

Long Island Sound Study

A Partnership to Restore and Protect the Sound

Citizens Advisory Committee Thursday, June 8, 2017

Housatonic Community College, Bridgeport, CT.

Meeting Summary

Welcome

Nancy Seligson, CAC Co-Chair, New York

Nancy opened the meeting with a tribute to former CAC CT Co-Chair Sandy Breslin, who died on May 31st. She cited Sandy's intelligence, insight, supportive nature and her great writing skills. After reading her obituary, Nancy opened the floor to invite comments from CAC members. A number of members provided thoughts and memories, and shared in the overall feeling of the profound loss at Sandy's passing. Several suggestions were shared for how people might honor Sandy, including support for an intern at CT Fund for the Environment, or a fund to support her Mother, Ruthie.

Membership

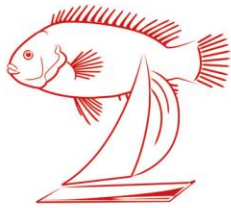
Nancy brought up the request for CAC membership from CT's Menunkatuck Audubon, whose representative, Karl Harvey, was present. Dave Miller, NYLCV, took the opportunity to praise Menunkatuck as a great chapter of Audubon and made the motion, seconded by Curt Johnson, to welcome them as a new member of the CAC. All voted in favor.

LISS Budget, Nancy Seligson, CAC Co-Chair, NY and Mark Tedesco, EPA LIS Office

The increased funding of the 2017 LISS budget to \$8.63 million is a wonderful surprise. It is a good problem to have, despite the short timeframe to decide how to obligate the funds. Nancy congratulated CAC members on their efforts to increase the LISS budget and the successful trip to Washington. She suggested everyone reach out to their congressional representatives to thank them for the budget success. Curt Johnson acknowledged the specific contributions of congresswoman Nita Lowey from NY's 17th District for her significant work. There will be a celebration gathering later in the summer/early fall to thank Representative Lowey with more details to follow.

LISS Budget, Mark Tedesco, EPA LIS Office

Mark provided a PowerPoint about the LISS 2017 Work Plan and budget. Upon hearing the "\$8.65 million dollars", Adrienne Esposito, Citizens Campaign for the Environment, entreated: "Wait, can you just say it again" after which all those assembled provided applause. Mark presented what has changed in the budget and noted that EPA needs to obligate all the funds by September 30. There is a shortened period for proposals and reviews. A request was made for a one page summary of the budget changes. Adrienne



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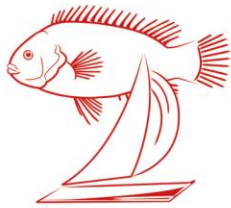
reported that NYSDEC sees sewer infrastructure repair such as pipes as a greater need than additional nitrogen wastewater treatment plant upgrades. Mark noted that NYC has re-engaged with the LISS. LISS has made it clear that a regional effort including NYC is important to support the science modeling needed to reduce nitrogen into the Sound. NYC can bring a lot of resources to the table. Denise Savageau, Town of Greenwich, said Greenwich has one of the best WWTP, but several years ago had a cracked pipe. EPA dealt harshly with the town. The Greenwich public works department now regards pipe repair as very important. The CAC needs to be aware of the two issues promoted by EPA.

Nancy Seligson commented that the CAC has been approached by the NY/NJ Estuary Program to have a joint meeting. This could be an opportunity to focus on the regional modeling needs through the joint CACs. NYC has the capability to manage a complex modeling effort. It has yet to be determined who will work on the water quality modeling at this point, or how it will integrate/build on Jamie Vaudrey's work on river watersheds, or interface with other watershed models.

Curt Johnson asked if the EPA is going to move forward with interim standards for NYC in the meantime (as the model is being developed). Mark responded that EPA is proceeding with the current Nitrogen Reduction Strategy and schedule.

Dave Miller noted that the budget windfall this year is yet another reason to have specific project proposals ready and in the pipeline. The LISS should not be caught unprepared for a budget windfall. There needs to be a list of projects ready to go. David stressed that LISS budget should fund only projects that implement the CCMP priorities. There are other sources of funds for infrastructure, such as pipe repair. The CAC should understand what categories can and should be funded through the LISS. The Policy Committee was asked to consider addressing the need for a project list.

Mark Tedesco reminded everyone that the LISS has identified priorities and that the FY17 funding was used in support of those CCMP priorities. Specific projects reflected those priorities have been identified, despite the tight timeframe to allocate the increase in funds. Adrienne Esposito asked about the 2017/18 federal budget. Mark Tedesco replied that under a continuing resolution (CR) a portion of money would be



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made available through pro-rating, but that knowing the final budget amount is needed to prioritize decisions.

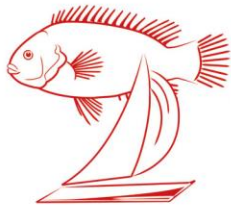
The list developed for the allocation of the increased budget funds would be helpful to have on future advocacy trips to Washington to explain the needs for funding. If the government has a 6-month Continuing Resolution instead of an adopted budget going forward, a portion of the budget funds would be made available to the LISS and then we would have to wait for the rest. It could be a difficult situation since the total allocation would be unknown.

