



Citizens Advisory Committee

Of the NY-NJ Harbor & Estuary
Program Committee

March 23, 2021

10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Meeting Recording: https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/ZECZul_fN75SEjCSezOJHGMKFAo-NhPflxMN4z3XYQ4Yk51DVV559Ao9K-iUO7jk.m_ddtHpkOTDUL7Wt

Attendees: Rob Pirani, HEP; Isabelle Stinnette, HEP; Rosana DaSilva, HEP; Elizabeth Balladares, HEP; Sara Powell, HEP; Meredith Comi, NYNJ Baykeeper; Lisa Bloodgood, NCA; Carrie Roble, Hudson River Park Trust; Shino Tanikawa, NYCSWCD; Michelle Luebke, BRxA; Allison Fitzgerald, NJCU; Tanasia Swift, BOP; Anthony Rose, NRPA; Bart Chezar; Beryl Thurman, NSWCSI; Bill Schultz, RRR; Chris Girgenti, RIPA; Clay Sherman, NJDEP; Connor Fagan, COA; Daisy Rivera; Elisa Caref, Center for the Urban River; Graceanne Taylor; Holly; Joseph Reynolds, Save Coastal Wildlife; Karen Argenti, BCEQ; Kari Martin, COA; Lindsey Strehlau; Lingard Knutson, EPA; Louis K; Margaret Flanagan, WA; Michele Langa, NY/NJ Baykeeper; Noelle Thurlow, Resilience Adventures; Rachel Wu; Siddhartha, HRPK; Suzanne Digeronimo; Tatiana Castro, BOP; Willis Elkins, NCA; Tracy Parham, FCI

10:00 AM – 10:10 AM – Welcome, Introductions & Approval of Minutes

- CAC NY Co-Chair, Lisa Bloodgood welcomed everyone in attendance. She particularly, highlighted the attendance of interns and students in the meeting which were invited by other CAC members. She also mentioned how going forward, all CAC members are encouraged to invite inters, students and/or young professionals to future CAC meetings as a way for the CAC to encourage mentorship within our organizations.

10:10 AM – 10:25 AM – *Stewardship Highlight: Working Towards our DEIJ Goals* –

- CAC NY Co-Chair, Carrie Roble introduced this agenda item by reminding everyone that the CAC and Harbor Educators Workgroup have jointly launched a sub-committee with the goal of working on our shared DEIJ goals.
- Tanasia Swift, Billion Oyster Project (BOP) Community Reefs Regional Manager, presented on a safe space agreement developed by BOP. The goal of the agreement is

to encourage those conducting a community program, to provide a safe space for their BIPOC community members.

- The safe space agreement acknowledges that historically, access to public spaces did not include Black, Indigenous, and people of color, which is why it is necessary to ensure that this coalition of partners agree to make our shared spaces a place where everyone can feel safe and welcomed.
- Safe space agreement goals include:
 - To provide safe outdoor spaces for BIPOC communities
 - To develop a coalition of partners
 - To hold diversity trainings and workshops
 - To produce internship(s) for BIPOC students
 - To host an annual conference
 - To promote safe space signage
- Safe space agreement timeline: to have a finalized version of the agreement that interested partners can sign on to by May 2021.
- Interested partners that would like to learn more about the safe space agreement and how to sign up should reach out to Tanasia at tswift@nyharbor.org.
- **Next Steps:** the CAC will continue to support and highlight the work of the DEIJ subcommittee and will promote with its members the final version of the space agreement when ready.

10:25 AM – 11:15 AM – NY/NJ Harbor Deepening: What Are the Impacts on Local Communities?

