

**York River Study Committee**  
**York River Study Committee Meeting Minutes**  
Tuesday, May 23, 2017  
Grant House, 200 US Route 1, York, Maine

1. Voting members present: chairman Chuck Ott, Karen Arsenault, Cindy Donnell, Joan LeBlanc, Mike Masi, Jack Murphy, Judy Spiller

Voting Members Absent: Jean Demetracopoulos, Thom Kearns, Stefan Claesson, Beth Walter

Non-voting committee members present: Jennifer Hunter, Jim MacCartney, Emma Lord

Visitors: Dave Gittins, Drew Donovan

2. Review of Minutes: On a motion made by Jack to accept the minutes of the April meeting and seconded by Judy and passed unanimously.

3. Continued discussion on designation endorsement: dredging and other factors – Chuck summarized:
  - Concerned about word of mouth communications, risk of losing support for management plan.
  - For the Study Committee to consider: Is there potential to cause delays, increase costs, block dredging?
  - Study Committee position: We previously developed and issued a statement. It is not our intention to interfere in any way with dredging of the harbor and as such we need consider the following steps:
    - (1) Find a way to allay concerns to everyone's satisfaction
    - (2) Restrict our recommendation for any designation to terminate at the Rte. 103 bridge
    - (3) Not to seek designation at all

Jenn added that she spoke with Maine DOT committee member and indicated, regardless of designation, they will not be involved at all in the permitting of the dredging project as it is a federal project through Army Corps.

Jim M from NPS: Federally assisted water resource projects require a Section 7 review as well as a NEPA review. Reviews are synchronized with other agencies doing permitting or reviews so there are not any delays or additional costs. The York Harbor FNP authorized in 1886 defines York Harbor dredging as a pre-existing issue and thus supersedes the NPS York River Study, now and into the future. Jim passed out a letter defining the NPS position addressed to the New England District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Discussion ensued regarding wording and our position on defining area for designation at the time:

- Suggestion to add the York River Study dredging policy statement to the NPS letter to Army Corps.
- Joan asked if a decision on boundary was necessary at this time.
- Dave Gittins voiced concerned about dredging impacts this year and in future years and the need to put townspeople at ease.
- Drew Donovan was concerned about delays as permit timelines were running out, the politics of it all and the fact that boats are running into problems at low tide.
- Jack asked about whether we could treat the river as "parts?"
- Mike suggested we needed to communicate our position – that we can't get in the way of the dredging and we're taking a whole watershed approach.
- Joan's question was how would the Park Service look at providing dollars to study an area not designated?
- Jenn asked if federally designated river status would help secure dredging funds in the future for this river to support its "working waterfront?"

- Chuck was concerned about reaching a timely decision tonight but discussed the issue of our committee coming to consensus with the many absences of members. He felt there was a need for absent members to weigh in on the discussion.

Chair entertained a motion for our recommendation for W & S designation as outlined in the NPS letter to the Army Corps., and that if the committee moves forward with a recommendation to designate the York River as a Partnership Wild and Scenic River, the downstream boundary of the designated river segment would be the Route 103 bridge. Motion made by Joan and seconded by Jack and supported unanimously. For next meeting, those who have not previously weighed in on the conversation are welcome to make a persuasive argument on their point. If there are significant objections to the decision, a motion to reconsider is possible.

In the meantime, Joan volunteered to draft a press release using the following language: “accordingly, if the York River is recommended for designation into the National Wild & Scenic River System, the downstream boundary would be the existing Route 103 bridge located at the upstream extent of the York Harbor FNP.”

#### 4. ORV Subcommittee/ORV topic updates: Jenn/subcommittee members

- Draft objectives for management plan – working waterfront – Notes were passed out, along with draft management objectives developed in consultation with Chuck, Cindy and Claire. Jenn asked for comments and preliminary support for draft objectives.
- Jenn met with MDEP – doing sampling this summer, looking for volunteers after storm events, collecting water samples at 6 different sites. Looking at nutrients. Joan, Chuck, Beth, Judy, Mike, Jenn on call for storm events.
- Upcoming topics:
  - June already set – Conservation Lands
  - July “Natural Resources” moved to October; no July topic meeting
  - August – Historic Resources
- Other topics added:
  - September – planning for buildout study
  - November? Climate change, preliminary results of buildout study, if timing allows
  - December? Second water quality topic meeting, report out on MDEP’s summer work

#### 5. Outreach subcommittee updates

Watershed walks – Karen reported on the two walks, each starting at 4:30 p.m.:

- July 13 – working waterfront with Jeff Donnell, historic river resources with Joel Lefever and Mary Harding
- July 20 – York Land Trust’s Smelt Brook Preserve with Joe Anderson, YLT Stewardship Director and Paul Dest or someone else from Wells Reserve talking about fish study.

Website/video – Jenn

- Quick discussion about where to post video – town websites, local access tv, other suggestions?
- Website now has events calendar. Flyers distributed to be posted re: archeological survey looking for volunteers aged 16 and above.

#### 6. Future Agenda Items – Chuck

- Review of recommendation passed tonight with absent committee members
- Timeline for town approvals of management plan

Adjourned at 7:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Arsenault, Acting Clerk