



Citizens Advisory Commttee
Thursday, December 8, 2016
Housatonic Community College, Bridgeport, CT
Meeting Summary

Welcome, Housekeeping & Logistics

The meeting started at 9:45 am with a quorum of 31 members present.

Discussion: Moving Forward

Nancy Seligson, CAC NY Co-chair, Town of Mamaroneck, initiated a discussion on the impacts of the recent election and the importance of the CAC's environmental work. She said that working locally on environmental issues could become even more important to restoring Long Island Sound and addressing climate change. She encouraged CAC members, through their local and regional leadership positions, to share their passion for LIS to by encouraging others to get involved to make a difference in our communities. The CAC recognized this as a great opportunity to reach out to our supporters. It's clear that work needs to be done at the local level. The environmental movement has benefitted from crisis in the past and NEPA and the Endangered Species Act came out of unlikely administrations. The Government was characterized as an aircraft carrier -- it takes a long time to turn it meaning that you can't overturn environmental legislation overnight.

The opportunity for increased spending on infrastructure could benefit LIS. The CAC needs to participate in the national infrastructure discussion by communicating about water infrastructure needs. *It was suggested that the CAC communicate with the Trump Transition team.* At the meeting, members reached out to other CAC members attending the Restore America's Estuaries (RAE) conference to encourage them to get these messages to Washington as well. The CAC should be strategic about how we act. *The messages from the CAC should focus on clean industry and recreation that rely on clean water.* Climate Control and protecting water and marine resources are important issues to address.

The Small Business Administration appointee from Stamford, Linda McMahon, is a Cabinet level person. An economic overlay will be used by the new administration. Climate change is not the right pitch: clean water is -- especially recreational and commercial fisheries and economics. *Messaging: We need to reframe how we talk about LIS; a "jobs and economy" filter is necessary.* Look at the new power map -- who do we need to be working with in NY and CT? We should engage non-traditional partners. Long Island Sound creates jobs, helps quality of life, and keeps municipalities solvent. Investing in clean water does this.

In addition, the CAC needs to support sewer upgrades and improvements for municipalities. Infrastructure includes sewage treatment. This message needs to come from diverse crowds, including



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associations of towns and counties. *The CAC should provide congressional representatives with a letter in support of water infrastructure projects. On the state level, the CAC needs to emphasize **water** infrastructure needs, not just roads. We need to have a list of shovel ready projects in hand; identify what is needed with budget and engineering done in advance.* These jobs are not easily outsourced so they provide local jobs. The STAC, CAC and Management Committee are needed. The CAC could work with the Association of National Estuaries (ANEP) since it is non-federal. *The CAC should send a letter to Trump directly since he lived on LIS and raised his family on LIS. Try to connect him to that.*

The CAC should agree on a consistent message regarding the economic value of Long Island Sound. The Earth Economics Report valued the Sound between \$17 - \$32 billion annually. *The CAC needs to decide upon which number they are comfortable with. It was the consensus of the group that the Policy Committee was best positioned to draft any letters on behalf of the CAC.*

The proposed new EPA administrator doesn't have familiarity with estuaries. LIS is vulnerable because we don't have a budget line item. We need to find other messengers to bring the message to the President-Elect. It was noted that this is not the first time that an EPA administrator has come to the job with antipathy for environmental protection. One of the present concerns is that we don't have time not to work on Climate Change. It was also noted that the President Elect is a populist and if he hears something enough he'll respond.

Policy Committee Update

Adrienne Esposito, Citizens Campaign for the Environment, reported for the Policy Committee on the effort to increase the amount of federal support for LIS. It is expected that the federal Continuing Resolution will keep the funding at \$3.9 million. The Policy Committee produced a letter to CT and NY senators encouraging increased funding for LIS. There is an effort to pass NY Congressman Zelden's bill for Plum Island. It is possible we may see an increase in spending for wastewater infrastructure in New York.

Sandy Breslin, CAC CT Co-chair, Rivers Alliance, reported that there is a \$1.5 billion deficit in CT that will make it a challenging time in the legislature. Many programs are losing money, and 200 positions have been lost over the last ten years. At OPM another 35 staffers need to leave and will not be replaced. The CT Governor doesn't understand land use or NPS pollution, he wants permits to be issued quickly. The influential CT Homebuilders Association has a goal to rollback wetlands protection and the Clean Water Act. This is a challenge for municipalities and staff. We need to support resources for DEEP, and keep local wetland and land use commissions independent and strong. We need to pay attention to keeping



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local control. Public Health is also an important issue as source water protection will benefit LIS. Working with partners will be key such as waterworks associations, Rivers Alliance, and connecting to broader networks, including watershed groups, and organizations such as NRCS.

Sandy also reported about a proposal to cut trees at a LIS stewardship area: Bluff Point Coastal Reserve. This activity is associated with the local airport. *There may be a request for a letter from CAC.* This issue is within the DOT, FAA purview. Mickey Weiss, Project Oceanology, said that the last time this was done, trees were cleared just enough to provide safety for approaching planes.

