

## York River Study Committee

### York River Study Committee Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, January 24, 2017

Grant House, 200 US Route 1, York, Maine

1. Voting members present: chairman Chuck Ott, Karen Arsenault, Stefan Claesson, Cindy Donnell, Thom Kearns, Mike Masi, Jack Murphy, Judy Spiller  
Voting Members Absent: Jean Demetracopoulos, Joan LeBlanc, Beth Walter

Non-voting committee members present: Jennifer Hunter, Paul Dest, Jim MacCartney

Visitors: Mike Sinclair, York Harbor Board

2. Executive Session: 5:32 p.m. to 5:37 p.m.

Out of Executive Session and prior to commencing with scheduled agenda, Chuck Ott began the meeting wishing to briefly address guest, Mike Sinclair, on the issue of paddlecraft use and overuse. Stating that as a group, we wish to communicate and work collaboratively with the Harbor Board as we study the issue. It was agreed that we need to better understand the issues: parking, launching, boat safety, carrying capacity of the river. More solid information needs to be generated.

Glen Rice will speak about a possible boat use survey at our February meeting.

3. Review of Minutes:  
On a motion made by Thom K to accept the minutes of the December 20, 2016 meeting and seconded by Cindy D passed unanimously.
4. Quarterly Budget Update and Federal Funding Update: Paul Dest presented a handout showing all the money we have on hand as of this date, starting from the Wells NERR fiscal year last July. He felt next year's funding would hold for the Department of the Interior (NPS) and that the Park Service was putting through draft agreements in advance of appropriations.

News on upcoming grant opportunities:

Historical Survey Funding - \$10-12K total if successful in all three

- Maine Community Foundation York County Fund and York Community Initiatives Fund - both have February deadlines
- New Hampshire Charitable Foundation – donor advised fund

Fish Study Funding - \$10K to raise by Wells Reserve

- Either outside funding or Wells Reserve will fund

5. Historic Resources Survey: Stefan Claesson reported that we had received three proposals from highly qualified firms. Stefan recommended hiring NEARC (Northeast Archaeology Research Center, Farmington, ME) to conduct the work. They will be working with Scott Stevens and Steven Mallory of Groundroot Preservation Group in York. Kick off will be sometime in February and run through August.

Motion made by Karen to contract with NEARC, seconded by Jack M and unanimously passed.

6. Grant Opportunity: Multispectral image data collection and processing for York River Habitats: Stefan presented the group with the concept for this grant that would provide equipment (drone and software) and training to help enhance the fish study and fish study sites at a very high resolution: looking at the health, substrate, water depth data, soil moisture etc. Stefan would process the data and would need funding for his time and work (around \$6K). The proposal would be written and submitted by the Wells Reserve. They would be the recipient of the equipment, if awarded.

There was consensus to move forward with submitting the proposal.

7. Section 7 Review for Study and Designated Rivers: Jim was asked to explain this section due to concern about the impact to the anticipated dredging project in York Harbor funded by the federal government during the study period and for future such projects should the river be designated. He explained that there would be a series of environmental reviews, including NEPA but not necessarily the NPS. Local citizens would have an opportunity to weigh in on federally assisted water resource projects as well.

The Study Committee has the purview to determine, based on our findings, where on the river we would recommend designation and what are the values we want to protect. Designation would not prevent dredging. Direction would need to be articulated in the management plan (ex: Working waterfront is an important value we want to protect and dredging as a pre-existing navigational project is allowable into the future (perpetuity).)

There was consensus that a sub-group would write a statement endorsing the dredging project. Jenn will draft. Paul, Jim, Cindy and Stefan will review it and it to be brought to the Outreach Committee Meeting in February.

8. Outreach Video Recommendations: Judy and Thom updated the group on their suggested revisions to the Tom Jackson short video. They made two different recommendations, each with fairly minor changes - one including text and narration, the other just text.  
Action: Jenn would reach out to Tom to ask for a proposal and timeline for completion.
9. Updates and continued discussion/planning: Jenn/committee
  - Jenn presented an updated ORV meeting schedule wanting to get additional feedback from advisors/others on threats, other data, strategies and actions for the management plan.
    - Also looking for more volunteers to help each month
    - Other issues mentioned but not included: springs, groundwater, well withdrawals
  - Ordinance subcommittee: Judy – Kittery; Karen – York; Jack – Eliot
  - Jenn added FAQ page and a studies and projects page to the website

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Arsenault  
Acting Clerk