



Baker Cove Watershed Committee (Bacwac)
Meeting Notes
October 7, 2020
10:00 – 11:30 am
ZOOM online meeting

Attendees:

Keith Hedrick, Mayor, City of Groton
Michelle Maitland, Project Mgmt. Specialist, Public Works, Town of Groton
Sidney Van Zandt, Vice President, GOSA
Dan Mullins, Executive Director, ECCD
Kate Blacker, Watershed patrol, Groton Utilities
Eric Thomas, CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP)
Heidi Comeau, Public Works, City of Groton

Additional Invitees:

Judy Rondeau, Assistant Director, Eastern CT Conservation District (ECCD)
Syma Ebbin, Professor/Research Coordinator, UConn/CT Sea Grant
Aundré Bumgardner, Councilor, Groton Town Council
Kurt Sendlein, Airport Manager, CAA Groton-New London Airport
Dick Conant, Groton shellfish warden
Rick Stevens, Manager, Water & Sewer, Groton Utilities
Mike Sinko, Sr. Mgr of Environmental Resources, Electric Boat
Joan Smith, President, Groton Open Space Association (GOSA)
Ron Bata, Watershed patrol, Groton Utilities
Brae Rafferty, Chair-Town of Groton Conservation Commission & Sr. Instructor-Project O
Tom Olson, Town of Groton Conservation Commission Member
Rich Palmieri, City of Groton Conservation Commission
Tim Umrysz, Public Works Director, City of Groton
Cierra Patrick, Economic Dvlpmt Specialist, City of Groton
Jonathan Reiner, Planning Director, Town of Groton
Deb Jones, Assistant Director of Planning, Town of Groton
Stacey Leitch, Public Works Admin Supervisor, Town of Groton
Eric Morrison, Shennecossett Golf Course manager, Town of Groton
Ben Roccapiore, Facilities operations & Building Services, UConn Avery Point
Tessa Getchis, Extension Educator, UConn/CT Sea Grant
Judy Preston, LIS Outreach Coordinator, UConn/CT Sea Grant
Judy Benson, Communications Coordinator, UConn/CT Sea Grant
Joellen Anderson, Member, Avalonia Land Conservancy
Stephen Mansfield, Director of Health, Ledge Light Health Department
Danielle Holmes, Sanitarian II, Ledge Light Health Department
Ed Machinski, Elks Club
Seven Groton shellfish commission members
Alissa Dragan, Environmental Analyst II, CT Dept. Agric/Bureau of Aquaculture
Kristin DeRosia-Banick, Environmental Analyst III, CT Dept. Agric/Bureau of Aquaculture

Eugenia Villagra/Liz Raisbeck, Groton Conservation Advocates
George Vassallo, Manager, EHS Compliance / Regulated Waste Lead, Pfizer
Patrice Granatosky, Mayor, Town of Groton
Town & City Conservation / IWWA Commissions

Project Coordinator: Maura Robie, ECCD Conservation Technician & Watershed Coordinator

Emailed: Groton WS map interior & Exterior 10-2-20, BC Water Quality Sampling plan – 4 pgs.

MEETING NOTES

Greeting

1) Review of the current BC WBP

Eric T - Mentioned the BC WBP is from 2011 and is usually developed for an 8-10 year implementation period. He asked us to evaluate it either as a committee or create a sub-committee. The review would probably not be on whole document, but segments such as milestones met, with a possible goal of having a report card or progress steps as an addendum for sometime next year. This tracking could help the Committee with community outreach and for prioritizing future work plan strategies. This could be put on agenda only when there are updates.

Sydney mentioned the former local shellfish task force with documentation in nearby Mumford Cove and shellfish beds; she recommends contacting Norm Bloom and Sons out of New Haven for a report, and oyster hatchery run by Jim Marco for insight on water quality benefits from oyster operation.

In addition, Eric suggested we look at Save the Sound LIS 2020 report card, with Unified Water Study trained volunteer monitoring efforts, the Eastern Section of Sound open waters gets an A+. There are some water quality issues noted in some coves and embayments, including Wequetequock Cove in Stonington. Baker Cove is not currently included in the bays portion of the Sound-wide monitoring program. A revised, interactive data visualization web tool, [Sound Health Explorer](#), is a recommended resource

for the Committee to review, to help with community outreach in connecting local watershed resources and coastal water uses.

2) GOAL 4 Design water quality monitoring program (G.U. monitoring plan/historic sampling map handouts)

Maura reviewed sources of bacterial contamination to surface waters include wastewater treatment plants, on-site septic systems, domestic and wild animal feces, and storm runoff and CT water Quality standards for fecal indicator bacteria E.coli and fecal coliform (FW recreational uses & SW direct consumption shellfish). Talked about DEEP recommending investing in a QAPP – quality assurance project plan, so data collection process considered scientifically valid & can be used for updates to state water quality reports. Part of the QAPP will document the questions raised for why water monitoring data is to be collected and what the Committee wants to learn from the data collection and assessment. Viewed bacteria “hotspots” from BC WBP (9 outfalls identified) and the need to overlay GIS points from current (or historic?) monitoring maps. Suggestion to contact GIS person at town (Jenny Gosselin) to assist with maps. Eric suggested Ledge Light Health District be encouraged to participate here as well. Maura has ArcGIS experience, if others interested in having a maps subcommittee, let her know.

