

HEMPSTEAD HARBOR PROTECTION COMMITTEE

FINAL MEETING MINUTES

Sea Cliff Village Hall

June 4, 2014

NOTE: ACTION ITEMS ARE IN **ITALICS**. MOTIONS ARE HIGHLIGHTED IN GRAY.

NOTE: the April 9th meeting was cancelled due to a conflict with a City of Glen Cove public hearing on Crescent Beach

Attendees: Mal Nathan (North Hempstead); Tom Rice (North Hempstead); Eric Swenson (Executive Director); Abby Kurlender (Roslyn Harbor); Sean Jordan (Oyster Bay); Catherine Chester (Sands Point); Karen Reichenbach (Flower Hill); Dan Fucci (Nassau County); Carol DiPaolo (Coalition to Save Hempstead Harbor) and Carol McGill (Sea Cliff resident)

Call to Order

Eric Swenson called the meeting to order at approximately 7:15 pm.

Review and Approval of Draft Minutes of Meeting of March 12, 2014

Catherine Chester moved to approve the minutes of the March 12th meeting minutes. Karen Reichenbach seconded the motion and the Committee unanimously approved them.

Administrative / Organizational Issues

Proposed 2014 Annual Dues – Eric reminded the Committee has received dues payments from the Town of North Hempstead, the Town of Oyster Bay, the City of Glen Cove, the Village of Sea Cliff and the Village of Roslyn Harbor. Still outstanding are the Villages of Roslyn, Flower Hill and Sands Point and Nassau County. It should be noted that those three villages have a fiscal year that starts June 1st and that the Committee typically awaits until after the start of these fiscal years to receive payment. **Catherine Chester will check with the Village of Sands Point. Karen Reichenbach will check with the Village of Flower Hill and Eric Swenson will check with the Village of Roslyn.** Dan Fucci had previously requested that **Eric send a voucher to the county in June. Eric will send the voucher to the county.**

Updates, Announcements, Reports, Reminders, & Upcoming Events

Eric Swenson made the following updates, announcements, reports and reminders:

L.I. Green Infrastructure Conference – the conference will be held on June 11th at the Town of North Hempstead's Yes We Can Community Center in Westbury. P.E., AIA and Landscape Architecture credits will be available. The registration fee for municipalities (including credits and meals) is only \$20.00. There will be concurrent sessions as well as tours of the building throughout the day.

Cedarmere Pond Cleanup - the cleanup will take place on June 21st and volunteers are needed. Anyone wishing to volunteer should contact Satish Sood at ssood@nassaucountyny.gov.

Sea Cliff Mini Mart – this year’s event will be on Sunday October 5th. Eric noted that the cost for a booth has risen from \$55.00 to \$150.00 this year. He has written to the sponsors to seek a reduction of this cost given that the Committee represents the village and other local governments.

Glen Cove public meeting on Crescent Beach – on April 9th, Eric indicated that he attended and assisted in carrying out the city’s public meeting. The City and its engineers presented their plan for conducting the monitoring necessary in order to provide the data to the Nassau County Health Department so that a decision could be made on whether to open the beach for the 2014 season. Following that public meeting, the City Council decided against appropriating the funds. Nevertheless, Eric reported that Nassau County Legislator Delia DeRiggi Whitton had requested that the County provide funding for a sewer feasibility study and that in response, the County Executive’s office convened a meeting and announced that they would be including \$1 million in the upcoming capital budget for this purpose. Eric verified this with the Deputy County Executive Rob Walker and offered to assist in developing the study. He also suggested that the scope of the study be broadened to include Sea Cliff and Glenwood Landing. Mr. Walker agreed to include Eric in the process and stated that he would contact him at the appropriate time.

Town of North Hempstad EcoFest – the Committee had an information booth at the event on April 26th and 27th and it turned out to be great weather both days. Information was provided to residents and discussions ensued with area elected officials and candidates about the work of the Committee.

Meeting with Supervisor Bosworth – on May 2nd, Eric attended a meeting along with Jennifer Wilson Pines of the Manhasset Bay Protection Committee to brief the new Supervisor on the work of the two Committees. Supervisor Bosworth brought in the Town Clerk, Town Attorney, Commissioner of Public Safety, Councilman Peter Zuckerman and several others and the meeting lasted about an hour and a half. The Supervisor has made improving the waterways and waterfront a priority and pledged to work closely with the Committees.

Meeting with Center for Watershed Protection – on May 6th, Eric attended a meeting with Deb Caraco of the Center For Watershed Protection and about 20 local stormwater officials from around Long Island. It was the first time that such a meeting was held on Long Island with this prominent organization and each became more acquainted with what each other is doing.

Peregrine falcon nest on Glenwood Power Station Stacks – Eric stated that he was contacted a few weeks ago by Mary Normandia from the North Shore Audubon Society with concerns about possible nesting of Peregrine falcons on the stacks of the Glenwood Power Station building undergoing demolition by National Grid. Eric in turn contacted Chip Hamilton from the NYS DEC who was well aware of the situation. Chip reported that National Grid’s consultant had climbed the stack and confirmed that there was an active nest with one egg and that the birds were exhibiting nesting behavior. In advance of the demolition work, National Grid had constructed an alternate nest for the birds on top of a standard size telephone pole but the birds chose to return to their old nest site. DEC advised National Grid that they could not disturb the nest until the young fledged which was expected in June. Eric noted that the DEC’s website indicates that the birds prefer nesting at heights higher than a standard telephone pole and has written to National Grid suggesting that a new nest pole be erected using one of the “super poles” being installed on Long Island including along the harbor.

Governor's Task Force Meetings on L.I. Septic Problems – Eric noted that he was invited to present testimony at the task force meeting held on May 12th in Mineola but then subsequently advised that there would not be time for his testimony. He did not attend. It appears that the Task Force was mainly interested in hearing testimony on south shore issues.

"Water We Going to Do? III" Conference – Eric reported that on May 22nd, he attended this conference which was the third in a series held by the Long Island Clean Water Partnership and that both he and Carol DiPaolo were presented with awards for their work on clean water initiatives. The focus of the conference was mainly on nitrogen issues from failing septic systems. One of the presenters gave the results of a survey of Suffolk homeowners which indicated that once educated on septic system issues, they would be willing to spend more each month on efforts to keep our waters clean. This dovetails on the results of the C.E.S.S.P.O.O.L. Project survey.

EPA Webcast on Harmful Algal Blooms – On May 29th Eric participated in this webcast. Of particular interest was a presentation by NOAA on its phytoplankton citizen monitoring network. With harmful algal blooms prevalent in nearly every harbor on Long Island (except Hempstead Harbor), this is an issue to be dealt with. NOAA provides all the equipment and training necessary except for a microscope. Eric felt that it would be good to add this monitoring but was unclear as to how much was entailed. **Eric will find out more and report back to the Committee at its next meeting.**

HarborFest report – On June 1st, the Committee had a booth at this event. The weather was spectacular and the crowds were large (but seemed less than in the past). Information was distributed on septic and other issues. North Hempstead Councilman Peter Zuckerman and Supervisor Judi Bosworth stopped by, among others.

Marine Education Day report – Eric noted that the Committee was signed up to participate in this June 5th event but that it was cancelled due to rain being forecasted.

Proposed Aquaculture Project – Eric mentioned that he was contacted by an individual who wished to start an aquaculture project in Hempstead Harbor whereby he would grow shellfish commercially in wire cages within the open shellfishing area. Eric indicated his support for the project but advised the person to contact the NYS DEC since the underwater lands are owned by the state. Eric subsequently spoke to Debra Barnes at DEC and she advised him that while the state does allow such ventures to take place within 5 acre parcels at no cost, they do not permit them in areas where there is substantial commercial harvesting taking place. She checked her records and found that over 6,000 bushels of clams were commercially harvested from Hempstead Harbor in 2013 and therefore this project could not take place in Hempstead Harbor. She is working to find another suitable location nearby for him. Eric asked for a copy of the shellfish landing figures and Ms. Barnes sent it to him. He passed around a copy at the meeting.

Scudder's Pond Subwatershed Improvements

Eric reported that much of the construction has already been completed and is on schedule. Two of the state grants are set to expire at the end of June and will not be extended. The third grant expires at the end of the year. On April 21st, Newsday did a story on the pond following a visit to the site the week before which included County Legislator Delia DeRiggi Whitton and Mayor Bruce Kennedy. On May 13th, NYS Department of State representative Tracey O'Malley visited the site and was impressed with the progress. At the time of her

visit, there was one complicating issue – the discovery of a natural gas pipeline running through the Shore Road weir structure that is slated to be replaced. Because of the involvement of National Grid, it appeared unlikely that this item would be completed before the end of June. Ms. O’Malley had received approval for a solution to this which involved removing that particular item from the grant workplan provided that those funds are expended on other construction at the pond.

Powerhouse Drain Subwatershed Plan

Eric distributed disk copies of the plan to all who had not previously received it.

Water Quality and Monitoring Programs / Shellfish Opening

Eric reported that he had prepared and submitted a grant application for the 2014 – 2015 water quality monitoring program to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation under the Long Island Sound Futures Fund program. The requested amount of \$55,000 would permit the Committee to carry out the usual 25 week “core sampling” program and also carry out bacteria monitoring at three sites during the remaining 27 weeks of the year. This would allow year-round bacteria sampling in the Scudder’s Pond and Powerhouse Drain areas. Eric indicated that it was necessary for the Committee to enter into an agreement with the Coalition to Save Hempstead Harbor to carry out this work and that he had prepared an agreement which incorporated comments from the Coalition. The cost for the program would be \$55,000 and would be paid for by the Committee if grant funding is not received. He asked for approval of such an agreement retroactive to May 21st so that he could forward it onto the Village for signatures. Karen Reichenbach moved to approve the agreement. Dan Fucci seconded the motion and all approved. **Eric will forward the agreement to the Village of Sea Cliff with a request that it be entered into.**

Carol mentioned that this year’s monitoring season began with a reconnaissance boat trip on April 28th and that she has collected samples for the past three weeks. She indicated that when she realized that there would be a gap between last year’s winter sampling and the start of this year’s program, she sought and received approval from the county health department to continue performing lab work for the gap period and that she continued to collect those samples even though it was beyond the scope of the grant and her agreement with the Village. This year’s grant application and agreement with the Village eliminated this gap. Carol also prepared a revised section of the Quality Assurance Program Plan (QAPP) that covers the new monitoring meter that the Committee purchased earlier this year. The EPA has approved the revisions to the QAPP.

Carol noted that she saw a couple of lion’s mane jellyfish in the harbor (more were reported to have been seen in Oyster Bay) and even saw a loon on more than one occasion (between Sea Cliff Beach and the Hempstead Harbour Club). She also noted that the EPA (and in response, New York State) has proposed revisions to the testing procedure for determining beach closures. These changes are expected to go into effect in 2015 and will be more stringent with the threshold going from 104 colony forming units to 60 colony forming units. This may result in more days of beach closure even where water quality remains the same. This may cause some members of the public to incorrectly conclude that water quality is worsening.

Mal Nathan mentioned that the Bay Constables and other enforcement agencies in the area had formed a New York State Clam Enforcement Task Force about a year and a half ago. While the group has not met in

some time, it still exists. The Committee was not aware of this group and **Mal agreed to forward information about the group to Eric.**

Long Island Sound Study Report Card Project

Eric mentioned that on April 25th, he and Carol DiPaolo met in New York City with the Long Island Sound Funders Collaborative to discuss the work on the report card project (see March, 2014 minutes) and to fill the various foundations in on the history of the Committee and its current projects and the history of activities of the Coalition to Save Hempstead Harbor. It was a worthwhile meeting for all concerned. The next meeting with the University of Maryland is expected to take place in early July.

Nassau County Soil & Water Conservation District

Eric reported that the District has been very active the last few months but that personnel issues are now at center stage since the part time staffer has taken another job and has reduced her hours dramatically and the District Manager has tendered his resignation. The Board has solicited candidates for these positions and is working to bring on a new District Manager first. The projects that they have been working on are:

- Cedarmere Pond Invasives Removal Project – The District is coordinating this cleanup. With the pending departure of the District Manager, Board Vice Chair Satish Sood has taken over the coordination.
- Tree and Shrub sale – The sale was successful with over 6,000 native trees and shrubs being picked up on April 18th and 19th.
- 3rd Annual Green Infrastructure Conference – work continues on this one-day conference which will be held on June 11, 2014 at the Yes We Can Community Center in Westbury.
- Long Island Envirothon – this annual event for high school students proceeded despite the loss of Canon as the national sponsor and despite heavy rain and cold weather.
- “Let It Rain” Art Sale for Conservation – the third annual fundraiser, with a stormwater theme this year, was held on May 3rd at the Old Bethpage Village Restoration. The event was fund, the food excellent but the crowds sparse. County Executive Mangano and his wife attended along with at least two County Legislators. The Committee and the District each had information booths there.
- Sediment and Erosion Training Course – this DEC-approved course was held on April 26th with about 60 attendees.