Adrienne reported that the NY Governor's staff gave a 60-day notice of intent to sue over Plum Island. The incoming President elect may look at Plum Island as a land deal rather than a preservation deal. The expectation that anything will happen during this congress is very low.

CT DEEP has reorganized. The office of LIS, permitting, and management will be changing. It would be good to get an update on this. *Mark Parker, CT DEEP, will talk to Brian Thompson about giving an update to the CAC.* Dave Sampson retired and Penny Howell is leaving this winter from DEEP Marine Fisheries. This leaves a hole in the staff at Marine Fisheries. Mickey Weiss reminded all of the challenge of keeping long term datasets going. The CAC should encourage water monitoring from DEEP. The trawl survey is in danger. *Letters are needed to both agency heads and/or the governor thanking them and expressing concerns. The Policy Committee will work on letters to the Governor and DEEP about the crucial services they provide. David Miller, NYLCEF, suggested a letter from CAC to congressional delegates and to both governors on infrastructure.*

TNC Messaging Work

Sandy Breslin introduced the topic and Chantal Collier from CT TNC, saying that we appreciate TNC for bringing colleagues today for a discussion on messaging. The CAC needs to think about how to have the "Communications" conversation with the STAC. The two committees have a shared goal but different approaches.

Chantal gave a PowerPoint presentation, ***Water Quality Communications and Facilitated Conversation to Identify Long Island Sound Messaging Priorities***, beginning with the purpose of the discussion about messaging goals, and desired outcomes. Stuart Lowrie, TNC NY Water Quality Program Director, was introduced to initiate group exercises designed to investigate shared circumstances, purposes, and



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concerns about LIS. Stuart provided background about TNC's efforts on LI working with opinion leaders, media, civic and business andmunicipal leaders, through focus groups and polling. He introduced the "Message Triangle"organizing everything you need to say to your target audience, and the importance of sticking to it. Kara Jackson, TNC's Long Island Director of Communications, then provided information about the media campaign through the Long Island Clean Water.org website.
<http://longislandcleanwaterpartnership.org//>

Chantal discussed CT TNC's work in CT on the Saugatuck watershed, which included a water quality symposium, and the work done by Dr. Jamie Vaudrey, from UConn Marine Sciences. The effort led to a watershed-based nitrogen reduction plan. Chantal highlighted Awareness, Willingness, and Messages from the public outreach and communications part of the plan. The public surveys showed that fertilizers were perceived as the greatest N source, but actually it is wastewater. The public responded that the most important reason for restoring and maintaining clean water was for Quality of Life (94%).

Robert Burg, NEIWPC and LISS, provided an update on the LISS Communications team work to foster behavior change using community-based social marketing in the Niantic River watershed in CT. The project timeline is to Spring 2018 when the campaign will be launched.

Stuart Lowry conducted a 20-minute exercise with the CAC to emphasize the point that awareness and persuasion are very different than education and they have different outcomes. Education is a lot more expensive. You move ideas forward through awareness and persuasion. Individuals react to information they hear by considering cost or benefit to them, fairness to them (is there a winner or loser here?), and sustainability to them. The three key questions the exercise explored included: How do our purposes connect us to each other? What common communications purposes do we have that gives us greater strength together? Who else could be connected to these issues for greater strength? The follow up included discussing what worked about this process, what didn't, was it useful and how, and what next.

Facilitated Discussion for Joint STAC/CAC meeting

A group discussion ensued.

Challenges and Suggestions:

- We need more dialogue between the work groups.
- How we (LISS) outwardly message is a challenge.
- It would be good to have a joint meeting with NY/NJ and LISS on the topic of water quality.



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- Can we advertise the STAC/CAC joint meeting as “Do you want/need this information to make yourself more effective at communication?”
 - Create an advance flyer?
 - Communications is important to scientists for funding; funding agencies want scientists to get information out to a larger/broader audience.
- Mark Parker reported that DEEP will be designating National Estuarine Research Reserve sites in LIS. The meeting about this will be coming in early 2017. Denise Savageau, Town of Greenwich, also suggested that the Coastal Storm Awareness Program (CSAP) is working on communicating storm risk; this may be good for CAC to learn about. Nancy Balcolm at CT Sea Grant is the contact for information.

Committee Updates:

Management Committee

The Management Committee met on Oct 17th. Topics of discussion included the budget, the nonpoint source tracking tool, indicators. There is land use cover information for CT but not NY. We should fund NY for land cover data collection. Habitat & Wildlife workgroup goals were discussed. There was also discussion about changes in reporting and outreach. Protection and Progress and Sound Health will be discontinued. Jim Ammerman, LISS, talked about the Water Quality Work Group. The EPA Nitrogen Reduction Strategy was also discussed. A question was raised about why there isn't a western embayment on the target list? Most discussion and political will in NY is coming from Suffolk County. Westchester has not been included. The open western Sound is a priority and includes the East River and surrounding area. *Nancy Seligson was asked to reach out to NY DEC to include Westchester and a western embayment.* . The committee also talked about the new water director for Region II EPA.

