

Long Island Sound Study (LISS) Citizens Advisory Committee
Meeting Summary

June 12, 2014 Housatonic Community College, Bridgeport, CT

Welcome, Housekeeping & Logistics

CAC vice chair Curt Johnson (CT Fund for the Environment/CFE) opened the meeting by welcoming participants and introducing Anita Gliniecki, President of Housatonic Community College (HCC) in Bridgeport. Anita welcomed the CAC and provided a brief overview of the college's impressive art collection ("the largest art collection of any two year community college in the country"), explaining that the art works become a part of the learning environment for the students. As an introduction to Curt Johnson's presentation on Green Infrastructure, Anita discussed the opportunity in retrofitting an urban campus, explaining the large areas of flat roof and other impervious cover when the campus opened in 1997. She acknowledged and thanked CT Fund for the Environment for their help with the project. Richard Hennessey, Director of Public Works at HCC, was introduced as the person who would provide a brief tour of the campus later in the morning.

Curt Johnson offered changes to the CAC agenda, acknowledging unanticipated absences of several presenters, and noted that this and the next couple of CAC meetings will be featuring CAC member work that illustrates CAC top priorities, including today's presentation by Jennifer Wilson-Pines, Manhasset Bay Protection Committee, on septic system public education, which ties into CAC priorities of citizen monitoring and watershed implementation.

David Miller, NY League of Conservation Voters, spoke up about S.L.A.M., an ice melt prediction model developed by The Nature Conservancy (TNC) in New York that he recently learned about, suggesting that it is a good example of how important this and other predictive models will be for resilience planning in the future, and how this ties into the CCMP revision. David suggested that TNC be invited to speak about the SLAM model and the work that they are doing concerning nitrogen and LIS.

Curt introduced Tracy Brown, the new CFE Director of the western LIS program. Jennifer Herring, The Maritime Aquarium of Norwalk, introduced the new Director of Education for the Aquarium, Tom Naiman.

Relative to Jennifer Herring's announcement of her retirement, Curt took the opportunity to say a few words regarding the work that has been accomplished under Jennifer's leadership, saying she has done an "absolutely fabulous job of rebuilding [the Aquarium] into a regional education institution and the premier organization in the world for showcasing Long Island Sound to the public." CAC co-chair Nancy Seligson, Town of Mamaroneck, noted that Jennifer has done "a

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fabulous job of building the Aquarium, with a great commitment and connection to the CAC.”

Housatonic Community College Green Infrastructure

Curt Johnson introduced the topic by stating that green infrastructure can have a significant impact abating the damages associated with nonpoint source pollution and stormwater. Curt also reminded the CAC that they highlighted green infrastructure retrofits, particularly at public educational facilities, as a top recommended SoundVision action item, and that the initiative was funded by the LISS through the Futures Fund to “bring the current 20 percent design to full design for the campus.”

Working with Kendall Barbery, Yale Forestry and Environmental Studies Masters student interning at CFE, whom he introduced, Curt outlined the efforts to retrofit the HCC campus with green infrastructure. Curt also acknowledged the support of Bridgeport Mayor Finch’s office, and ‘tipped his hat’ to Leah Schmalz, CFE/Save the Sound, for her lobbying efforts that helped secure the necessary funding for the project. Other partners include the consultants Hazen and Sawyer from NYC, and Arcadis Engineering.

Kendall discussed the four preliminary proposed designs for several sites in downtown Bridgeport, including the HCC campus-parking garage. With 50,000 square feet of roof deck and existing flooding issues on the ground floor, this building is a logical candidate for green infrastructure retrogrades. Kendall showed the engineering plans and demonstration visuals from the Philadelphia Water Department, which has applied GI technologies throughout that city. In total, if implemented, the four projects will collect and infiltrate stormwater from approximately 5 acres of impervious streets, roofs and other impervious surfaces, and infiltrate and treat several million gallons of stormwater annually.

Following the PowerPoint presentation the CAC joined Richard Hennessey, Director of Public Works at HCC, on a tour of the campus and specific GI proposals.

Septic Systems (LISS Futures Fund)

Jennifer Wilson-Pines, Manhasset Bay Protection Committee presented “*Working Together to Improve Water Quality in Northern Nassau County, NY*”, an overview of joint projects of the regional protection committees in the county. Funded in 2013 by the LIS Futures Fund, this project worked on the issue of unsewered (cesspool) areas of Nassau County (within 50 communities; representing 20-30% of the land area and 10% of the population). An educational conference was held for municipal officials, and training and a tour

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for local inspectors (currently no standards or certification exists to deal with cesspools). A public perception survey interviewed 350 people and concluded, among other things, that people do not want to spend money to maintain their septic/cesspool unless they understand the issue of nitrogen pollution. *"It's Your Water"* was an effective campaign to encourage education of the public.

