

Minutes (DRAFT)

Public Access Work Group
New York-New Jersey Harbor & Estuary Program
June 30 2021 12:00 – 1:45 PM

1. Approval of Minutes from March 31 2021 Meeting

The minutes were approved following a motion by Scott Dvorak and a second by Graeme Birchall.

2. PAWG Project Updates

Rob Pirani thanked the Work Group and its members for their help in preparing the New York – New Jersey Harbor Estuary Paddling Guide. 7,000 copies were printed and posted online. Over 5000 copies were provided to partners but we still have additional copies/rolled versions suitable for posting. If you are interested, let Rob know. www.hudsonriver.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/HRF_HEP_PaddlingGuide_final_5-27-21.pdf The database has been updated and is available. Pratt Institute submitted a proposal to NYS to help provide an online resource and maintain it over time.

City of Water Day will be held on Saturday July 10. The celebration is coordinated by Waterfront Alliance and HEP. There will be over 45 sites/organizations hosting In Your Neighborhood events, including many PAWG members. Thanks to funding from USEPA and NYC Ferry, HEP was able to provide \$24,000 in grant assistance.

3. Summer 2021 Programs and Meeting COVID Protocols

Hugh Carola led a round robin update from Work Group members on their summer program plans and how they are addressing the latest developments on pandemic response.

- *Hugh is taking people out and tours are popular but dependent on the participation of partners and volunteers willing to host and mask*
- *Graeme has asked his volunteers if they were vaccinated. They are limiting to 50 people per hour / 300-400 per day. No school groups or organized groups. No issues with masking*
- *Owen – red hook boaters / BBP boathouse are active. For the most part people have not been masked but kids are. There is no canoeing on the Gowanus due to govt request from EPA. Also they lost argument on Huntington street end.*
- *Graeme – noted that HRPT has released its draft estuarine Sanctuary Management Plan. Including sections on historic ships and public access.*

4. Staten Island Maritime Activation and Resilience Plan

12:40 - 1:05 PM

Priority PA-A-2: Contact Recreation Assess prospects and refine goals for increasing direct access for boating, swimming, and wading, incorporating associated water quality considerations.

Maggie Flanagan from Waterfront Alliance presented the latest draft of the plan for discussion and input, including chapters on access, programming, and planning.

Rob asked what are the excellent examples for street end access. She noted 2nd street launch on Gowanus that has water quality, programming, and arrangements with adjoining land owners re utilities.

Maggie noted that parks funding is really needed – focus on the maintenance funding that is needed.

It was noted that Kayak SI likes to use road edge instead of official site as rip rap makes it difficult

Owen suggested that we Improve not remove access – eg Alice Austen should be improved.

Max – 777 front street address may not be correct

The group then discussed general lessons that could be drawn from SI examples:

Shino – raised green gentrification as a concern. She also suggested a designated priority marine activity zone? Tour boat docks are so designated.

Graeme – suggested a good faith test for public outreach – same people at same meetings – how to change timing and approach to get a wider spectrum of the community to participate.

Maggie noted EDC Waterfront navigator as an example for how best to provide incentives/efficient aside from more density - especially relative to state requirements.

Also Insurance concerns were noted as a focus.

Graeme - Informal access as a means of education – what is the most cost effective way to do this without the high cost professional infrastructure.

From chat

Does Waterfront zoning requires shaded areas? Check with DCP. Private waterfront open spaces are inspected by DPR from time to time to evaluate access and compliance to ensure the public can use, signage is maintained, lighting is maintained, etc.

Rob noted that this will be an agenda item for next September, working with Parks and City Planning.

5. Waterways Stories

1:05 - 1:25 PM

Priority WQ-D-2: Waterway Stories Develop briefs and stories about water quality conditions of individual waterways and watersheds

Building on the data from the forthcoming Harbor-wide Water Quality Report, the Water Quality Work Group is exploring how best to develop briefs or stories about water quality conditions in the various waterways of the estuary. Rosana Da Silva led a conversation to get initial ideas from recreational and public access community.

Comments:

Focus on fishable / swimmable water - ie people be able to go swimming – this should be the focus of the story; it should be about use, not about data. Swim guide as a specific resource – based in Toronto- this is a specific resource that people use

Some connection to data or more about uses? Focus on uses, do not get bogged down

Question: Who is the primary audience for this; need clarity especially as to not duplicate existing data. Answer – general public but partners are a key vehicle for distribution

Place based approach – need to make sure we are responsive to diversity, how uses/concerns/access are different waterfront areas – participatory process/ training for people?