Implementation Team

Work groups reviewed their progress. Efforts are being made to try to improve communication flow. Many questions were raised about the work groups. How do we get the most important info out? What are the work groups supposed to be doing? Everyone has full time jobs. Should we try to bring all the work groups together for a meeting? CCMP tracking should be specifically addressing CCMP goals and include metrics to define if we're succeeding toward those goals. Roles are not entirely clear to participants. Even work group leaders weren't entirely clear about their goals. Who is responsible for the oversight of work groups? This is all still relatively new, and challenging, and assumes that money is available. The I-Team can recommend what needs to be done, and perhaps what needs to be funded.



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More oversight is needed about accomplishing implementation actions (IA's). The communications team gave an update on the Public Involvement and Education work group (PIE); Judy Preston, CT Sea Grant/LISS, talked about plans to work on shoreline public access. Robert Burg, NEIWPC/LISS, talked about plans to implement a community based social marketing project in the Niantic watershed in CT. The Ad Hoc reporting group talked about their progress; we need a representative to this group from the CAC.

The Blue Plan

Nathan Frohling, CT TNC, presented a PowerPoint about the LIS Blue Plan. This is a new way of looking at protecting LIS, involving spatial planning. He cited the example of the Islander East pipeline that was placed through shellfish beds in Stony Creek in Branford, CT as the reason why the plan is needed. The Blue Plan addresses the need for more information, stakeholder engagement, policy and a plan. Two hundred people attended the recent public input session at the Norwalk Aquarium. NY state is participating. The next event for input will be on Long Island. Denise Savageau commented on the boundaries of the Blue Plan and importance of avoiding conflict with the coastal zone boundary. Nathan responded that the hope is to have the boundary include marshes and mudflats. Planning can take place into the upland.

LIS Futures Fund

Mark Tedesco reported on the November 14, 2016 awards announcement for the Long Island Sound Futures Fund, hosted in Mamaroneck, NY. The goal is that these awards contribute to a greater understanding of the issues facing LIS, and spawn replicable projects. \$1.3 million was awarded for 25 grants. The LISFF program is in its 11th year. There is a growing body of work that has been accomplished. Benefits include the fact that we get concrete numbers about what's changing in LIS, and projects illustrate important benefits and solutions, such as green infrastructure.

A number of CAC LISFF recipients reported on their awards and what they will be working on in the coming year:

- Tracy Brown, Save The Sound. Two awards: Green projects team to work on a green infrastructure retrofit at Beardsley Zoo in Bridgeport, CT, and the western LIS office will produce guidance to inform water quality monitoring in LIS.
- Corey Folsom-O'Keefe, National Audubon/Audubon CT: Wildlife guards program at Pleasure Beach, Bridgeport, CT will train, mentor, and employ ten Bridgeport high school students to provide shorebird stewardship and interface with the public.



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- Chantal Collier, CT TNC. Two awards: Construct and publicize a new onsite wastewater demonstration system at a public TNC property on LI (Uplands Farm Sanctuary). The second project is design work for fish passage restoration in the Falls River watershed on the lower CT River to open up the entire watershed.

Nancy Seligson provided an update on a LISFF funded project in Mamaroneck to upgrade the Town Center parking lot with green infrastructure, including educational signage. Nathan Frohling, reminded everyone that he co-wrote with CT Sea Grant the Blue Plan report, with funds from LISFF. Sandy Breslin reported on the grant to Audubon NY "Be a Good Egg" program, where volunteers are involved in stewardship to protect beach nesting birds, and also mentioned the work that will be done by Sarah Crosby at Earth Place, CT. with high school students from Fairfield County on water quality education and outreach.

Other Discussion and Updates

- NAMEPA – *the North American Marine Protection Association, is a first-time recipient of LISFF funds and could be good a candidate for the CAC.* Judy Preston and Robert Burg will be to visiting their offices in Southport, CT after first of year and will query their interest in becoming a member of CAC.
- The Northeast Ocean Plan was accepted and certified on December 7th.
<http://neoceanplanning.org/plan/>
- Nathan Frohling reported that there is an effort to get federal funding to pave the Shoreline Trail that runs from East Haven to Madison, CT. <http://shorelinegreenwaytrail.org>
- There was a request to consider a later start time for the CAC meetings.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 2:53 pm.

Reminder: Special joint STAC/CAC meeting, Friday, January 27th, 2017, Bridgeport, CT

Meeting Resources:

- From Dave Miller: The CIC/CAI Clean Water report link:
<https://cocommunications.box.com/v/CICCleanWaterReporter1114>
- PowerPoints: [will be posted to LISS website]
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- Resource from Stuart Lowry, NT TNC: Journal Environmental Management: ***Attributes of Successful Actions to Restore Lakes and Estuaries Degraded by Pollution***. Catherine Gross, James D. Hagy III 2017.
- Mark Parker, CT DEEP, read an email to CT State DEEP employees from DEEP Commissioner Robert Klee about the recent nomination for the EPA Administrator: