

Housatonic River Estuary Commission (HREC)

**HOUSATONIC RIVER ESTUARY COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, January 26, 2010
Shelton Community Center
Craft Room 3
Shelton, CT 06484**

1. CALL OF THE MEETING/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairman Gesullo called the meeting to order at 7:05 P.M.
All in attendance pledged allegiance to the flag.

ATTENDANCE

Bob Gesullo, Chairman, Shelton
Lori Romick, Vice-Chairman, Milford
Bill Rohland, Commissioner, Derby

NOTE: There was not a quorum for this meeting.
Chairman Gesullo stated that Commissioners Urban, Rock & Blake contacted him and said they could not attend tonight's meeting.

Also in attendance:
Marianne Chaya, Clerk, HREC

2. PUBLIC PORTION OR GUEST

Ed Kisluk resides at Birchbank, Shelton.
Mr. Kisluk stated that he is here because he has an interest in the Housatonic River. He has lived here his whole life and has property along the river. He is the former chairman of the Housatonic Lake Authority. He said he happened to find our meeting minutes on line and have looked at some of the issues the Commission has addressed in the past. I thought I would come by and listen. Chairman Gesullo asked Mr. Kisluk to tell about the Housatonic Lake Authority. He responded that it is a quasi-governmental organization comprised of members from Shelton, Derby, Seymour & Oxford. They work with the DEP and FERC and local town's authorities. He talked a little about what that Commission is all about.

Chairman Gesullo explained a little about what this commission is all about and mentioned that we have our own website. www.thehrec.org

3. APPROVAL OF THE November 23, 2009 MEETING MINUTES

Commissioner Rohland MOVED to accept the minutes from the November 24, 2009 meeting. Since there is a not quorum the minutes cannot be approved. It will be put on the March meeting agenda for approval.

HREC Minutes should be considered a draft version until approved at the next regular meeting.
HREC Minutes submitted to the respective town's Town Clerk's office for legal posting requirements.
Tape recording of the meeting is available at Shelton City/Town Clerk's office.

4. FINANCE REPORT

Chairman Gesullo stated that the balance is still around \$3000. He met with Mayor Lauretti and mentioned the request for funds letter he submitted to Shelton. Both Shelton and Milford has the funding request on their agendas for the 2010-2011 budget talks. I met with the Finance Director in Shelton who said he did not see any issues with this request. The only expenses we are aware of at this time are for the clerk and the spring river cleanup.

5. Use of Member Alternates and/or Member-at-Large

Chairman Gesullo stated that we can discuss this topic tonight but we are unable to vote on anything since we don't have a quorum.

We still have an opening for a member-at-large and I don't want to address it right now.

The reason the alternates came up is that Stratford uses Scott Corner if Commissioner Rock cannot attend. We always welcomed his input and when we voted on issues, he voted. Our by-laws do not address that specifically for alternates. Commissioner Rock challenged it.

Vice-Chairman Romick said she feels if he comes and volunteers his time he should be able to vote. I feel his is volunteering his time and he should be recognized for that.

Chairman Gesullo added that we also appreciate the alignment he has with other organizations. If Bill Rock can't be here it is nice that Scott Corner can come in his place. I think Scott should be able to vote for the town he represents.

Vice-Chairman Romick and Chairman Gesullo commented that they like the idea of alternates to insure that we have coverage from all the towns at the meetings. Chairman Gesullo said that we would have to table this issue until the next meeting but wanted it in the minutes that we addressed alternates and the status of voting privileges if they are officially representing one of the towns.

Vice-Chairman Romick suggested a change in the by-laws to address the alternates and voting privileges.

The member-at-large will be addressed after the alternate issue is settled.

6. Web page report – Bill Rohland

Commissioner Rohland reported that he has added the River Alliance article and link to their site on our website.

Vice-Chairman Romick said we are not getting any emails on our website.

Chairman Rohland said that he contacted all the towns to see if we have links. Some have this Commission buried. He can't remember if it's Ansonia or Shelton. When I found it I sent back an email questioning why it was put where it was. I said we are a Commission. I got an email back saying that we are not a government agency. I would expect to find them under the category of Commissions.

Marianne said that she has an email address for the agendas and minutes for their website and she has to fax the agendas/minutes to the town clerk.

Commissioner Rohland said that the agendas and minutes are posted on Derby's website. He will send the link to each web master for each town. Marianne said she thinks each town has to post the minutes for each Commission on their website.

Commissioner Rohland said that there were some towns where he had to hunt to find our links. On Orange's website there was not a posted web master.

7. Year-End report

Chairman Gesullo stated that each town was sent the 2009-year end report. He said that he got a couple of calls from Shelton after the report was sent. One was from the Mayor who asked me to come in. He said he read the report and was pleased to see what progress we are making for a Commission as young as we are and it's very difficult to get together.