Look at water quality blogs – IEC

Question: How do we manage data in a way that keeps it up to date – focus on individual stories or uses

Can this be a tool for advocates for waterfronts

No data on swimming = balancing advocating while making sure we are responsible for people getting sick.

It was noted that QAPP is needed for citizen science water quality data like NYC Water Trail to be used

What uses are possible when quality is good / what can't you do when quality is not good

What format – on line tool / other formats -

6. CRP Restoration Activity Map Update

Priority H-A-4: Prioritization Create a decision making tool for prioritization of restoration opportunities.

Isabelle Stinette presented a mapping tool HEP is developing to map and track progress on restoration plan projects and opportunities.

Comments

Consider including a crowd sourced photos of the sites – completed restoration project/access to nature

Focus on encouraging people to understand the sites

Beta site links will be sent out with minutes

7. Partner Updates

1:35 - 1:45 PM

Hugh provided an update on NJ Public Access rules – no update on the rules. Things are on hold till election day

Michael – comment period ended on DCP – organizing the final plan and recommendations – Fall release is anticipated

Hugh - August 18 NJCF is doing a panel discussion on DEIJ

Owen - Shanty on Saturday at the Gowanus Canal! <http://gowanuscanal.org/sea-shanty-saturdays-gowanus-canal>

Next Meetings:

Wednesday September 29 4-6 PM

Wednesday December 15 12-2 PM

Attendance

12:01:52 From Margaret Flanagan to Everyone : Good afternoon, this is Maggie Flanagan from Waterfront Alliance, and happy to be serving as a co-chair.

12:02:15 From Lingard Knutson to Everyone : Lingard Knutson R2 EPA

12:02:58 From Rob Pirani to Everyone : Welcome everybody - we will get started in a couple but please say hello in the chat - Rob Pirani, NYNJ HEP

12:03:21 From Rosana Da Silva (she/her), HRF/HEP to Everyone : Good afternoon everyone - Rosana Da Silva, HRF/HEP

12:03:24 From Elizabeth Jaeger, Natural Areas Conservancy to Everyone : Elizabeth Jaeger, Natural Areas Conservancy. Hi everyone!

12:03:47 From Chris Wassif to Everyone : Hi everyone, Christopher Wassif, Waterfront Planner, NYC Planning :)

12:03:54 From Graeme Birchall to Everyone : Graeme Birchall, Downtown Boathouse

12:04:04 From Sara Powell (she/her) to Everyone : Hi all, Sara Powell, Ambassador for the Bronx & Harlem Rivers Urban Waters Federal Partnership, HEP/HRF

12:04:19 From Anne Toomey to Everyone : Hello! Anne Toomey from Pace University

12:04:39 From Lingard Knutson to Everyone : Lingard Knutson EPA

12:05:27 From Shino (she/her) to Everyone : Good morning. Shino, NYC Soil & Water Conservation District & HEP CAC.

12:23:24 From Elizabeth Jaeger, Natural Areas Conservancy to Everyone :

12:36:54 From Max Taffet | NYCEDC to Everyone : Hello all! Max Taffet, NYCEDC, PortNYC Planning mtaffet@edc.nyc

12:37:00 From Scott Dvorak to Everyone : Scott Dvorak from The Trust for Public Land in New Jersey

12:37:07 From Helena Andreyko to Everyone : HI, everyone, Helena Andreyko from HRF here

12:37:08 From Rebecca Pryor to Everyone : Hi all—Rebecca Pryor, Guardians of Flushing Bay and Riverkeeper

12:37:11 From Hugh Carola to Everyone : Hugh Carola. PAWG Co-Chair & Program Director @ Hackensack Riverkeeper

12:37:25 From Lisa Schepcke to Everyone : Hi. Lisa Schepcke, American Littoral Society

12:37:44 From Chrissy Word, City Parks Foundation, she/her to Everyone : Hi All- Chrissy Word, Director of City Parks Foundation; apologies for coming late - had a meeting and will have to leave early for the same reason.

12:37:56 From Michael Marrella (DCP) to Everyone : Good afternoon. Michael Marrella, NYC Dept of City Planning.

12:38:16 From Chrissy Word, City Parks Foundation, she/her to Everyone :

12:38:21 From Shino (she/her) to Everyone : Shino with NYC Soil & Water Conservation District & HEP CAC

12:38:54 From Chris Bowser (he, his) to Everyone : Chris Bowser, NYSDEC, chris.bowser@dec.ny.gov

12:39:57 From Owen Foote to Everyone : Owen Foote here, Gowanus Dredgers Canoe Club, Red Hook Boaters, Kayak Staten Island and Long Island City Community Boathouse