

## **Management Committee Meeting Minutes**

June 11, 2019 (DRAFT)

17 Battery Pl, Suite 915, New York, NY 10004

### **Participants**

#### **Management Committee:**

Rob Pirani (HEP), Ann Fraioli (NY Educator, by phone), Jason Fagel (NYSDEC, by phone), Dana Mecomber (PANYNJ, by phone), Clay Sherman (NJDEP, by phone), Brett Branco (WQWG Chair/CUNY), Evelyn Powers (IEC, by phone), Peter Wepler (USACE, by phone), Rick Balla (EPA), Mazeeda Khan (EPA), Lisa Bloodgood (CAC-NY), Margaret Flanagan (PAWG, by phone), Pinar Balci (NYCDEP, by phone)

**Others in attendance:** Fran Dunwell (NYSDEC/HREP, by phone), Greg Alber (NJHDG, by phone)

**HRF/HEP Office Staff:** Rosana Da Silva, Isabelle Stinnette, Elizabeth Balladares, Jim Lodge

### **Minutes**

#### **1. Welcome and agenda review**

Rob Pirani reviewed the agenda and announced the passing of Dennis Suszkowski.

#### **2. Review and approval of minutes of March 4, 2019 Meeting**

Rob Pirani reviewed the March minutes and highlighted the Policy Committee has approved the Environmental Monitoring Plan. HEP has been working collaboratively with the Hudson River Estuary Program to assist in the development of the State of the Hudson, enabling our programs to jointly lay the groundwork for developing a joint-report in the future. Rob indicated that there has been a delay in finalizing the Communications Plan due to requests being made for specific language. HEP and HRF continue to work through the plan.

**Action:** March 4, 2019 meeting minutes were approved.

#### **3. Proposed 2019-2020 Workplan**

Rob Pirani reviewed the draft 2019-2020 workplan, for which EPA has allocated an additional \$180,000 to support the Urban Waters Program. The grand total budget of \$740,000 is anticipated to go into effect on October 1, 2019. In an effort to improve the use of our [Action Agenda Tracking Tool](#), HEP modified the Annual Workplan's progress report into a new format similar to the tool and incorporated a breakdown of how the staff plans to dedicate time to projects/activities. Staff will be working on CSOs and sea level rise, culvert stream assessments, public access work groups and providing small grants to a number of NGOs to host events in City Water Day, the continuation of CARP II, a social media aggregator called tagboard to support citizen science, and efforts to

engage a Harbor Educators group. Roughly \$35,000 of unused staff funds is being requested for reprioritization to support projects/activities in the workplan.

HRF has approved eight grants under its 2018 call for proposals that will provide the bulk of the non-federal match. HRF's peer-review process includes an outside review of pre-proposals, request for full proposals of 20 pre-proposals, and an expert review panel to recommend projects to fund. Proposals included focuses on fish abundance and health, microplastics and associated pollutants, storm surge barrier impacts, mussels and salt marsh research, flows within tidal restricted salt marshes, sturgeon abundance through side-scan imagery, and further research on eDNA signals. HRF will invest \$1.32 million to support the eight grants, which also supports HEP's priorities.

**Action:** Motion of approval for the 2019-2022 Workplan was received.

Rob Pirani to notify EPA of the requested reallocation of existing funds.

#### 4. **Update on Harbor-wide Water Quality Report**

Rosana Da Silva provided an overview of the report and a status update. Great Lakes Environmental Center, the consultant on the project, has compiled data and prepared draft tables and analyses for the Harbor-wide Water Quality Report and regional waterbody fact sheets. Rosana shared some of the recommendations made by the Water Quality Work Group, but is seeking for additional comments and input to the current analysis. The draft report will be presented for approval at the September meeting.

**Action:** Rick Balla to provide additional EPA contacts to provide comments.

Committee members to submit comments by end of the week.