C.E.S.S.P.O.O.L. Project Update

Eric noted that a lot has taken place since the last meeting. These include the holding of Long Island’s first conference for local government officials on septic issues. The April 25th event at Old Bethpage Village Restoration was well attended and well received. This was followed by two two-day training and certification courses held on April 22nd and 23rd and April 24th and 25th in Oyster Bay. Attendance was limited to 25 persons per two day course. Each course included one day of classroom instruction with homework assignments

followed by a day in the field uncovering and inspecting septic systems followed by an exam. Eric and Sean Jordan both took the course and found it very informative and interesting. At the same time, the pollsters at SUNY Stony Brook finished up their polling of north shore residents on septic system knowledge and motivating factors. The results of this survey were unveiled in a presentation at the Joint Protection Committee meeting held on May 14th at the Bryant Library in Roslyn. Eric noted that the same team that has worked on the C.E.S.S.P.O.O.L. Project decided to apply to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation for a follow-up grant to the septic training course. The Town of North Hempstead has agreed to be the sponsor and, like the other NFWF grant, will be matched entirely by in-kind services of the team members. Eric's contribution will be 100 hours over the course of a year. If approved, this grant will permit the holding of three more certification course; the pursuit of professional credit (e.g. building inspector credits) for attending (in addition to the certification); and the production of GIS maps that will cover such items as soil types, depth of groundwater, proximity to harbors and bays, and housing density. These maps will provide a better indication of those areas most prone to environmental damage due to failing septic systems. Grant awardees are expected to be notified in October.

Coastal Signage Project

Eric noted that the final designs have been approved by the NYS Department of State and the designs are undergoing the process to fabricate them. Color samples had to be revised because two of the signs had faces that were too orange. Those were corrected and the layout proofs are now being prepared and must be reviewed and approved before fabrication can take place. Our grant requires that the signs be fabricated and installed before the end of the month. That deadline will be tight and we are working as hard as we can to make it. Mal stated that the Town of North Hempstead sign shop can assist with installing the sign at Gerry Park. Assistance with other areas would need to be approved.

Municipal Updates

Roslyn Harbor – Abby Kurlender nothing to report other than the fact that two public water supply wells owned by the Roslyn Water District (which serves her village) have been closed due to Freon contamination issues. An air stripper is proposed to be located in Christopher Morley Park to treat the water.

Flower Hill – nothing to report.

Town of North Hempstead – Mal Nathan reported that the Town is partnering with Operation SPLASH to establish a program whereby volunteers would work in Town waters, beginning with Manhasset Bay, to clean up debris in the water and along the shorelines. Town officials visited Freeport where Operation SPLASH has been working for years and met with Rob Weltner. They also took a boat tour of the Town's waters with Kevin Braun to scope out the situation. They anticipate using 1 or 2 boats. Large debris would be cut into smaller pieces for transport. If all goes well they hope to have a program set up by the Spring of 2015. Mal also noted that a deer was recently spotted swimming in Manhasset Bay, heading in the direction of Louie's restaurant. The Bay Constables succeeded in getting it to shore. He also noted that deer have been spotted on the Town's solid waste authority property along Shore Road in Port Washington by the sand pits. Finally Tom Rice indicated that the Town is working on removing the buses that are currently using the North Hempstead Beach Park parking lot. They expect the buses to be removed when the current lease is up in 2015.

Town of Oyster Bay – nothing to report.

Sands Point –Catherine Chester had nothing to report except to state that the Mayor and Trustees were very interested in the progress of the Scudder’s project

Other Items

International Coastal Cleanup – Carol DiPaolo noted that she is organizing a beach cleanup in conjunction with the International Coastal Cleanup this year. The event will take place at Tappen Beach (and if enough volunteers, at Sea Cliff Beach aslo) on September 27th from 9:30 am to 11:30 am. She is still securing the necessary approvals.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:15 pm

NEXT MEETING: September 10, 2014 at Sea Cliff Village Hall