

Public Access Work Group -  
March 31 2021 Minutes  
New York-New Jersey Harbor & Estuary Program  
4:00 – 6:00 PM Via Zoom

**1. Welcome and Agenda Review** **4:00 - 4:10 PM**

*Hugh Carola from Hackensack Riverkeeper has agreed to serve as co-chair. The group may consider formal by laws at our September meeting.*

**2. Approval of Minutes from Jan 2021 Meeting** **4:10 - 4:15 PM**

*Karen Argenti motioned and Maggie Flanagan seconded. Passed unanimously.*

**3. Increasing Funding for Waterfront Park Management** **4:15 - 4:35 PM**

**Priority PA-B-1: Stewardship** Identify and support strategies for increasing public stewardship in higher need areas.

*Emily Walker from NY4P provided an overview of their Play Fair campaign and election platform for ensuring adequate and equitable funding for NYC Parks. She also highlighted the mayoral platform. More information is here [bit.ly/saveourparks2021](http://bit.ly/saveourparks2021). Allan noted in chat that NYC DCP also maintains the Waterfront Access Map: [waterfrontaccess.planning.nyc.gov](http://waterfrontaccess.planning.nyc.gov). They hope to update Spring 2021.*

**4. New York City Greenways Coalition** **4:35 - 4:50 PM**

**Priority PA-A-1: Increase Access** Advance opportunities for increasing public access, particularly in areas of higher need.

*Terri Carta from Brooklyn Greenway Initiative spoke about the NYC Greenways Coalition and efforts to provide pedestrian and bicycling access to the waterfront. The best way to connect with Terri is [terri@brooklyngreenway.org](mailto:terri@brooklyngreenway.org).*

*Rob Buchanan – what about e-bikes? Terri – tough question – their focus is about building the network, not operations; Hugh asked about whether there was pressure to monetize use from users and Chauncey cited need to commit to create greenways in less affluent areas. Terri noted that it is important to recognize EJ issues that are involved. Need to align bike access with waterfront uses. More information here: [www.brooklyngreenway.org/coalition-calls-for-federal-investment-to-connect-nyc-greenway-network/](http://www.brooklyngreenway.org/coalition-calls-for-federal-investment-to-connect-nyc-greenway-network/)*

**5. Providing Direct Access: Current Issues and Next Steps** **4:50 - 5:25 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.

*Owen Foote from Gowanus Dredgers about 300 Huntington avenue - Huntington Street End is privately funded but will need to be approved by the City - the next opportunity to testify will be at City Council. Willis Elkins from NCA updated the group on current discussions about the Vernon boulevard street end on their waterways - <https://actionnetwork.org/petitions/create-public-access-at-vernon-blvd-shoreline> and NY4P vision for Vernon Blvd from 2006: <http://www.newtowncreekalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/>. Maggie Flanagan from Waterfront Alliance provided an update on the NE Staten Island Maritime Activation Plan.*

*Karen mentioned the need to set physical goals to account for what we want. Here is the Low Impact Development Doctrine that BCEQ did in 2006. It may need updating, but the idea is here. <https://bceq.org/2006/06/10/bceq-doctrine-of-low-impact-development/>*

*Rebecca – noted the challenge getting capacity for community groups to do planning? [eg scape did work for NCA pro bono].*

*Jacky – identified the challenges of getting input for the process / opportunities for people getting more involved without technical skill set.*

*Willis and Andrea - firms have the same goals (access, restoration, etc) but are met with severe limitations set in place by their clients (budgets, liability concern, etc).*

*Andrea noted that waterfront access plan for Gowanus have incentives but no mandates. There are challenges when the decisions are not for public property*

*Graeme - Safety concerns are important parameter. There could be metrics for this.*

## **6. Paddling Guide Update**

**5:25 - 5:50 PM**

**Priority PA-C-2: Public Participation** Encourage and support public participation in water-based activities.

*Rob thanked the contributors who helped staff put together a database of more than 170 access sites. Pratt has put together a draft brochure which was shared. Asked for comments by April 9.*

*Sarah and Can walked through current draft to highlight sections/ questions. Discussion on importance of links to a smart map (great); desirability of incorporating information on where recreational kayakers can land during their paddle/or provide details on restrictions in the*

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*paddle area; prioritize including a name or link that's how to find the programs or regular boathouse group; not separating launch sites; have the water temp/air temp graphic to be on the face of the map; need to make distinction amongst sites that are only run by boathouses/operators and not true public launches.*

**Next Meetings:**

Wednesday June 30 12-2 PM

Wednesday September 29 4-6 PM

Wednesday December 15 12-2 PM