

**Long Island Sound Study
Citizens Advisory Committee
Meeting Summary
Thursday, March 12, 2009
290 Broadway, New York, NY**

Welcome/Introductions

New York CAC co-chair Nancy Seligson called the meeting to order at 9:45 AM and asked for introductions and roll call of members, 16 CAC members were present, which is not a quorum.

Policy and Funding Updates for Press Conference

Nancy Seligson gave an update on the Long Island Sound Economic Recovery Package that was compiled by the CAC Advocacy, Legislative, and Policy Subcommittee. This package was distributed to Representatives of the LIS Congressional Caucus, Governor Rell, and Governor Paterson. [See CAC Meeting Materials for copies of the package and letter to elected officials] Nancy added that this package shows the need for the proposed NY Clean Air, Clean Water and Green Jobs Bond Act and shows the need for increased loans, funding, and jobs. To promote this stimulus package, Nancy announced that CAC members, in conjunction with the Clean Water/Jobs Coalition and Keep New York Working, would hold a press conference on the steps of City Hall during lunch.

Curt Johnson thanked those CAC members that attended the LIS Citizens Summit on March 6th that focused on the need for clean water infrastructure. He announced that Rep. Rosa DeLauro has agreed to be the Connecticut LIS Caucus co-chair; she had been an active supporter of legislative actions for the Sound in the past and he is pleased she is taking on this role.

Curt Johnson began the summary about clean water funding for CT and NY. Curt stated that CT will be receiving \$48 million for its Clean Water Fund from EPA under the federal economic recovery act (or stimulus bill). The CT Assembly will be holding a hearing on LIS stimulus funding tomorrow. These funds are being targeted for use mostly for projects in three towns.

Al Caccese gave an update on the NY Bond Act proposal which would call for \$5 billion dollars for “Clean Water, Clean Air, and Green Jobs”. This proposal includes \$1 billion dollars for watershed protection, \$1 billion dollars for Clean Water Infrastructure, and another \$3 billion for green jobs, clean air, green transit, and urban health. [As a side note: A NYSDEC study estimated that NY would need \$36 billion dollars over the next 20 years to for clean water infrastructure improvements] Nancy added that the Press Conference would be an excellent opportunity to show support for the Bond Act. She also said that she would be calling on every CAC member to write letters to their state representatives to show their support of the Bond Act. She also added that funding for the Federal State Revolving Fund (SRF) Loan Program for NY needs to increase dramatically. Infrastructure projects such as upgrading sewage treatment plants must be funded by a partnership of federal, state and municipalities working together.

The group discussed successful projects that are also recommended for funding, such as the CT lobster V-notch program. The group wondered why NY does not have a similar program. Nancy and Curt will write a letter on behalf of the CAC to show support for NY being part of this regional effort. This letter will be sent to Commissioner Grannis and Karen Chytalo. Ann Rodney agreed to forward information on V-notch programs being conducted in other New England states.

Agenda additions

Margie Purnell asked permission to read a letter from the Fishers Island Conservancy resigning from the CAC. The letter stated that the Conservancy was very disappointed in the CAC's Long Island Sound potential project list for funding under the economic recovery act that was sent out to elected officials. The Conservancy does not agree with or support the projects pertaining to dredging and, by inference, tacit support for our current program of or open water disposal of dredged materials. The Conservancy was also very upset that the Stimulus package and letters to elected officials were not sent out to the entire CAC for approval before they were released. Nancy and Curt pointed out that the letters were fully vetted by and circulated to the Policy and Advocacy committee, and that time was very short. Nancy asked Fishers Island Conservancy to reconsider since they have been such an important part of the CAC. This discussion also raised the point about conflicting views among CAC members concerning dredging. There was a request to put the issue of dredging on the next CAC agenda.

Sound Vision Project

Curt Johnson proposed the idea of a project that the CAC work with Connecticut Fund for the Environment and Save the Sound who will apply for funding to examine LISS's Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP). The document is over 15 yrs old and priorities have changed. He suggested that CFE apply for support to hire a technical consultant to give an overview of the current CCMP, and then act as a facilitator to lead the CAC in determining progress to date, and come to consensus about new priority areas. Ann Rodney added that the group needs to be very specific with what they want to evaluate (e.g., programs, program process, evaluation impacts, perception of public). This process could be conducted during half day working sessions.

Curt suggested two possible funding sources: Funding directly from the LISS, which would have to be approved by the Management Committee, and LIS Future Fund (LISFF). Curt Johnson told the group that Save the Sound had put together a proposal that he would submit for the LISFF for its deadline on March 13th. Many members were concerned about the late notice of this idea and wanted to see a copy of the proposal. Curt agreed to distribute a copy of the proposal for CAC comments and hold a follow up telephone conference for deciding on comments to incorporate prior to a revised application being submitted to the Management Team for their review and approval. Members also wanted to clarify that the CAC would be consulted regarding the selection of any consultant, and received reassurance that the priority areas would not be pre-determined but chosen by the CAC. The goal is to reach consensus on a CAC LIS action plan that will be multi-year in scope. Significant support was expressed for a later, post-grant follow-up focused on a larger community outreach effort, analogous to the Listen to the Sound project – an effort designed to receive input and support from the CAC. With these concerns registered, and with the opportunity to review and edit the final LISS grant, the sense of the CAC was solidly in support for seeking funding for this effort.

Break for Press Conference- CAC members broke for lunch and headed down to the steps of City Hall for a Press Conference. Al Caccase and Nancy Seligson spoke from the CAC. Representatives from the General Contractors Union, the North American Laborers Union, the Nature Conservancy and the NY League of Conservation Voters also spoke about the need for clean water infrastructure funding.

After the Press Conference, CAC members reviewed the Sound Vision Project draft proposal. Members suggested that Save the Sound submit the proposal to LISFF in order to make the March 13th deadline, but then circulate the proposal so members could comment before the proposal is submitted to the LISS Management Committee.

TMDL Revision

Ron Entringer and Lorraine Gregory gave an overview of the LIS Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) reassessment for nitrogen. The reassessment is being conducted because EPA, CT, and NY have adopted new water quality standards and the original TMDL called for a review after 5 years. Ron and Lorraine presented the following points for discussion. If you have any comments or suggestions, please email them at raentrin@gw.dec.state.ny.us or lagregor@gw.dec.state.ny.us.

1. How can the TMDL for nitrogen connect with and/or support local water quality and/or natural resources objective and activities?
2. This TMDL revision is focusing on the load allocation (LA) for nonpoint sources of pollution. The calculation will change because discharges from urban municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4) are now regulated for point source. MS4s have a relatively small nitrogen load, but the costs for reductions are big! What are your ideas for ways we can work with the MS4s to help them a) understand their role in TMDL strategy and b) comply with their new permit requirements?
3. What advice can you give us about obtaining public input on this TMDL reassessment? What specific audiences should we talk to?

Other Business/June Agenda Items

The next CAC meeting will be in Stamford, CT on June 11, 2009. One possible topic is a discussion on the CAC's view on dredging. Other suggestions for topics may be sent to the Long Island Sound Office and CAC Co-Chairs.

Meeting adjourned at 3:00PM.