



Baker Cove Watershed Committee (Bacwac)

Meeting Notes

October 6, 2021

10:00 – 11:30 am

ZOOM online meeting

Attendees:

Tabitha Harkin, Town of Groton Planner/CDBG
Jill Rusk, Administrative Assistant to Mayor, City of Groton
Michelle Maitland, Project Mgmt. Specialist, Public Works, Town of Groton
Callie Scheetz, Director of Curriculum & Instruction, Project Oceanology, Groton
Kate Blacker, Watershed patrol, Groton Utilities
Paul Norris, Groton City Councilor, resident of Jupiter Pt.
Dick Conant, Groton shellfish Commission
Tom Olson, Town of Groton, Conservation Commission Member
Sidney Van Zandt, Vice President, GOSA
Karen Scopino, Town of Groton, Conservation Commission Member

Additional Invitees:

Heidi Comeau, Public Works Services Coordinator, City of Groton
Leslie Creane, Planner, City of Groton
Eric Thomas, CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP)
Keith Hedrick, Mayor, City of Groton
Joan Smith, President, Groton Open Space Association (GOSA)
Ben Roccapiore, Facilities operations & Building Services, UConn Avery Point
Syma Ebbin, Professor/Research Coordinator, UConn/CT Sea Grant
Jamie Lee, Property Manager, Groton Housing Authority and Project Manager, GGRC
Aundré Bumgardner, Groton Town Councilor
Dan Mullins, Executive Director, ECCD
Joseph Summer, Building & Zoning Official, City of Groton
Shawn McComiskey, Airport Manager, CAA Groton-New London Airport
Rick Stevens, Manager, Water & Sewer, Groton Utilities
Henry Jorsz, Elks Club
Mike Sinko, Sr. Mgr of Environmental Resources, Electric Boat
Ron Bata, Watershed patrol, Groton Utilities
Brae Rafferty, Chair-Town of Groton Conservation Commission & Sr. Instructor-Project O
Rich Palmieri, City of Groton Conservation Commission
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
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

Roger Sherman & Jay Kane, Co-chairs, Groton shellfish commission

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 Natural Resources Specialist & Watershed Coordinator

Emailed: Agenda, outreach & education letter sent to residents

MEETING NOTES

1. Introductions **None**

Restated Bacwac goals

2. WISC – 18 month simplified Work Plan review (Maura, Michelle, Heidi)

i. To Do's

a. Project Leads discussion

Still have a need for Project Leads – ideally, each member would pick a task to lead, contact Maura. Karen & Tom updated us on Town Conservation Commission clean-up sites and search for volunteer coordinators at each one. They will take leadership role for Task #3 - stream & waterside clean-ups.

b. Work Plan revisions discussion

Looked at reducing # of Tasks (ones with no lead) for this workplan period. Michelle suggested eliminating #9 – Develop Riparian buffer plan & #10 – Develop Impact Tracking. Add 'Implement on-going water quality monitoring program'. Lead is Groton Utilities – Kate B./Rick S.

Paul Norris is interested in #4 Fertilizer Behavior Change Campaign in his neighborhood and is willing to be Lead. Maura can assist.

c. Example education & outreach campaign 'Rethink Runoff'

www.rethinkrunoff.org

Eric T. emailed about Award-winning Vermont-based community education program – 'Rethink Runoff' – Extensive campaign with many municipalities participating. Michelle suggests to maybe use as model for Bacwac "Good

housekeeping” business/resident campaign. Maybe Sam/ Cierra engages the Mystic Chamber for a joint effort w/ Stonington. Please check out website and give feedback at next meeting. Invite ‘Rethink Runoff’ lead to Dec. meeting?

Other

Dick C. talked to Kate Brown of state boat pumpout program and can provide contact info if we want to pursue that task. Jill belongs to Groton Representative Town meeting and Town supplies 25% of cost. Tom O. mentioned in current year TOG budget, they allocated \$19,980 for boat pumpout program.

- ii. Update on Lake George Grant / CT DEEP RFP for the FY2022 Section 319 Nonpoint Source Management grant cycle. (Maura)

ECCD was awarded an EPA 319 non-point source pollution (NPS) grant managed by CT DEEP for a design/build retrofit for a FWS wetland to improve stormwater detention to infiltrate and retain pollutants including nutrient and bacteria. Included benefits will be habitat improvement, pedestrian walkways and signage for education. Maura attended Groton City COW meeting to announce.

Eric emailed info on FY22 319 request for grant proposals for future planning: EPA policy memo encouraging State NPS programs look to add prioritization for Environmental Justice-focused projects. EJScreen tool – perhaps a Bacwac committee member can offer up some intersections with the Bacwac work plan priorities.

Bacwac subcommittee could consider to leverage local town/city priority EJ needs with the Bacwac Simplified Work Plan (2021), i.e. something with 1) UConn Stormwater Corps recommended installations or 2) Groton CC plans to update the BPC Stewardship Plan that address pollution reduction/elimination currently impacting BPC. EPA and DEEP emphasize EJ as part of evaluation criteria. DEEP does encourage pre-application discussion with program watershed managers – Eric T. for BACWAC region. Forthcoming FY2022 319 grant round RFP [DEEP Section 319 Request for Proposals for Nonpoint Source Pollution](#) with application deadline of 12/22/21. For the Committee to forecast: eventual FY21 319 awardees

would be notified in late summer 2022 and funding contracts could be available in late 2022 or early 2023. Not suggesting adding additional burden to current Bacwac efforts – more about projecting ahead a year or so to continue Committee priority actions with Town/City collaboration.