G.U. monitoring plan outlines E. Coli, N, P, TSS, turbidity tests and testing macroinvertebrates w/UCONN or Ella Grasso Tech HS students. Also Frequency of sampling, sampling conditions, sample locations, funding – ECCD - use of federal 319 nonpoint source block grant technical assistance funds could be considered if deemed eligible use of funds.

Need to determine with Rick – what G.U. lab testing can be done (possible match for 319 funds).

Kate can update plan to include saltwater testing, with suggestion that assistance could come from reviewing the Save The Sound Unified Water Study and possible guidance from nearby UConn Avery Point researchers.

Sydney asked if houses with private septic are being looked at and Mayor Hedrick responded that City has a list of houses and when sold, are required to convert to City sewer. Reaching out to Ledge Light was

suggested. Sidney mentioned that Ed Martin, Shellfish Commission Chair had retired and new Chair Roger Sherman was mentioned by Mayor.

3) Committee Member progress reports

- ▶ Create 'public-friendly' watershed map for handouts and social media posting

- a. Maura went over 10/2 version of map. Final except for minor fixes including Marshes, Shellfish classif., Town beds and Date – shellfish Key. Thanks to Michelle for keeping us moving forward!

Michelle went over the suggested edits from committee members. Eric - a letter should be sent to all listed stakeholders explaining why they're on brochure. To make font larger, asked committee for 4 bullets to delete in center panel of exterior map.

- b. Maura relayed more current info and comments about public-friendly map from Alissa Dragan, DABA. Reviewed 4 steps needed to re-open recreational shell fishing in Baker Cove. Also, Baker Cove comprehensive (sanitary) survey in 2022 will probably not enable classification upgrade allowing for recreational shellfish program, could lead to angry public. Commercial Restricted Relay classification is the most likely positive outcome.

BC WBP & Bacwac's goal is to improve water quality in Baker Cove to support designated recreational uses from CT IWQR, which include fishing and shell fishing. It will be Town & City decision once 4 prior steps are achieved.

Went over Most recent Shellfish area Classifications map from Alissa Dragan, CT DABA. Classifications come from Nat'l Shellfish Sanitation Program (NSSP) – 500 page document!

Eric – DEEP developed a TMDL (total maximum daily load, or “pollution budget”) analysis from 2013 specified shellfish impairment, may have an agency to agency conversation and possibly readjust TMDL based on new info. The Next Steps section of the TMDL technical summary for the Thames/Groton area

(CT E1_013) provides recommendations that this Committee and other partners can consider towards restoring the current shellfish use impairment.

- c. Michelle – Updated us on planned events in town for World Rivers Day 9/27 to meet MS4 requirement. Events included Clean-up, Poetry, Tour of boat launches and Library had a ‘River’ book donation. Article in the Day to be forwarded to Group.

 - ▶ Maura – ppt educational slides for submittal to GATV reviewed 2 slides created for public education.

 - ▶ Review activities under GOAL 6 - Promote good housekeeping practices among municipalities and property owners
Maura – Reviewed Management Objective 2 in BC WBP. Town MS4 permit GHP BMP’s checklist – Pet Waste, pest control, septic highlighted as need more research. Recommendations in Table 7 for pest control, pet waste (septic & others) for City & Town. ECSC, UCONN CLEAR & NEMO – good resources for outreach & ed, i.e. topics include pet waste, Fertilizers, etc. Sidney – Town P&Z has done a great deal on addressing impervious cover & Stormwater runoff. Mark Berry of Parks/Rec got outhouse put at high use area for fishermen. Michelle – Parks worked with The Nature Conservancy to install vegetated riparian buffer restoration at a skate park (outside of BC Watershed).

 - a. Good housekeeping practices for businesses – Chamber of Commerce
Cierra, Econ Dvlpmt, couldn’t make meeting, but can meet Fri. w/Michelle, Heidi, Maura to discuss reaching out to businesses.

 - b. Other
Community Based Social Marketing (CBSM) 3-day workshop overview – exciting! / will provide link to quick review.
- 4) Are you interested in my getting speakers / experts on specific topics?
Let Maura know suggestions.

* Regarding any inputs from Poquonnock R. to Baker Cove. Syma E. at August meeting – May be some mixing at mouth of BC, but overall tide from river goes out through breach at Bushy Pt.

To Do's for next meeting:

- ▶ **Goal 4 Activity:** Design water quality monitoring program
- ▶ Email Selections on 4 bullets to delete in center panel of exterior map
- ▶ Maura to see if Alissa Dragan of DABA can present at Dec. meeting

Links:

ECCD-Baker Cove Watershed Committee webpage

<https://conservect.org/eastern/watershed-committees/>

2011 Baker Cove watershed-based plan

<https://portal.ct.gov/->

[/media/DEEP/water/watershed_management/wm_plans/bakercovewbpdf.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DEEP/water/watershed_management/wm_plans/bakercovewbpdf.pdf)

* Meeting dates for 2020: **December 2 (10-11:30)**