



Niantic River Watershed Committee

Minutes

Niantic River Watershed Committee Meeting

March 8, 2011

4 - 6 pm

**LTA Room, Waterford Town Hall
15 Rope Ferry Rd, Waterford, CT**

Attendees: Don Danila, East Lyme; Maureen Fitzgerald, Town of Waterford; Fred Grimsey, STR-STH; Marvin Schutt, East Lyme; Eric Thomas, CT DEP; Chris Tomichek, Waterford; Dave Turner, Turner Environmental; Tom Wagner, Town of Waterford; Judy Rondeau, Watershed Coordinator

1. Welcome: Judy Rondeau opened the meeting at 4:08 pm and welcomed participants.
2. Review of February 8, 2011 Meeting Minutes:
Tom Wagner made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Dave Turner. All were in favor, minutes were approved.
3. Watershed Coordinator's Report:
Judy distributed a report of her activities for the past month.
4. Discussion:
 - a. Establishment of Board of Directors – Judy updated the Committee members on the status of board creation. At this point, the Selectmen need to move forward to adopt the appropriate procedure within their towns to appoint the directors. Judy had written and distributed a Watershed Compact at the Selectmen's request, which has been signed by the Waterford First Selectmen. Judy suggested scheduling a meeting with all four CEOs in April, to get the compact signed, and discuss the process required to get the directors appointed. Marvin Schutt offered to speak with East Lyme First Selectman Paul Formica. Eric Thomas expressed disappointment that the process hasn't moved forward in a more timely manner. Suggestions to expedite the process were solicited. After discussion it was decided that a representative from each town would approach his respective CEO to sign the compact. The compact will be copied and passed to the next town so that the final copy has the signature of all the CEOs. Once the compact is signed, we will submit a press release and gather the CEOs for a photo opportunity. Finally, we will discuss with each CEO the process necessary to appoint members to the Niantic Board. If it is possible to appoint directors without each town having to adopt an ordinance, it would streamline the process considerably.

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- b. Plan of Work – Committee members reviewed the draft Plan of Work. The Plan is based on the Niantic River Watershed Protection Plan (NRWPP) goals and objectives, as summarized in the Guided Summary (pages 25 to 32). Once Committee members are satisfied with the proposed activities, the next step will be to prioritize the list. Chris Tomichek raised the point that the NRWPP is getting old, and we may identify a goal that is not in the plan, but is worthy of including, *i.e.* a new technique or technology. Eric Thomas commented that the plan will need to be updated in time. Fred Grimsey commented that recommendations may come out of the Niantic River Nitrogen Working Group, which was formed as a result of a requirement of Dominion’s NPDES permit.
5. Monitoring Data:
- a. RFP Funding Opportunities – Judy is looking for funding opportunities for the RFP. Among the considerations are the Long Island Sound Future Funds small grant program and Dominion Foundation’s grant program.
 - b. Monitoring Program Development – Judy discussed the potential of developing a volunteer monitoring program to fulfill the NRWPP recommendation of a long-term watershed-wide water quality monitoring program. She stated she had been contacted by Unilever United States Foundation, which was looking for community groups to support. Judy would like to connect with the groups already conducting macro-invertebrate rapid bio-assessments (RBV) in the area, including high school groups. Students from East Lyme and Waterford high schools have recently been monitoring Latimer Brook. She would like to recruit volunteers to conduct stream walks. She would also like to connect with students to assist Fred Grimsey with the STR-STH water quality monitoring in the Niantic River. Fred currently monitors nitrates, phosphates, temperature, salinity, and dissolved oxygen at eight stations in the river. It was suggested that college interns could assist Fred with monitoring. Judy suggested that the Unilever grant could potentially be used to purchase additional monitoring equipment to supplement the monitoring Fred is currently doing. Fred stated he would like assistance with reviewing his monitoring program. Don Danila offered to compile Fred’s monitoring data. Judy suggested convening the Monitoring Subcommittee for further discussion.
6. Outreach:
- a. Teacher Loan Kits – Status – Judy applied for a loan from the Environmental Professionals Organization of Connecticut (EPOC). We should hear in April if we have been approved. In the meantime, she will keep her eyes open for other opportunities to fund this project.
 - b. Social Marketing Strategy Update – Judy, Maureen Fitzgerald and Tom Wagner met with three nursery and landscape business owners to discuss the social marketing strategy. Although turnout was small, the business owners were enthusiastic about the project. Judy also created a “Landscaping for Water Quality” page on the Niantic River Watershed website to support and promote this project.

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- c. Boat Pumpout Program Outreach Update – The Committee discussed distribution of the stickers and magnets. Judy got contact information to thank the Harbor Managements and Shellfish Commission for supporting the project.
 - d. New Opportunities? Judy suggested the possibility of putting together an event for National Estuaries Day (September 24th). Fred Grimsey suggested doing a motorboat regatta to complement the kayak regatta held earlier in the summer.
7. Other Business
- a. 2011 LISFF possible projects – Coordinator Position Funding – Judy is preparing a LISFF small grant application to provide funding for the Coordinator position after the current \$319 grant is complete.
 - b. Fred Grimsey stated he is resubmitting his 2010 LISFF application to fund the STR-STH Niantic River pumpout boat program.
8. Partner Reports – Judy distributed the final report for the USGS water quality monitoring of Latimer Brook, Oil Mill Brook and Stony Brook, summarizing information gathered from the first and second years of data collecting, which was sent to her by John Mullaney of the USGS. John will present a summary of the data collection at the April 12, 2011 meeting.
9. Next Meeting: **April 12th, 2011, 4:00 PM, LTA Room, Waterford Town Hall.**

Meeting adjourned at 5:47 PM.

The Niantic River Watershed Coordinator is funded in part by the CT DEP through a US EPA Clean Water Act §319 NPS program grant.

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