

Housatonic River Estuary Commission (HREC)

Representing the towns of Shelton, Milford, Orange, Stratford, Derby, and Ansonia CT.

To: The Honorable Mark A. Lauretti (Shelton), James L. Richetelli Jr. (Milford), James Zeoli (Orange), John Harkins (Stratford), Anthony Staffieri (Derby), and James Della Volpe (Ansonia)

From: Bob Gesullo, Chairman of the Housatonic River Estuary Commission (HREC)

Date: December 2, 2010

2010 HREC Year-end Summary Report

This report is intended to summarize the 2010 activities of Housatonic River Estuary Commission (HREC), which is authorized under the State of Connecticut General Statute Sec.25-170 (Chapter 483b) to work collectively with each of these towns as the stewards for the river for which each of these towns share borders.

The Commission is composed of one representative from each town who is appointed to this Commission by the City Executives (Mayor or First Selectman) to serve a term of two years. The commission may study any issues relating to the Housatonic River and may make such recommendations as may be necessary to maintain, protect, and restore the resources of the estuary of the Housatonic River. The commission shall consider the adverse impact any action proposed for the Housatonic River estuary that may impact its' resources. *This is a forum in which the these communities regardless of their own local or similar efforts, come together without borders to collectively work together for one common goal, the stewardship of the Housatonic River.*

The following is a summary of accomplishments completed during 2010 supporting the mission statement of this commission since its' establishment in 2007:

- Actively participated for the third year in the Housatonic River Clean-up. The Commission received a "Certificate of Achievement" from Shelton Mayor Mark Lauretti for efforts with the clean up. This participation allows commission members to see "first-hand" the amount and types of debris coming down the river. Subsequent actions include requests to the legislature for statutory changes such as those expanding the "bottle bill." Commission members saw a substantial reduction in the amount of plastic beverage bottles removed during this year's clean up. HREC strongly supports the river clean up and its' volunteers.
- The HREC established a website for easier communication with parties having interests and concerns for the river. Derby Commissioner Rohland is responsible for updating information monthly. (www.TheHREC.org)
- HREC commissioners continued their outreach efforts by attending and participating in related meetings with the CT Maritime Commission, the CT DEP, CT Sea Grant, and the Long Island Sound Assembly. Several commission

members now serve on various other related commissions and provide valuable information and communication between the groups.

- The Commission invited guests' two meetings this year.
 - Harbormaster Ray Swift from Milford and Ross Hatfield from Stratford attended the March meeting to discuss several harbor related matters.
 - Former Senator, "Doc" Gunther attended the May meeting to discuss river dredging and the possible state establishment of a Port Authority.
- The Commission drafted a letter of support for shoreline recreational use of the McCallum property.
- HREC submitted comments to the DEP regarding the changes to the water use regulations in CT. It was recommended that companies drawing water from the State's rivers to be required to use water conservation, water reclamation and other best management practices to reduce the overall use of this precious resource.
- The Commission drafted a letter of support to Sacred Heart University for their developing Masters Program in Environmental Science Analysis and Management. They are submitting a grant application to the National Science Foundation to develop this program and provide funding for the first two cohorts of graduate students. They requested to work with the Housatonic River Estuary Commission to develop research projects that graduate students could work on with the focus of this masters program to be the Housatonic River Watershed.
- The Commission wrote a letter to the US Army Corps of Engineers supporting the use of the vessel "Currituck" for dredging of the river and subsequent beach nourishment in support of the Town of Stratford's efforts.
- Voted in Scott Corner to replace Jeff Snyder, former Commissioner Member-at-large, who moved out of state during 2009.
- Continues to support changes in the current boating regulations to require kayakers to wear PFD's all year long, not just October thorough May, due to the multiple summer-time incidents that occurred during 2009. Commission members worked on an identification program for kayaks as well as advocating boating safety.

The commission has established a small annual stipend funding (operating budget) for recoding fees and ancillary expenses and has requested that each participating town support the Commission with these small expenses. "We would like to express our gratefulness to the towns of Shelton, Milford and Orange for their ongoing support " We also acknowledge the support from the Town of Stratford for its contribution in-kind of it's pump-out boat to all river towns (Milford, Stratford, Orange, Shelton, Seymour, Derby and Ansonia) keeping the river cleaner.

Plans for 2011 include:

- Collaboration with a university such as Sacred Heart, to develop a study to determine the entry points of floatable debris in the river and possible means of removing/stopping its entry. The commission is able to provide access to vessels to travel up the river and survey pollution sources.
- Participate in the annual river clean-up to be scheduled in May.
- Improve communication with our local and legislative leaders.
- Continue to monitor the soil and erosion control measures at the Baldwin Station housing in Milford after many trees were removed from the property leaving the

riverbank vulnerable to erosion resulting in additional sediments that will need to be dredged from the river in the future costing additional tax dollars to area residents.

The commission is dedicated to its mission and truly appreciates the support of the local leaders of the towns it represents. Please feel free to contact your town Commissioner as listed below, for any issues relating to the River.

Respectfully submitted,

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