

York River Stewardship Committee

Minutes for the November 26, 2024 meeting

York Land Trust Community Room, 1 Long Neck Marsh Road, York

Voting Members Present: Karen Arsenault, Allan Cawrse, Sally Harold, Karl Honkonen, Joan LeBlanc (Chair), David Marshall, Mary Marshall, Jim Smith, Susie Rice

Other Members Present: Jenn Hunter (Coordinator), Deane Rykerson (Alt), Stefan Claesson (Alt), Paul Dest (Wells Reserve), Jim MacCartney (NPS)

Guests: Nancy Nadler (YLT), Mike Modern (Parks and Rec Committee), Wendy Pomeroy (Kittery)

- 1. Welcome:** Joan LeBlanc opened the meeting at 5:30 with introductions from all, including our presenters Rob Mohlar and Angela Brewer from the Maine Department of Environment Protection.
- 2. Learning Opportunity – York River Water Quality Monitoring:** Angela Brewer gave a presentation and Rob Mohlar displayed data from Maine DEP’s water quality monitoring work on the York River, which is considered a reference estuary for good water quality conditions in southern Maine. Angela conducts the discrete sampling, with surface to bottom water column profiles at points in time, and Rob conducts continuous sampling using sondes that remain in the water collecting data over time. Their monitoring takes place every five years. Angela’s presentation is available on our website: yorkrivermaine.org. Many questions were asked relating to nutrients, bacteria, temperature variations, and eelgrass. One notable takeaway was the need to educate people on the protection of eelgrass which persists in the York Harbor area.
- 3. Communications Products from Fluent:** Jenn reported that Fluent has put together a brand guide “template” with secondary colors and specific fonts. They also finalized a letterhead and some outreach materials and templates: annual report, rack card, tabletop map, and other tabling materials, email signature, PowerPoint template, and a library of icons and logos. Progress has been made on the website, with most of the remaining work to focus there, along with some social media post templates. Some minor changes have been made to the website content, but it is mostly the same with a new look and organization. The contract goes through January 2025 but is mostly completed.
- 4. Review of Minutes from September and October meetings:** Joan moved to accept the minutes of the September and October meetings. Seconded by Mary and all approved.
- 5. Annual Reports to councils/select boards:** Joan reported that she and Mary made a presentation to the York Select Board. There was one question regarding a kayaking field trip for kids. Sally reported that she presented her report to the Kittery Town Council, with no questions asked. She also presented to the Kittery Conservation Commission. They were interested in a river trip with Jim. Karl reported that he has an appointment to meet with the South Berwick Town Council and will report back. He would like to offer a river trip as well. David reported that he updated the Eliot Select Board at their October meeting. Discussion about Eliot wanting a boat trip but not so easy. Would work with GWRLT.

6. Updates

- **Projects update:** Jenn gave updates on all projects and contracts.
 - Fluent is about two-thirds through its funding and work on communications and branding.
 - For the Salt Marsh Restoration Design project there have been two meetings at the marsh sites. With our funding and involvement, we have been able to advance the scale and pace of restoration design and planning. Partners have not been able to do that on their own in the last year. There will be a community walk targeted for March. The project team is looking for future funding for restoration implementation, likely through NAWCA or MNRCP.
 - Regarding funds provided to GWRLT to help procure an easement for a riverfront farm, the closing is scheduled for December 15. Looking for an opportunity for a site walk and to promote the project after it has closed.
 - Jenn gave a quick update on the five projects funded through the Watershed Grants Program. All are underway as planned, except for the Save Kittery Waters project. They just hired their CreekSmart coordinator who is starting next week, so they are about 4 months behind and will likely request an extension.
 - In December, Jenn plans to work on the request for proposals for the next round of the watershed grants funding. The Committee will need to provide input on that.
- **National Park Service Update:** Jim reported that Joan, Sally and attended the NPS PWSR meeting in Vermont, hosted by the Missisquoi River, which went very well.
- **Town of York River Access Ad Hoc Committee:** Mary reported that the committee would be interviewing 3 or 4 design companies that responded to the RFP to do the dock study next week in order to recommend one to the Select Board on their December 9th meeting. ARPA funds are being used for the project, so a decision needed to be made before the end of the year.

7. Public Comments: none

Motion to adjourn at 7:44.

Submitted by Karen Arsenault, Secretary

Approved: 1/28/25