

CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

TO THE SOUTH SHORE ESTUARY RESERVE COUNCIL

CAC Meeting Minutes

November 9, 2022

7:00-9:00 p.m.

Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Present:

Maureen Dolan Murphy, Citizens Campaign for the Environment/Chair CAC
Rob Weltner, Operation SPLASH/Vice-Chair CAC
Jeremy Campbell, NYS DOS/Reserve Coordinator
Alexa Annunziata, Peconic Bay Keeper
Judi Bird, League of Women Voters Brookhaven
George Costa, Trout Unlimited/Art Flick Chapter
Alli DePerte, Atlantic Marine Conservation Society (AMSeas)
Maureen Dunn, Seatuck Environmental Association
Kathleen Fallon, Co-Chair TAC/NY Sea Grant
Suzy Goldhirsch, Fire Island Association
Rich Groh, Town of Brookhaven
Sarah Healy, NYS DEC/LINAP
Sally Kellogg, NYS DOS/Reserve Office
Artie Kopelman, Coastal Research and Education Society of Long Island (CRESLI)

1. Introductions

M. Dolan Murphy called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. Introductions were made.

2. Meeting Minutes Approval

May 10, 2022 Minutes

Motion by A. Kopelman to approve; seconded by J. Bird; carried.

September 13, 2022 Minutes

Motion by J. Bird to approve; seconded by A. Annunziata; carried.

3. Dredging at Cupsogue: Impact to Seals

A. Kopelman described the CRESLI seal research including how long monitoring has been going on, types of seals observed, and the number of observations made. It was noted the original SSER CMP did not include seals, likely due to the lack of data, but is now included in the current CMP. He highlighted that seal encounters drop when dredging occurs. Currently, there is a dredging project near Cupsogue Beach. The Marine Mammal Protection Act says that if harassment is necessary, Incidental Harassment Authorization must be provided to the public for review. A. Kopelman requests the CAC ask the Council to ensure that the proper procedures are followed especially for large scale projects that have a potential to impact marine mammals in the reserve.

Question: Does USFW get involved?

Answer: No, seals are under NOAA fisheries jurisdiction.

Comment: Shinnecock bay is identified as an area of significant coastal habitat where concentrations of harbor seals are of statewide significance.

Comment: Offshore development is currently ongoing, so this disturbance is adding insult to injury.

4. Election Results SSER Legislative Breakfast

M. Murphy noted this is an opportunity to educate new and returning elected officials and to get them more engaged with the South Shore. The legislative breakfast will provide information to elected officials on progress made on the South Shore and what we can do with increased funding. Those wanting to attend must register, space is limited. The Environmental Bond Act passed on election day but some of the South Shore races have not yet been called. The races that were called were noted.

5. Summary Document

The document defines what the SSER is, what has been accomplished, and what still needs to be done.

6. SSER 30th Anniversary Celebration

The first subcommittee meeting was held where criteria for a logo was identified. The old finalist logo that was worked on in 2019 was shown. We would like for anyone interested, to highlight the 30th anniversary of the SSER by co-branding events with this SSER logo. It is anticipated to be a yearlong celebration.

7. South Shore Estuary Reserve Office

J. Campbell highlighted the amazing press event that occurred on September 19 and was hosted by Town of Babylon. Thank you to all attendees and to our hosts. The last SSER Council meeting was October 25. Presentations were on Blue Carbon Seagrass Restoration project with Cornell Cooperative Extension, updates from Nassau and Suffolk Counties, and from the DOS LWRP program. SSER again participated in the A Day in the Life program at the Carmans River and Connetquot River. The final Community Science Long Island webinar is next week, November 16 at 7 PM, don't forget to register here: <https://seatuck.org/community-science-webinars/>.

8. Public Comment/Announcements

George Costa – DEC has awarded grants to support marine water quality, conservation, and flood protection projects which include a new fish ladder study at Terrell River, Patchogue Lake, and Lower Lake in Yaphank. A day in the life of the Forge River was October 14.

Maureen Dunn – Seatuck has been contracted to remove invasive on Rattlesnake Creek. There has been a huge Sea Lettuce bloom the past 3 weeks in the Great South Bay.

Rob Weltner – In 2022 Operation SPLASH had 7 boats, made over 400 trips with volunteers to pick up debris. The Sea Lettuce bloom has also been noted by SPLASH volunteers.

The meeting adjourned at 8:32.