- During our December 2020 meeting, the CAC welcomed Karen Baumert and Peter Wepler, with the U.S Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to speak on the proposed NY/NJ Harbor Deepening Project. The presentations were followed by some Q&A time, presentation materials including a recording of this discussion can be found by clicking [here](#).
- Since the CAC provided the USACE the time and space to present on the proposed project, it also wanted to provide the same opportunity to hear from local NGO and Community based groups to talk openly about their concerns of the proposed project.
- Beryl Thurman, Founder/Executive Director of North Shore Waterfront Conservancy of Staten Island joined the CAC as the main speaker and spoke at length about the potential impacts on the EJ Communities of the North Shore.
- She was joined by Kari Martin and Connor Fagan from Clean Ocean Action and Anthony Rose from the Natural Resources Protective Association.
- Concerns around the project include:
 - Requests for the USACE to do a complete Environmental Impact Statement. Mention that Finding of No Significant Impact Statement disregards impact that has already occurred from the last round of deepening.
 - Background of Staten Island's North Shore area and the types of contaminants these EJ communities are exposed to
 - The history and impact of the Archer Daniels Manhattan Project site
 - Financial burdens left on property owners last time around and that can be expected to once again happen with these new harbor deepening activities.

- High pitch dredging noises
- Job opportunities that are likely to not become available to community members of the North Shore area
- If the project proceeds, the need for mitigation that benefits and includes the North Shore
- Impact of climate change and the pandemic on the project has not been considered
- Dredged material management considerations lack details
- Impacts to wetland and upland habitat
- The need for a resiliency plan for the North Shore
- Environmental Assessment Data is Outdated (25-year-old environmental assessments and impact analyses from previous harbor deepening projects in 1996)
- Since congressional approval will be necessary to issue project permits and to provide funding, the CAC can offer support by reaching out to congressional representatives elevating the concerns of groups like NSWCSI, COA and NRPA. In addition, the CAC should also demand answers to questions like those that were posed via our comment [letter](#).
- Comment letters submitted by the North Shore Waterfront Conservancy of Staten Island (NSWCSI) and Clean Ocean Action (COA) on this proposed project can be found [here](#).
- **Next Steps:** The CAC will identify areas of support when it comes to letter writing and contacting congressional and local officials. Will also continue to provide our partners with updates and awareness about the project and work to highlight community voices.

11:15 AM – 11:30 AM – Program Update: Draft FY 21-22 Workplan and Sources of Funding

- HEP Program Director, Rob Pirani used this time to outline the priorities in HEP's upcoming draft annual workplan and shared possible new resources for Action Agenda Implementation.
- Some of the priorities that HEP staff have prioritized in addition to the work that's been prioritized through HEP's technical workgroups and committees include:
 - Support for the states and EPA in the development of consistent water quality standards
 - Restoration planning and working alongside buyout plans
 - Supporting public access stewardship programs in higher need areas
 - Assessing contamination levels of navigational channels
 - Continuing to support urban waters ambassadors in the Lower Passaic and Bronx/Harlem, work of Harbor Educators and efforts that strengthen Citizen Science in the Estuary.
- A list of existing/potential new resources of funding for Action Agenda Implementation can be found [here](#). Members of the CAC are encouraged to offer their vocal and written support for these opportunities that would help advance our shared goals.
- **Next Steps:** The CAC will work with HEP on providing written support for these funding opportunities.

11:30 AM – 11:50 AM – NJ Co-chair Candidates & 2021 Priorities

- HEP outreach coordinator, Liz Balladares, shared a [CAC priorities survey](#) with members. CAC members were and still are encouraged to fill out the [survey](#) to prioritize Action Agenda goals they'd like to see the CAC focus on in the upcoming year or two.
- Candidates that applied for the position of NJ Co-Chair briefly introduced themselves to the group, kicking off the voting process for the position.
- CAC members got the chance to learn more about the candidates through these [candidate profiles](#) and by hearing more from the candidates themselves.
- **Next Steps:** share with all members the result of the voting exercise and announce the new CAC NJ Co-chair.

11:50 AM – 12:00 PM – Participant Updates & Announcements

- Partners shared upcoming events and initiatives with the rest of the group which were also shared in a follow up email after the meeting.