

Meeting Minutes
Weir River Estuary Park Committee
Tuesday April 11, 2023, 4:30pm
Remote - Call in Meeting

This is a Tri-Town Committee, appointed by the Boards of Selectmen for Cohasset, Hingham and Hull, not a non-profit Watershed Association. Formed in 2002 approved in 2005, the goals of the WREP Committee are; to **Preserve** the rare and idyllic setting, **Expand** public access and low impact recreational opportunities, **Protect** the historical and geological integrity, **Protect** and restore natural resources and biological diversity, **Conserve** a contiguous corridor of open space and healthy habitats, **Develop** educational opportunities and foster stewardship, **Establish** Community support for land and estuarine habitat protection and maintain working relationships with Town Selectmen, Conservation Commissions, Planning Boards and Advisory, Open Space and Harbor Development committees, local Land Trusts, Land preservation organizations, and related regional state and federal agencies.

1. **Call to Order** by chair Sharon Allen (Hin), Dick Avery (Coh) Tom Bell (Coh), Judeth Van Hamm (Hul), Scott Plympton (Hul), Mark Buonagurio (Hin). Meeting called to order with quorum at 4:43.
2. **Minutes** from the meeting 02/14/23 were reviewed and approved for posting.
3. **Opening:** Sharon informs members of Remote Meeting Law details. New: Zoom Meetings may continue for the next 3 years.
4. **Presentation: Trail to Straits Pond for Wildlife Viewing**
 - a. Hull's Director of Conservation and Environmental Impact, Christian Krahforst presented an overview of the proposed trail and shared the draft plans via zoom.
 - b. The plan shows access to the island starts along the waterfront next to Eastman Road. It would pass through the bocci court and turn north to become a boardwalk over marsh border on its way to the island.
 - We note that boardwalks are a challenge. They are expensive and will need to be budgeted for future maintenance.
 - c. A historical map showed the area was once proposed as a hiking and wilderness trail.
 - d. Phase 2: Permit Review and prepare engineering plans for construction.
 - Funding via Mass Trails is pending.
 - We should consider engaging State DCR to re-open the trail.
 - Key Dates: Starting Jun 1, 2023
 - a. Develop Waterfront Chapter 91 licenses (required)
 - b. Submit plan to DEP in August
 - c. Submit MEPA in September
 - d. With funding begin construction 1 year from now.
 - e. Comments (these may be attached to the proposal):
 - Chapter 91 approval has been taking only 90 days for approval.
 - Save as many trees as possible. Trees provide a visual screen from Gratta's property.

- Use solid land for a trail and not build a boardwalk.
- The access is for wildlife viewing. No dogs!
- Designated paths are needed once you're on the island.
- The Hull Land Conservation Trust has funding from donations for a brick trail/patio that could be used.
- Members would like to do a site visit. Not feasible. It would require hacking thru briars for access.
- Is there a plan for phragmites? Invasives? No. It's too big a problem for this scope.

5. Updates by Town

Cohasset:

- Progress is continuing on Atlantic Ave as storm drains are installed.
- The Woods Hole Engineering study impacts stormwater, but Straits Pond was not studied. Note, by 2070 we can expect a 9' rise in sea level.

Hingham:

- a. Scott is now a back-up administrator on the WREP Facebook page.
- b. Mark discusses that PFAs (forever plastics) are found in slow-release fertilizer.
- c. Sydney Pond trail clean-up is waiting for Conservation approval.

Hull:

- a. Scott reached out to Hull DPW on cleanup of the hobo camp at the Weir R. bridge. DPW says it's ok for us to clean up. We will address this on clean-up day.

6. Annual Estuary Clean-up Day:

- a. April 22
- b. This is a SPWA and WRWA collaboration and will provide ice cream and picnic.
- c. There was a discussion on fertilizer and grass seed.
- d. Consider 'Adopt a highway' for cleanup assistance.
- e. Leverage the email distribution list from Faith Burbank

7. Next Meeting:

- a. Next meeting is on Tuesday, June 13, 2023, at 4:30. This will be a Zoom call
- b. Consider future member roles and positions for committee.
- c. **Meeting Adjourns:** 6:07 PM