Nancy Seligson reviewed work group reports and commented that the CAC needs to keep these actions in mind in regard to CCMP priorities and remind the Management Committee to continually refer back to the IA priorities of the CCMP.

The LIS Funders Collaborative has asked the CAC to recommend a project for their funding consideration. A discussion ensued with questions such as: What should the CAC do that is different from EPA, NY DEC, etc.? What will advance LIS priorities from CAC's perspective? At what scale do we want to work? How much money is available? How do we separate out the actions that government funding can and should provide?

There was discussion about citizen embayment monitoring as a possible program for funding by the Funders Collaborative. Carol DiPaulo, Hempstead Harbor Protection Committee, said that the CAC has talked about annual base funding for embayment monitoring for years to no avail. Hempstead Harbor is doing everything they can to sustain their type of program. Dave Miller reminded the CAC that the Funders Collaborative is a different pot of money than the LISFF, although NFWF is part of the Collaborative. It was agreed that funding for monitoring should be in the base LISS funding.

The Funders Collaborative has funded the Unified Water Study focusing on volunteer stewards and Citizen's Science water quality monitoring. Tracy Brown, CFE/STS, noted that the Unified Water Study and LIS Report Card funded through the Collaborative is in the \$300 - \$500k range. Tracy said she doesn't think the Funders Collaborative would be interested in funding an existing program, but would be more interested in a project



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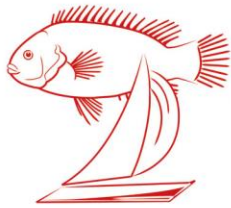
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that covered the entire Sound, addressing marketing, sustainable and resilient communities, habitats and wildlife.

Ideas and Discussion on Funders Collaborative opportunity:

- Sound-wide collaborative idea because this is what government is not doing. Government doesn't have the mechanism to work collaboratively.
- Possible opportunity to work with the NY/NJ harbor estuary.
- STS/CFE effort that is currently being funded through the Collaborative is a good example of the kind of things the CAC should consider.
- Sustainable and resilient communities recommendations from the CCMP need to be addressed; towns want concrete solutions.
- Influence decision makers to invest in Long Island Sound. The example of the amount of money that has come into Long Island for LINAP was cited; this is desperately needed in CT. LINAP also had a lot of advocacy; a huge campaign at multiple levels.
- Messaging assists with the achievement of the goal, but first we need the goal.
- Provide towns with the tools.
- Focus on CCMP goals that could be addressed based on our discussions, such as marketing as a strategy to get sustainability plans implemented.
- There is the need for engagement, such as events to get people connected to the Sound.
- In CT many programs will/are going to be eliminated or significantly decreased because of budget problems. Need to deliver what money there is into these communities. Make sure money gets to the towns.
- Importance of public awareness of LIS is key. National Estuary day/week is September 23 to 30. Can the CAC organize a group event? The Greenwich Shellfish Commission created a National Estuary event that has become very popular.
- There is a tremendous opportunity to energize the public and give tools to the towns to educate the public.
- Provide a clear path forward for enthusiasm; bring towns together that are currently working independently.
- Work with a small group of towns to create a road map with local hands-on information.
- Start the engagement with listening first.



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- Start with lawns because every town is dealing with that.

Nancy will circulate these ideas.

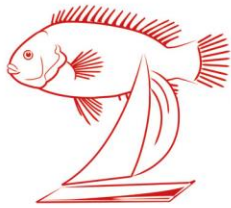
Niantic Bay Behavior Change Project & Social Media Campaign, Robert Burg, NEIWPC

Robert presented a PowerPoint presentation on the campaign and responded to questions. The budget has so far been a low \$10k. The objective is to create a replicable model that can be used elsewhere around the Sound. A number of questions will be answered as the project progresses. The Niantic watershed is a good opportunity because of the interest of the community and CT DEEP. Denise suggested looking at soil health as a better approach than just fertilizer. A new test for nitrogen has been developed at UConn and this may be integrated into an application from UConn for LISFF support. Currently the team is looking at a number of potential behaviors to target. The next step is soliciting the input of a number of soil scientists about the best behavior to target through the campaign. Public surveys will be conducted over the summer.

Robert also provided a brief update on the LIS social media trash/litter campaign. The Public Involvement and Education team (PIE) will run a campaign this summer from Mid-July through mid-September, ending on the international coastal cleanup day. This information will be shared with CAC partners for their involvement.

Policy Committee Update, Adrienne Esposito, Citizen's Campaign for the Environment; Curt Johnson, Save the Sound

Adrienne Esposito provided an overview of the recent Lobby day in Washington, D.C., attended by a number of CAC members. The group met with individual legislative members: Murphy, Blumenthal, DeLauro, Lowey, Courtney, and King. The CAC group met with the LIS Congressional Caucus chairs Reps. Zelden, Suozzi, and DeLauro as a group also. Senator Blumenthal suggested working with other Estuary programs to advocate support for the National Estuary Program. The Great Lakes program has been significantly reduced in the new budget. Representative Suozzi suggested hosting a LIS event in September with the two state governors. Adrienne will reach out to Rep. Suozzi to begin discussions about dates and venue.



