

York River Study Committee

York River Study Committee Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, February 28, 2017

Grant House, 200 US Route 1, York, Maine

1. Welcome and Introductions

- Voting members present: Chairman Chuck Ott, Stefan Claesson, Jean Demetracopoulos, Thom Kearns, Joan LeBlanc, Michael Masi, John J. Murphy, Beth Walter
- Voting members absent: Karen Arsenault, Cindy Donnell, Judy Spiller
- Non-voting committee members present: Jennifer Hunter, Jim MacCartney
- Additional attendees: Emma Lord, National Park Service; Glen Rice, York Resident

2. Review of Minutes

Study Committee members reviewed and approved minutes from the January 24th meeting.

3. Federal Funding and Grants Applications Update

Jim MacCartney reported that \$60,000 in federal funding from the National Park Service has been supported and will receive final approval within a month. These funds can be spent throughout the grant period.

The following grant applications have been submitted to support the historic resources study:

- \$5,000 from NH Charitable Foundation
- \$5,000 from Maine Community Foundation
- \$2,000 from York Community Initiatives Fund

The scope for the York River fisheries study was submitted to the Lobstermen's Association for consideration.

The committee is exploring opportunities for grant funding from the Maine Coastal Program. A town sponsor and a 25% cost share would be required.

Key Decisions / Next Steps

- ORV Committee will continue exploring project ideas for potential funding from the ME Coastal Program. Project ideas include working waterfront, coastal resiliency, or other efforts to be determined once grant guidelines are available.
- Jenn will ask Claire Enterline to inform the committee about grant guidelines and deadlines for the Maine Coastal Program.

4. New Subcommittee on Town Regulations and Ordinances

Members of this new committee include Karen Arsenault, Judy Spiller, Jack Murphy, Jeannie Demetracopoulos, and Jenn Hunter (others are welcome). Jenn circulated a draft list of tasks for the committee to undertake in an effort to document local regulations and ordinances impacting the York River watershed.

Key Decisions / Next Steps

- Committee members concurred with the proposed list of tasks for the new committee.
- Beth Walter will forward research she conducted during water quality study that may prove useful as a template for each community.
- Jenn will distribute information from the Piscataqua Region Estuaries Partnership (PREP) study of communities in their watershed.
- Committee will look back at timeline for local approvals previously prepared by Joan.

5. Potential Boat Survey

York resident Glen Rice presented information about potential tools that could be used to help survey boat use in the York River by counting the number of boats going under bridges. The tool combines an ecosounder with Raspberry Pi (mini-computer board). The project would cost \$75 per unit and one unit per bridge span would be needed. Mike Masi noted that this potential research project would be a good educational opportunity for students though the timing may be a challenge with research needs during the summer when school is out of session. Mike also noted that students could be asked to ground-truth results from the ecosounder.

Key Decisions / Next Steps

- Committee supported the project concept. If resources become available, a project scope with questions to be answered would need to be developed.
- Mike Masi will explore opportunities to partner with York High School marine science and robotics programs.

6. Review of Wild & Scenic River Classifications

Jim MacCartney provided an overview and handout to review the following three potential Wild & Scenic Rivers Act Classifications which should reflect existing conditions: 1) wild river areas, 2) scenic river areas, and 3) recreational river areas. Jim noted that 90% of partnership rivers are classified as 'recreational' and most rivers with some development fall into the 'recreational' river areas classification.

Key Decisions / Next Steps

- The YRSC first needs to determine whether or not to move forward with a Wild and Scenic Rivers designation.
- The second step would be to choose one or more classifications for the designation.

7. Updates and Continued Discussion/Planning

Dredging Statement

Study committee members reviewed a draft dredging statement.

Key Decisions / Next Steps

- Study committee members unanimously approved a draft policy statement regarding the "York River Wild and Scenic River Study and York Harbor Dredging". The statement includes language stating the YRSC's intention that potential designation of the York River into the Wild and Scenic River system would in no way preclude or interfere with maintenance dredging for the existing York Harbor federal navigation project.
- The policy statement will be posted to the website and included in the committee study.

Historic Resources Survey Project Update

Northeast Archaeology Research Center in Farmington, Maine has been hired to conduct the historic resources survey. They will also work with Groundroot Preservation Group in York. The project should be completed by August. A meeting to coordinate with the Eliot Historical Society will be scheduled for late March.

ORV Subcommittee Update

ORV Committee hosted a well-attended meeting regarding Saltmarsh Migration / Sea Level Rise on January 31st. Representatives from state agencies highlighted resources and mapping tools that can be used to understand and summarize salt marsh migration and sea level rise in the York River watershed. The next ORV meeting on March 7 will focus on Water Quality – the committee will also meet briefly to discuss potential build-out study. Later in March an ORV meeting will be scheduled to explore infrastructure and a free flow assessment of the river. An updated draft schedule for additional 2017 monthly ORV meeting topics was distributed.

Outreach Subcommittee Update

Outreach Committee met on February 2nd to discuss next steps for the video developed by Tom Jackson, website updates, and outreach associated with the historic resources survey, the fish study and potential summer events. The committee made recommendations and is exploring options to update the video. Meeting notes were distributed. The next Outreach Subcommittee meeting will take place on March 9th.

8. Future Agenda Items

n/a

Meeting minutes prepared by YRSC Member Joan LeBlanc