in which properties owned by non-profits along the Connetquot River will be planted with native plants to demonstrate to community members in Idle Hour what they can do to lessen nitrogen input. The main goal is to illustrate how much nitrogen you can pull if native plants are used.

4. Stewardship Award

A subcommittee was created, and members are: Marshall Brown, Lesley Kane, Allison DePerte. The tasks include advertising the award and reviewing the applications. Anyone can submit an application, it does not have to be a CAC member. The first meeting will be end of March to beginning of April.

5. SSER Logo Ideas

M. Dolan Murphy asked the Council if they wanted to pursue a CAC Council logo. In the past a logo subcommittee had been created but nothing ever came from it. L. Siegel brought up that one had been created when Jeff Fullmer had been SSER coordinator, but it was never used. Potential components were brainstormed: bridges, Fire Island Lighthouse, Heron, Egret, Blue Crab, Horseshoe crab, sunset, seahorse, alewife, native plants. J. Campbell called for the display of R. Neville drawings for SSER outreach events. M. Dolan Murphy defined the logo adopting process: CAC must agree on a logo, which is then brought to the SSER Council. The Council can approve, ask for changes, or dismiss the logo. Then the logo will be brought to DOS who will explore if the logo can be used in accordance with NYS branding guidelines. M. Dolan Murphy mentioned she will have an intern that could come up with ideas. There was a vote and all agreed to make a logo. A subcommittee was created, members include: Maureen Dolan

Murphy, Maureen Dunn, Rachel Neville, Judi Bird, Lesley Kane, Lou Seigel. The subcommittee will bring a draft version to the next CAC meeting.

6. Jeremy Campbell, South Shore Estuary Reserve Office

Jeremy Campbell introduced new SSER Office staff, S. Kellogg and R. Neville.

Christie Pfoertner reviewed past function; Seal walks with CRESLI where C. Pfoertner and A. Kopelman suggested installing signage at seal walk locations to increase awareness of the environmental issues, how to interact with marine mammals, and the SSER.

Resiliency Forum organized by SSER and Sea Grant held on February 21, 2019 at Long Island Maritime Museum in Sayville and had over 20 people attended. The purpose is to provide information directly to homeowners on how to prepare for storms and tidal flooding. The next Forum will be March 13, 2019 at Babylon Town Hall from 6pm-8pm. Lesley Kane ask for a Forum for Town of Islip residents. The Town of Hempstead and Town of Southampton have also asked for a similar forum hosted in their municipality.

C. Pfoertner is working with Massapequa High School Environmental club during their Awareness Week to give presentations to students on the effects of plastics, with quizzes featuring metal straws as prizes. Over 50 students attended the first period of three total during the week.

Upcoming events include: Long Island Natural History Conference, Green Industry Careers Day at Suffolk County Community College, Seatuck Eco-Carnival, LIISMA Invasive Species Conference, Creek Defenders Day, Babylon Earth Day, participation in the Alewife monitoring program, SSER to coordinate with Cornell Cooperative Extension to create a new site for the Horseshoe Crab monitoring program within the Reserve, creation of an activity booklet using R. Neville drawings, and A Day in the Life.

SSER to increase their participation in the A Day in the Life program by introducing a new open water sampling station. The new station will help fill the gap by connecting information taken in the South Shore tributaries to the Fire Island National Seashore. S. Kellogg asked if anyone would be willing to take students out on a boat to help facilitate this endeavor. M. Dolan Murphy suggested to reach out to Rob Weltner. L. Kane can assist. K. Rabin suggested to reach out to Jim Brown and S. Kellogg already in contact with Town of Hempstead.

Maureen Dunn suggest SSER needs more scientific data available and this can be accomplished by engaging through citizen science and community groups. Suggested SSER buy equipment as that is a limiting factor to local groups

7. Public Comment and Announcement

The next SSER TAC meeting will be April 2, 2019 10 a.m.-1 p.m. at the Long Island Maritime Museum in West Sayville.

Maureen Dolan Murphy – Nassau County Back Bays Study is a US Army Corp project and USACE will be announcing a draft plan shortly. A public meeting is intended for late May or early June on the project. M. Dolan Murphy will reach out to see if they will present at the CAC May meeting.

Tiffany Bowman – The Patchogue Coalition Against the Cornerstone Development brought concerns of a potential new luxury apartment complex to be built along the Patchogue River. This 50-unit 4 story high luxury apartment unit is proposed to be built on the Patchogue River in the flood plain and many community members are against it. The proposal is with the planning board and the property is presently zoned industrial. M. Dolan Murphy suggest the CAC can write a letter to provide guidance on how the development as currently designed does not comply with the SSER CMP. **Motion** by S. O'Neil, to approve writing a letter to Patchogue Village Board; seconded by L. Kane, carried. M. Dolan Murphy volunteered to draft the letter.

Sean O'Neil – Alewife found in the Peconic Estuary today March 12, 2019. Peconic Baykeeper is creating a fulltime Great South Bay keeper position.

Lesley Kane – Annual shoreline clean up event will be May 4 and 5, 2019.

Kyle Rabin – LINAP is launching a STEM competition with a focus on Long Island Water Quality challenge for grades 6,7, and 8.

Kaetlyn Jackson – Fire Island National Seashore is working with NY/NJ Baykeeper to get a manta trawl scheduled for Patchogue River and lake and the Great South Bay.

Maureen Dunn – Upcoming river herring training sessions on March 14 in Montauk 5pm-6pm and April 4 in Riverhead 7pm-9pm. Islip, Brookhaven and Hempstead towns are participating in the Half Shells for Habitat program. Town of Hempstead recently posted two paid internship opportunities for shellfish restoration. Seatuck is hosting a discussion on March 27th at 10am at Seatuck; related to the Climate Community Protection Act.

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.