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It was a substantive day with multiple organizations representing the CAC and LIS interests. Adrienne thanked everyone who participated. The CAC thanked Adrienne for organizing and leading the effort. Everyone put in long hours, especially on the bus ride home.

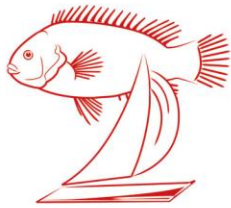
Mark Tedesco reported that there is a House estuary caucus with the 28 estuary programs represented. There is also a newly formed coastal caucus with partners focusing on coastal resiliency. These are emerging, bi-partisan efforts. Restore America's Estuaries (RAE) is a coalition of 11 estuary groups from around the country and there is also a national association of estuaries.

The CAC Policy Committee is talking about an event this summer to celebrate the accomplishment of the States meeting the TMDL nitrogen reduction requirements of 58.5%. It would be an opportunity to re-sign a LIS Agreement and to sign the new CCMP. NEP's Nat'l Estuary Day, the week of September 23 to 30, would be a good date. This is an opportunity to bring state and local elected officials together to celebrate LIS accomplishments. There was a suggestion to hold a press conference, including scientists, to talk about LIS and perhaps hold a panel discussion with decision-makers. Port Jefferson was suggested as a location for the event.

Nancy Seligson reported that many cities and states were condemning the president's decision to exit the Paris climate accord. The Town of Mamaroneck passed such a resolution that is available on the Town's website.

Research Proposals/Updates, Jim Ammerman, NEIWPCC

Jim provided a PowerPoint presentation about Science needs for LIS, and an update on research funded through the Sea Grant programs. Among the things he noted was a new eelgrass survey that will be done this summer (last done in 2012). He provided an overview of 2015 funded projects that dealt with Nitrogen Processes and Sediment fluxes [Tobias, Robinson Fulweiler, Mark Altabet] and the 2017 project of Whitney & Vlahos, Lawrence, Rasbury & colleagues. Jim also provided a *Science Needs for Eutrophication Management Measurements, Analysis, Modeling* handout, and showed desirable model characteristics (many of which are not true of the SWEM model). Ocean acidification is an issue of concern. Jim O'Donnell has worked to



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place acidification sensors in western LIS. Chris Gobler, on LI, is also working on this. The USGS has put a new monitor in the Peconic Estuary and results are showing a surprisingly high acid level in these waters. Jim noted that hypoxia modeling is of great interest globally due to the 600 hypoxic areas around the globe now. Mickey Weiss, Project Oceanology, noted that storm events and wind mixing are considered among the most important factors impacting hypoxia. New generation models should reflect this. Mickey will be going to the STAC meeting next week for the CAC.

Updates

Because of time constraints, the LINAP, Niantic River Watershed Committee, and LIS Nitrogen Strategy updates were canceled.

DEEP Organizational Changes, Mark Parker, CTDEEP

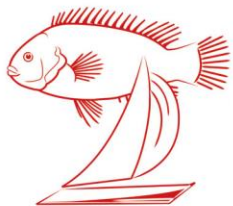
National Estuarine Research Reserve (NERR), Mark Parker, CTDEEP

Mark Parker provided a PowerPoint presentation on organizational changes at the CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, including recent changes due to layoffs and retirements. Five levels of organizational structure were highlighted. Mark suggested using the DEEP website to link to information on Long Island Sound. Curt Johnson pointed out that Land and Water Resources includes coastal zone management, and pesticide information is now under the Materials Management Program.

Mark also updated activity regarding the National Estuarine Research Reserve program (NERRS). The members of the working group in CT includes Roman Zajack, Jamie Vaudrey, Peter Auster, Ron Rozsa, and Chris Elphick. Kevin O'Brian is the lead at DEEP. An area will be selected where researchers can conduct research. Despite skepticism, there are no prohibitions associated with the area selected. A criteria evaluation is being created, and guest speakers have been invited to help with the process. Two public meetings and webinars have been conducted and one more public informational meeting will be held this summer. More information is available on the CTDEEP website on a separate webpage. In September the group hopes to file an application with NOAA for NERRS status.

ACTIONS

NS, CJ: follow up on Nita Lowey event



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MT: one pager re budget changes [received]

NS: share funders collaborative ideas with CAC

NS: facebook info on plastics and resolution; put on website

Paris accord resolution from town level (Mamaroneck)

ANAP see how coordinate with (NS)

AE, CJ: Sept. date for Policy folks to reach out to representatives for September event

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at approximately 3:00. The next regularly scheduled CAC meeting is Thursday, September 14th in New York [location TBD].

The presentations from the meeting are available at:

For additional information on the CAC, visit:

<http://longislandsoundstudy.net/about/committees/citizens-advisory-committee>