#### 5. **EPA Five Year Evaluation**

Rob Pirani provided highlights from the materials prepared for the five-year review, which have been submitted to EPA HQ. The process includes a report submission, field trip, and a letter from EPA indicating the challenges and opportunities for HEP. The EPA review team, including an outside NEP representative, held a preliminary discussion and applauded HEP on its CCMP revision process, outreach, and our science integrity. The team identified challenges and opportunities that included better alignment with funding, collaboration with other estuary programs like the Hudson River Estuary Program, and the long-term financial stability of the program in implementing the Action Agenda.

The field trip with EPA will be held July 23-25th which will allow HEP to highlight work that has been completed or ongoing in partnership with the members of the Management Committee and work groups. The first day of the field trip, HEP in New Jersey highlighting the Urban Waters Federal Partnership efforts, waterfront parks, and EJ issues. The second day we will be visiting the Bronx River and Randalls Island site visits along with visiting Billion Oyster Project on Governors Island. The last day, we will be visiting Hudson River Park Trust and end with a meeting to finalize the challenges and opportunities letter.

## 6. Updates from Work Groups and Committee Chairs

The chairs of the Water Quality, Restoration, Public Access Work Groups and the Citizen Advisory Committee highlighted progress on HEP priorities and upcoming activities.

- Restoration Work Group: Isabelle Stinnette indicated the group has been focused on best practices. An oyster subcommittee meeting was held to discuss efforts across the estuary. Other actions of focus by the work continues on wetland migration pathways outreach, input to NYC's waterfront plan to include shoreline and shallows, and discussions around creating a re-contamination workshop.
- Water Quality Work Group: Brett Branch shared that it is a critical year for the long term control plans being developed in shared waters. The group is focused on continuing discussions to elevate criteria, monitoring, and methodologies used for pathogens and press upon the development of the short-term action plan between the two states.
- Public Access Work Group: Rob Pirani indicated a meeting will be held in the next week to continue discussion the NYC waterfront plan. Civic partners and HEP are seeking funding opportunities to implement and advance the action agenda.
- CAC: Lisa Bloodgood shared the CAC's work on the tagboard to elevate citizen science efforts. The CAC has developed a survey to collect feedback on the needs of groups on protocols and methodologies for existing citizen science program. In addition, the CAC has been engaging stewardship organizations to participate in the CAC by inviting them to present to the group.
- Urban Waters Federal Partnership – Lower Passaic: Elizabeth Balladares has been working with NPS and TPL on the Dundee Island Park in Passaic, NJ through clean ups, kayaking, and fishing programs. This support is in an effort to engage the community on making a connection to the river in to increase engagement on future mitigation efforts. Interviews are being held with the public to analyze outreach and provide recommendations to improve/inform outreach efforts.

## 7. Other Updates

- Rob Pirani updated the committee that HEP hosted an ecosystems workshop about a month ago with USACE, HRF, to look at better utilizing ecosystem services and worked through a couple of methodologies. The report will be finalized next month. In addition, HEP has met with legislative leadership in DC, NY state, and will later meet with NJ and NYC to discuss interests and leadership for activities to support Action Agenda efforts.
- Urban Waters Federal Partnership – Bronx/Harlem: Rob Pirani informed that Katie Freidman from NYC Parks is stepping in to cover for Sara Powell, while she is on maternity leave. The Harlem River Watershed plan received 130 comments, a large effort by Sara to engage organizations. Parks will be working on public access and finalizing the report. Efforts to daylight Tibbets Brook out of the CSO system will be a huge accomplishment for NYCDEP and NYC Parks.

- Rick Balla updated that Nesmarie Negron has moved to Texas shortly after the March meeting and Mazeeda Kahn will be acting till R2 assigns a new person. Rick Winfield is working on detail in the Chesapeake Bay; a senior person from R2 will be moved to support HEP till a permanent replacement is found. Please continue reaching out to Rick Balla and Mazeeda Kahn.