



Policy Committee Meeting Minutes

July 26, 2016

Hudson River Foundation

Participants

Policy Committee: Chris Daggett (HRF, Chair), Thomas Creamer (ACE-alt), Jeff Gratz (EPA-alt), Pinar Balci (NYC DEP-alt), Kerry Kirk-Pflugh (NJ DEP-alt, phone), Bernice Malione (PANYNJ), Charles Warren (CAC), Dennis Suszkowski (STAC), Phyllis Reich (NJ Local Government- alt)

Management Committee: Meredith Comi (CAC), Evelyn Powers (IEC), Clay Sherman (NJ DEP), Shino Tanikawa (CAC), Judith Weis (STAC), Rob Pirani (HEP), Aurash Khawarзад (WE ACT), Lisa Baron (ACE), Jeff Myers (NYSDEC)

Others in attendance: Peter Brandt (EPA), Ashley Slagle (NJHDG), Lisa Oberreiter (NJHDG), Rick Winfield (EPA), Robert Elliot (HRF Board), Jon Kramer (HRF Board), Mark Tedesco (EPA)

HRF/HEP Office Staff: Clay Hiles, Helena Andreyko, Kate Boicourt, Jim Lodge, Anna Marandi
Chris Zeppie (consultant - HEP)

- A. Introductions and agenda review:** Chris Daggett chaired the meeting. Introductions were made and the agenda was reviewed.

Action: Committee members are asked to respond to a doodle poll for the November meeting

- B. Approval of January 26 Meeting Minutes:** The committee reviewed the minutes from the January 26 Policy Committee Meeting. Rob reported on progress on two of the action items: the CAC by laws and procedures for public comment were reviewed and staff committed to being more engaged in ensuring that these procedures are followed. HEP, Hudson River Estuary Program, and EPA staff discussed the options for hosting an upriver/downriver conference in 2016 or 2017.

Action: The Committee approved the minutes from the January 26 PC Meeting, subject to correction of a referral to the powerpoint presentations.

- C. Program review:** Rob Pirani reviewed the program activities since the Committee's January meeting (See meeting powerpoint for additional details) and thanked the committee for approving the 2016-2017 Work Plan and \$712,000 Budget. Rob summarized the budgeted items for this coming year including additional EPA support for Production of State of the Estuary Report and Environmental Monitoring Plan and support for one year of the of Harlem/Bronx River Urban Water Ambassador. The contract is now being processed by EPA.

The National Estuary Program was reauthorized through 2021; this may result in a possible bump to \$750,000 in base funding for FFY 2017.

D. Action Plan & CCMP revision

- a. Rob reviewed progress on the CCMP revision, including Action Agenda 2017-2022 Climate Vulnerability Assessment State of the Estuary Report and an Environmental Monitoring Plan. State of the Estuary conference and release of the Action Agenda slated for May 2017 (see meeting powerpoint for details). This process was started with a large outreach effort (20 workshops, hundreds of participants) including large public meetings and technical meetings that will inform the fall development of an Action Agenda highlighted by identification and agreement on 25-40 priority actions. These will be reviewed by the Management Committee in September, the CAC in October, and the Policy Committee in November. Following public review in early 2017, the agenda will ultimately be adopted by the Policy Committee in Spring 2017.
- b. The committee had several comments on the process and the emerging five themes for the action agenda:
 - i. Help utilities and localities address stormwater management needs in support of implementation of the LTCP and MS4 permits. *Chris Daggett highlighted the importance of collaborating with Jersey Water Works. NYC DEP and EPA highlighted the need for interagency coordination, particularly in relation to mandated water quality clean-up measures. Bringing NY and NJ together on what could be accomplished through the coordination of LTCP efforts should be an important goal for HEP.*
 - ii. Advance the understanding and management of near shore areas for habitat restoration and access
 - iii. Identify new sources and secure funding for CRP projects
 - iv. Foster community-based programming and improvements at public parks in high need areas.
 - v. Address information needs and public perception of water quality: *Dennis Suszkowski highlighted the importance of communicating what MS4 and LTCPs are to the broader community, as well as what these efforts will actually result in on the ground.*
 - vi. Other: *Pinar Balci suggested that it was important to identify realistic milestones, given 5-year action agenda and many goals that are long term in nature. These should have annual targets if possible. Rob Pirani noted that the State of Estuary report and Monitoring Plan will be focused on this question, and highlighted that reporting could happen on a bi-annual basis at a conference, and possibly via the website and other media.*

Chuck Warren noted the absence of managing toxic material was missing from the themes. Rob noted that this is because the Sediment Work Group/CARP Advisory Committee had not yet met.

Action: Staff committed to sending the draft Action Agenda to the Policy Committee at least two weeks prior to the November 2017 meeting

- E. Identifying new resources for HEP priorities:** HEP consultant Christopher Zeppie highlighted the elements of the white paper being developed to investigate opportunities for funding progress toward the NY-NJ Harbor & Estuary Program's goals. The white paper will review existing and proposed options based on fees, liability, mitigation, and allocation of general /existing dedicated funds, and will provide a general assessment of challenges and opportunities associated with potential sources (see presentation materials for additional details).
- a. Policy committee members noted that fee-based revenue options, such as water withdrawal, wastewater discharge, and others options, generally mean authorization through legislation at the municipal or state level. *The difficulty of raising water rates was discussed. Chris Daggett highlighted Camden County, NJ MUA as one place where aggressive asset management has led to only modest rate increases over time.*
 - b. There was some discussion as to the feasibility of aviation mitigation funds. *Mark Tedesco (EPA) highlighted the example of NFWF funding Long Island Sound projects, which allows for pooling of various funding streams into a larger pot. He also highlighted examples of municipalities in Tampa Bay and in southern California pooling resources to meet regulatory requirements for addressing TMDLs and monitoring. The funding plan should assess possibilities of how shared resources can help partners gain efficiencies with current funding.*
 - c. Other comments:
 - i. *Chuck Warren indicated that it is important to highlight what these measures would achieve, their nexus to CCMP goals, and how funding would be spent.*
 - ii. *Bernice Malione pointed out that it would be helpful to investigate short term and voluntary measures as a place to start.*
 - iii. *Chris Daggett asked if there were any restrictions on HEP seeking external funding sources, and EPA indicated that there were not with the exception of lobbying or seeking legislation.*
 - iv. *Multiple individuals raised the need to establish an infrastructure bank to receive and distribute funds.*
 - v. *Rob Pirani emphasized the need to highlight that funds sought are for all priorities, not necessarily to fund HEP programs.*

Action: *HEP will incorporate Committee comments as it to continues stakeholder interviews and research. The draft paper will be presented at September Management Committee meeting and the November Policy Committee meeting.*

F. Updates

- a.** Tom Creamer highlighted that the ACOE Harbor Inspection tour is set to occur on September 20.
- b.** On or about August 24th, the ACOE will kick off its NY-NJ Harbor Tributaries study, which will examine alternatives for addressing flood risk in the Harbor Estuary on a regional basis.

G. Adjournment. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:50.