

August 9, 2023 Meeting Minutes

3:00 PM – 5:00 PM

Meeting Recording:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1iGN99wy5SqWAXiz3DpxVSRXCyre2lvM/view?usp=share_link

Attendees: Peter Brandt, EPA; Philip Toussaint, Ecopreneur; Rebecca K; Rob Pirani, HEP; Elizabeth Balladares, HEP; Rosana Pedra Nobre, HEP; Samantha Wilder, IEC; Allison Fitzgerald, NJCU; Christopher Girgenti, RIPA; Sara Hodges, Pratt; Pamela Pettyjohn, Coney Island Beautification Project (CIBP); Tanasia Swift, BOP; Terrance L. Bankston, FOE; Georganna Deas, CIB; Helena Andreyko, HRF; Karen Argenti, BCEQ; Louis Kleinman; Melissa Miles, NJEJA; Michele Langa, HRK/NYNJ Baykeeper; Michelle Luebke; Anna Weiss; Bart Chezar; Bill Schultz, Raritan Riverkeeper; Caitlin; Catherine McVay Hughes; Christina Carrero, HEP; Dan S., Hudson Riverkeeper; Future City Inc; Sara Eichner; Shino, NYCSWC; Wynnie-fred Victor Hinds, WPA

DRAFT AGENDA

3:00 PM – 3:10 PM – Welcome, Introductions & Approval of Minutes - Chris

- Members were encouraged to introduce themselves on chat
- Co-chairs gave a quick shout out to EJ officers joining leadership and Liz officially welcomed Chris Girgenti, Randall's Island Parks Alliance as new CAC co-chair.
- Minutes from April's meeting were approved

3:10 PM – 3:30 PM – Stewardship Highlight: Recapping City of Water Day 2023

- Liz will provided a brief recap of this year's City of Water Day events including major highlights around grants, number of participating organizations and types of activities that took place.
- After recap, partners were asked to join in sharing any reflections from this year's CWD and any things to keep in mind for next year's festivities
- CIB was happy to have speakers of native american origin speak on the history of the native people to Coney Island
- WPA was glad to participate in City of Water Day for the first time and is looking forward to making it an annual celebration for Weequahic Park in Newark NJ

3:30 PM – 4:00 PM – Hudson Access Project Beta Map - Chris

- Sara Eichner from Pratt Institute began to speak about the latest efforts around the Hudson Access Map Project, which is collecting information about all the places where the public can get into and onto the water in the Hudson & Harbor Estuary and its tributaries.

- project has had some challenges - collecting data has been difficult. Survey has been distributed which was sent to park managers and others but it's been hard to get people to follow through with it.
- More effective way to build dataset has been desktop research via google searches and comparing of existing data and on the ground data validation
- Trying to focus areas that are red - meaning underserved
- Red areas only have names and not alot of in instead of showing current wq data they've added info on how heavy rain can impact water access sites under rainfall
- Water safety right now just has info on water temperatures. But will include info tide gauges
- Map now working: you can look through map or list for all the places/sites included
- First preferred method of data collection was for people to operate the site to fill it out but haven't been successful in that

4:00 PM – 4:30 PM: Overview of Weequahic Park Association - Liz or Allison

- Weequahic Park Association's Executive Director and new addition to the CAC leadership, Wynnie-Fred Victor Hinds, will highlight WPA's dedication to the restoration and preservation of Weequahic Park located in the city of Newark.
- WPA located in sout ward of Newark - one of the oldest and most successful grassroots poc led park support and advocacy organziations
- Has been around for 30 years - have a partnership agreement with Essex county
- Model themselves after central park even though they have nithing close to their resources
- Recently WPA has come to receive a few grants between private foundations and city grants. Other grants include TNC - proposing sensory garden mostly geared towards children and disabled to encourage to spend time outdoors
- Goals of park is to be welcoming of everyone and not just residents -
- Homestead network and you would think it could encourage park restoration
- Some metrics wynnies hopes on using - tally on metrics from parks affairs and community meetings.
- Another grant being proposed by WPA prioritizes nature based solutions as a flood management practices.
- some challenges: fish being caught from the lake and eating it
- Links around njdep lake management support were shared

4:30 PM – 4:45 PM – Ecopreneur

- Ecopreneur's mission is to provide youth with more volunteer opportunities and to create a lasting sustainable, circular economy through brand and nonprofit collaborations. Platform co-founder, Phil Toussaint provided an overview of how the platform rewards volunteers for doing good.
- Volunteer platform works by connecting student volunteers with incentiized activism
- A goal of the platform is to drive volunteers to projects and encourage advocates to help accelerate the completion of projects
- Organizations that sign up their projects are have access to a database of brands willing to donate supplies to service projects in exchange for brand awareness and marketing.
- Brands that partner with the platform benefit from increased exposure & sales with organic recognition and relevant project affiliation

4:45 PM – 5:00 PM – Participant Updates & Announcements

- Participants shared upcoming events and initiatives taking place across the estuary and upcoming EPA comment periods.