3. Committee Member progress reports

- i. Update – #8 Public School adoption of environmental stewardship projects via classrooms, grade-level, or internships i.e. storm drain stenciling, rain gardens, monitoring (Callie)

Callie is making good progress at the Thames River Magnet School. The 5th graders are using the Baker Cove watershed map and are doing a schoolyard assessment to potentially put RG's. Teacher training was done on Project O skiff. They have a commitment to Kolnaski School next year for teaching the teachers field trips. She is looking for suggestions around town of examples of pollution mitigation sites to check out with them. Jill has been involved with Principal of Magnet school looking to build trail to Birch Plain Creek and connect Mirra Estates. She's seeking trail location guidance. Eric T. post meeting suggestion: reach out to Avalonia Land Conservancy steward (email stewardship@avalonialc.org) and to Groton Open Space Association.

- ii. 'public-friendly' watershed map for handouts and social media posting (Maura, Michelle)

- a. Outreach to businesses and residents of Baker Cove – next steps

Over Summer, intern Bailey Comeau mailed outreach letter to 37 prop managers & businesses listed on map & guide and 193 residents abutting the Baker Cove WS in the City (Jupiter Pt, Twin Hills).

We've had 35 ppl take the survey. Out of those, at least 30 left their address and about 10 left their contact info. Lots of opportunities to educate around what a watershed is, sources of pollution, what nonpoint source pollution is, where shellfishing is allowed or not. Topics of interest to folks – top 3 are rain barrels and rain gardens, using less pesticides and fertilizers, reducing nuisance waterfowl with riparian buffers.

- b. Discussion of adding map online – follow-up
 - Jill & Michelle can have City and Town host the map for community engagement.
- iii. Stream & waterside clean-ups (Bruce, Karen; Groton Conservation Commission)
 - Tom O. – CC in process of updating BPC Stewardship plan and adding action items, hope to reissue plan by Nov.
- iv. Other updates
 - a. ARPA letters to Town & City
 - As approved by Bacwac, Sent letters to Long Term Recovery Committee c/o John Burt, Town Manager & City COW. Pointed out language in ARPA...Green infrastructure investments and projects that address the impacts of climate change or improve resilience to climate change, such as stormwater management and outfall retrofits, measures to conserve and reuse water or reduce the energy consumption of public water treatment facilities. **Just to mention a few reasons to implement:** increase stormwater infiltration and storage capacity, reduce stormwater runoff and pollutant discharges from flooding, combined sewer overflow (CSO) events and erosion, alleviate "Urban heat islands" and additional benefits include habitat for birds, declining pollinators and other wildlife and increased greenspace. Also gave suggestions based on UCONN Stormwater Corps reports for City/Town & specific locations, recommended installation.
 - Heidi's understanding – COG internal staff will be gathering the requests and then sending to the Council to rank and determine what funds go where. Jill can follow up. Tabitha – on LT Recovery committee, TOG hosting 2 public open houses & online website. They will require a grant application.
 - b. Redevelopment of town-owned Groton Heights School by Thayer-Mahan
 - Eric T. emailed – located in city, but town-owned and in BC w'shed.
 - Michelle – TOG applying for brownfield clean-up. Letter from Bacwac - Request sensitive review of development plans/approvals in support of improving downstream water resources, including Lake George & BPC?
 - c. CT NERR seeking public comments

Public comment and input to required Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Draft Management Plan (DEIS/DMP) for proposed CT National Estuarine Research Reserve (CT NERR). Public comments due by Oct. 18.

d. Water Quality sampling program

Kate – Provided water quality sampling data from last quarter (Aug.) & water quality map update. Sample 2 sites, can add a 3rd at Trails Pond.

Michelle – working with IT to access their sampling site data, will work with Kate. LT hope is to add Town & City sampling data. 9/24 email from Joseph Pratt, Chief Plant Operator, City of Groton WPCA - mission alarm system worked great. He received a high manhole alarm from the manhole at colonial Manor. Sent a crew to clear the blockage which went well and they had no sewer overflow.

Additional

Sidney – GOSA new property on Drosdyk Dr., there is a giant rush of water running into BPC near P.O. & for sale sign.

Michelle – Groton chosen for Save the Sound culvert assessment

MS4 education & outreach by TOG & Save the Sound, 1st episode of a new show “Clean Water Ways” on GMTV.

4. Meeting dates for 2022 discussion

To Do's for next meeting:

- ▶ Let Maura, Michelle or Heidi know if you're willing to be Project Lead on Work Plan items (or would like to add one) and to discuss what role means
- ▶ Let Maura know any topics to get a speaker for

* Meeting dates for 2021: **December 1 (10-11:30)**

* Meeting dates for 2022: February 2, April 6, June 1, August 3, October 5, December 7