Jennifer covered several other events and joint efforts in the region, including the Long Island Infrastructure Conference, hosted by the Brookhaven National Laboratory; a joint meeting of the regional Protection Committees; water monitoring partnerships; and the reopening of the Hempstead Harbor shell fishing beds after years of effort.

Paul DeOrsay, Friends of the Bay, which is part of the Oyster Bay/Cold Spring Harbor Protection Committee, talked about the best management practices being implemented in this western LIS estuary, which include pet and Canada goose waste management, cesspool education program, and support for MS4 compliance. Activities include cleanups, public events, education, restoration, and water quality monitoring. A Blueway trail is in the works.

CAC Policy Committee

Curt Johnson handed out a copy of a letter to Kathryn Sullivan, Under Secretary of Commerce at NOAA, written in support of keeping the Milford NOAA lab open. The letter urged NOAA to "maintain or expand NOAA's budgetary support for the Milford Lab."

Sandy Breslin, Audubon Connecticut, reported that members of the Policy Committee are trying to move the reauthorization process along. Sandy offered the potential of another Washington, D.C. lobbying trip in July that needs CAC representatives to make it most effective, with the option to arrange meetings within districts as well if CAC members are unable to travel to D.C.. David Miller and Grant Westerson, CT Marine Trades Association, suggested that members need 9 to 12 months advance notice of D.C. travel (as they do in the Great Lakes program), and that the accommodations are the greatest expense. Louis Burch, Citizen's Campaign for the Environment, suggested doing district work and planning for a later D.C. trip; Grant commented that there is an advantage to getting Congressmen onto "your turf" versus getting an intern in D.C.. David Miller suggested having the caucus schedule a meeting or reception in DC to provide an information-sharing session.

David Miller gave a LIS Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP) update. A schedule for the process is now available; the first draft of the document is out and being circulated for an inter-agency review. A number of comments ensued, including concern that not enough communication between state agencies and municipalities and across agencies is happening regarding the CCMP, and the fact that the document will be seeking public comment in the summer months when most people will be vacationing and unlikely to participate.

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Two public meetings are planned (one each in CT and NY), with the document being finalized later in the fall and published in December. A question was posed about inviting EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy for some aspect of the final process. On October 1st, Jim Latimer, EPA, (consensus is that he has done a great job with the CCMP process), will be reassigned by EPA to another project. Concern was expressed that the CAC really needs to “raise the volume” and express their concern about the CCMP document and process. David Miller suggested meeting with the two state governors to help make the CCMP a reality. Mark Parker commented that there has been a great deal of input into the process, including scoping meetings. Criticism, concern and frustration for the tone of the document were expressed. Curt suggested that a subcommittee of the Policy Committee should meet for a day to work on CAC comments; this should be scheduled for a month out (July). Nancy Seligson asked about extending the public comment period; Amy Mandelbaum, LIS Outreach Coordinator for NY, talked about a webinar scheduled for municipal officials in July and invited those interested to join in a planning call about this scheduled for the coming Monday.

A motion was made by the CAC co-chairs to recommend that the CAC co-chairs request a 90 day or longer extension of the public comment period for the CCMP. Seconded by Carl Harvey, The Sound School; all voted in favor. Curt reiterated the need for a half-day session in the second week of July to prioritize CCMP goals by a subcommittee of the CAC Policy Committee. Nancy Seligson commented that public meetings are much more difficult to get results from in this day of multiple forms of electronic communication, and suggested that in the July meeting that each CAC group commit to hosting a public meeting of their own. Sandy Breslin warned that the CAC wants to raise public awareness with the general public, and webinars won't do that. David Miller commented that public meetings come with TV and newspaper coverage as well. Curt closed by saying that the co-chairs would email a letter to the CCMP Core Team, and set a planning meeting in July.

Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned at 2:23 p.m.

2014 CAC Meetings March 13 (NY), June 12 (CT), September 11 (NY) and December 11 (CT)

For meeting minutes and other information, visit:
<http://longislandsoundstudy.net/about/committees/citizens-advisory-committee/>