

York River Study Committee

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, April 25, 2017

1. Welcome and introductions (5:30) – Chuck

Voting members present: Chairman Chuck Ott, Jack Murphy, Cindy Donnell, Thom Kearns, Judy Spiller, Joan LeBlanc, Karen Arsenault

Voting members absent: Stefan Claussen, Jean Demetracopoulos, Mike Masi, Beth Walter

Non-voting members present: Paul Dest, Jenn Hunter

2. Review Minutes of March 28, 2017 Meeting – Chuck

Motion to approve minutes made by Judy, seconded by Jack and passed unanimously.

3. Quarterly budget report [see budget handout] – Paul

Paul reported the funding position as of 3/31/17 minus 2 new grant sources

4. Project Updates:

Historic Resources Survey - Jenn reported on the meeting with the Eliot Historical Society, attended by about 40 people, with contractor team making a presentation. Contractors still in process of contacting landowners, where there has been an overall positive response. There will be a public dig event in June. It will be offered to students at Marshwood and York High Schools, as engaging young people is one of our goals. Two out of three funders have provided funding for this project, with a third remaining.

Fish Study – Paul reported that it has been delayed a week due to bad weather but nets have been filling up with rainbow smelt and eggs, alewives beginning to show up, American eels and others. Volunteers from York High School, AmeriCorps, landowners and others have come to help. Nets set MTW Thurs. evenings and checked in a.m. for anyone interested in helping.

5. *Marine Coastal Program*: Jenn met with SMPD Commission, putting together a proposal from the Coastal Communities Grant Program, for a buildout study and review of ordinances to protect watershed resources to help guide our process for putting together our management plan. Also getting letters of support from all towns that would be involved. If awarded (June notifications), Judy Colby George would be contracted for the work, with a start date of August 1.

6. *ORV Subcommittee*: Jenn reported on the following upcoming meetings

April 26 – Cindy, Chuck, Working Waterfront, Tidal Water Recreation and Economic Values (agenda attached with this meeting's materials)

May – Karen, Drinking Water Supply, Karl Honkonen, Forest Service, Mike Rogers, Kittery Water District, Gary Stevens, York Water District

June – Jean, Scenic Resources, Freshwater Ponds and Watershed Lands Recreation, GWRLT, YLT, IFW, KLT, Eliot Conservation Comm., Kittery Cons. Comm.

July – Joan/Paul, Natural Resources

She also reported that she is trying to draft objectives after each ORV meeting, handed out and reviewed by group. Joan suggested that we might need some interim steps to revisit management goals.

7. *Outreach Subcommittee*: Karen reported on the two watershed walks scheduled for July, the first focusing on working waterfront, history of the George Marshall Store and wharf, and a walk led by Joel Lefever to

the pond in Steedman Woods, providing new information on its history. The second walk is scheduled for the Smelt Brook Preserve, with Joe Anderson, Stewardship Director of YLT and a staff member of the Wells Reserve talking about the fish study.

Jenn reported on the slideshow/movie which thanks to a musician friend of Chuck's now has music. It will be used on our website and other places that we can identify going forward.

8. *Discussion on committee designation endorsement:* Chuck led the discussion on what factors remain to be addressed in order to submit our plan to each community by February 2018. Top on the list of critical issues was **dredging**

- Dredging impacts on both the health of the river and our community
- what are the effects on permitting?
- what are the prevailing opinions of the community?
- We support dredging and need to get this resolved

Other issues relating to the ORV recreation category

- Will designation create more "interest" in the river?
- Can we manage overuse?
- Is overuse going to happen whether or not there is designation?

Buildout Study

- How do we deal with town ordinances when they already think ordinances are too restrictive?
- We need to take a forward thinking approach for the river and think "conservation."

Much remains to be discussed.

Meeting adjourned at 7:05.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Arsenault
Acting Scribe