8. Discussion on the wastewater treatment systems letter

Vice-Chairman Romick stated that in June we sent a letter to Congressman Chris Murphy. The original request for stimulus funds was for the adjacent towns; Ansonia, Derby, Shelton, and Stratford that all wanted stimulus money to upgrade their sewer treatment plant system and their stormwater systems. The improvements would benefit the river. We wrote the letter saying we were in favor of that and the CT General Assembly should look at the adjacent towns to do together – so you get a bigger bang for your buck if you are cleaning up 5 sewer treatment plants in 5 adjacent towns instead of one here and one there. It seems it would be a smarter use of money.

But I can tell you that as part of the Long Island Sound Assembly our annual report had this in it and also sent a similar letter. This project didn't make the approval from the State. In the annual report we sent from the Assembly we addressed this and said that failure to appropriately allocate these funds is a waste of available opportunity for better utilization and management of the sound and its resources and recommend that in the future for the next round of stimulus funds and how they should be prioritized.

Commissioner Rohland asked what towns got the stimulus money and Vice-Chairman Romick said that one is Hartford, who desperately needed it. Some got the money for the sewage treatment plants and others got it for other items. There was no written pre-requisite for which projects got picked and which didn't. They weren't prioritized in a way that made fiscal sense. We (the LIS Assembly) also addressed dredging in our report and improvements in the stormwater collection system would also help the amount of sediments coming in, especially to the Housatonic and going out to the Sound. It would reduce the need for dredging so often. We tried to make a real strong point and case for that.

9. Flow protection issues

Chairman Gesullo commented about the email received by all the Commissioners regarding a 40-year wait. I talked to the person who heads this up and said you gave me late notice and I can't show up in Hartford. We talked

at length about the issue and then we talked about our organization. She asked if we would take a position on this and do it in writing.

Vice-Chairman Romick stated that the flow protection issue is the diversion; the removal of water from the river for corporations, whether it's used for cooling water, use for irrigation for their shrubs, plants, for golf courses, etc. Some will get approved. My only thought to add to that for the flow protection issue is that there has to be a true need. I think if they are going to be allowed approval they should also reclaim any excess water. Paved surfaces and runoff from roof leaders should go into some type of underground stormwater treatment system so that it recharges the groundwater. If you have a slow recharge to take all the extra water that does not go out during those heavy rain events would reduce the pollution to the river and you'd recharge the groundwater.

Vice-Chairman Romick offered to draft a letter with recommendations.

Vice-Chairman Romick also mentioned that once these stream flow regulations are done the next set of regulations are going to be the water quality regulations for the State. That may be when we should jump on for some support.

10. Commissioners Remarks

The Commissioners discussed the Sacred Heart University Master's program where we were asked to participate. Vice-Chairman Romick said that we responded to them and now it has to go for national accreditation for review. The Commissioners talked about using students from local universities to do studies on the river. Vice-Chairman Romick mentioned using the river cleanup time to evaluate what is coming down the river and where to start their projects. Mr. Kisluk talked to the Commissioners about the debris starting at the Stevenson dam and that there is debris management protocols from FERC to the licensing language for power plants to address floating debris. These involve the Stevenson station, Rocky River, Falls Village – 5 electric stations that were partners to that relationship. You could contact HVA and they could point you in the right direction.

Chairman Gesullo said he had nothing to report from Shelton. His focus has been on getting the annual funding in place from Shelton.

Vice-Chairman Romick reported that as a member of the Long Island Sound Assembly we addressed stormwater and domestic wastewater management. We would like the State to allow DEP to deny alternate septic systems along watercourses. They require a lot of maintenance and people don't want to spend the money to maintain them properly and then they fail. There is no regulatory enforcement officer to inspect them to see that they are operating properly. We now are working to implement stormwater management. We now need to start focusing on getting these stormwater implementation devices installed. DEP is now working on a criteria policy. There are a bunch of new products out there and I'm all for high-technology systems but they have to work.

The LIS Assembly also feels the CT Dept. of Transportation should really be held to the same standards in reference to their projects in relation to their drainage issues.

We are also advocating the "smart growth" for new communities.

Commissioner Rohland had nothing to report for Derby.

11. New Business

Vice-Chairman Romick said she wanted to start working on the items that were listed on our annual report. Where do we want to go and what do we want to do first? Chairman Gesullo said we would have to table it until the next meeting where we hopefully will have a quorum.

Chairman Gesullo said that at the next meeting we will have to vote on the November meeting minutes, address alternates and the voting privileges and recommended changes to the bylaws. Then we will get a consensus of what to work on first for 2010.

Vice-Chairman Romick asked if we should invite the Stratford and Milford Harbormasters to our March meeting? The Commissioners agreed.

12. Discussion on HREC next meeting

The next meeting will be in Milford at the Parsons Government Center on March 23.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:50 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Marianne Chaya
Clerk, HREC