

River Council of the Great Egg Harbor National Scenic and Recreational River
Regular Bi-Monthly Meeting Minutes
February 19, 2014

Meeting Called to Order: at 6:35 PM by Greg Gregory, Chairperson.

Roll Call: by Fred Akers, Administrator.

Board Members in Attendance: Julie Akers (Buena Vista Twp.), Brian Camp (Corbin City), Jim Owen (Estell Manor City), Dick Colby (GEHWA), Bill Christman (Hamilton Twp.), Chris Jage (Hammonton City), Greg Gregory (Somers Point City), Ralph Bernard (Weymouth)

Board Members Absent: David Brown (Egg Harbor Twp., out of town), Joel Spiegel (Folsom Boro, recuperating from hip surgery), Rick Coe (Monroe Twp.), Bill Handley (Upper Twp.), Clark Sprigman (Winslow Twp.)

Quorum Present – Yes

Others Present: Fred Akers (River Administrator), Paul Kenney (NPS), Chuck O'Donnell (Alt. Corbin City), Cara Muscio (Clean Ocean Action)

Open Meetings Act: Greg Gregory stated that the meeting was advertised pursuant to the NJ Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 et seq. Notices were sent to official publications for the River Council – The Courier Post and The Press of Atlantic City. A copy of the notice was posted on the bulletin board of the Fox Nature Center, Atlantic County Library in Mays Landing and the GEHWA website.

Approval of Minutes: Bill Christman made a motion to approve the minutes of the December 18, 2013 meeting. Dick Colby seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Nomination and Election of Officers of the River Council: Fred Akers introduced the existing slate of officers as the nominees for 2014 and inquired if there were any other nominations to be made. None were made and the Secretary called to accept the slate of officers listed below:

Chair - Greg Gregory
Vice Chair - Rick Coe
Treasurer - Dick Colby
Secretary - Fred Akers

All Ayes.

Resolutions: Fred Akers brought the following resolutions before the council for vote:

Resolution 1-2014: Designating Depository of Funds and Authorized Signatures on River Council Accounts.
Resolution 2-2014: Designating Official Publications.
Resolution 3-2014: Notice of Meetings of the River Council

A motion was made by Ralph Bernard and seconded by Bill Christman to approve Resolution 1-2014. Roll call; all in favor. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Greg Gregory and seconded by Ralph Bernard to approve Resolution 2-2014. Roll call; all in favor. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Ralph Bernard and seconded by Bill Christman to approve Resolution 3-2014. Roll call; all in favor. Motion carried.

Public Portion:

Cara Muscio, Coastal Programs Coordinator for Clean Ocean Action, gave an informative 15 minute presentation about COA and her role in reaching out to other organizations such as the River Council to see where we may be able to work together. The mission of COA is to improve and protect the waters of NJ and NY coasts, and they are marking their 30th year as a coalition of currently 135 groups. Cara's background is in Biology and Education, and she covers the Manesquan to Cape May region. Besides the annual Beach Sweep program in communities all along the coast, Cara noted that river quality issues have a direct impact on the coast, and COA is focusing on improving water quality here too. She distributed published information materials.

Education & Outreach Coordinator Report (Julie for Lynn Maun)

Schools:

St. Vincent DePaul School: Julie and Lynn continue to work with the 3rd, 4th and 5th grade classes.

Events and Meetings: GEHWA sponsored and/or supported the following events.

GEHWA Member Meeting: The GEHWA Member Meeting program was held on Tuesday, January 28, 2014. Fred presented the history behind the Wild and Scenic designation of the Great Egg Harbor River.

Upcoming Events and Meetings:

GEHWA Member Meeting: The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 25, 2014 at 6:30 PM

NPS Report (Paul Kenney): Paul reported on the Wharf Rd. Hospice project in EHT. After looking at maps, he has determined that the NPS has no jurisdiction to review the property as a water resource project, and therefore will not issue a letter of review. He noted concerns from existing residents along the road about flooding and emergency traffic. The Dept. of Agriculture has issued a \$2 million grant for the consultant and developer to proceed with the project.

In funding news, Paul commented that 2014 should be a better year for the GEHR, with an additional \$12,000 allocated.

Old Business: None

Other Old Business: None

New Business: Steve Eisenhower (by email) requested action on upcoming legislation referencing the Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) program. Fred reported that the Council passed a resolution in 2012 to support reinstating full PILOT monies to affected communities, and we could prepare an updated resolution to support the push.

River Councilor Reports for each Municipality

Estell Manor City: (Jim Owen) Jim questioned if anyone had heard of the impact on water quality from all the road salt used this winter. He also noted that there have been coyote tracks around, but no deer tracks, and that there are beavers on Stephen's Creek.

GEHWA: (Dick Colby): Dick reported that there will be an Atlantic County Parks clean-up at the Railroad trestle on 3/9 and a Spring clean-up at the Unexpected Wildlife Refuge on 4/26. As Treasurer of both GEHWA and the River Council, he summarized the annual budget to be about \$100,000 from the NPS, which covers salaries and operating expenses for our two employees.

Hamilton Twp.: (Bill Christman): Bill commented on the current situation with the Lake Lenape Dam repairs as a “pass-the-buck ordeal”. In a follow-up to his lost pets report, he has found no sign of coyote tracks, but instead has seen big cat footprints.

Hammonton: (Chris Jage): Chris reported on several upcoming events: the Pinelands Short Course on 3/8 at Stockton College, the annual NJ Conservation Foundation Land Rally on 3/22 in New Brunswick, and a clean-up of Hammonton Park with ACUA on 3/29.

Weymouth Twp.: (Ralph Bernard): Ralph reported that he’s seen otters in the GEHR outside his house.

Other New Business: None

Administrator’s Report (Fred Akers):

1. PWSRs FY2015 Appropriations Update: The FY 2015 Congressional appropriation should be available soon, and it is expected that we will get an added \$12,000 over last year’s Cooperative Agreement, which was cut. There will be a meeting of the PWSRs in April on the Upper Delaware; if anyone would like to attend, please contact Fred.

2. Lake Lenape Dam status: Fred showed recent photos from the Press about the damage to the dam. He also noted that the Rt 54 gage shows river water levels to be close to flood stage. A question was raised about whether the fish ladder will be opened for the herring run.

3. BL England SJG Pipeline Update: Fred presented an aerial history documenting the history of the power plant and existing and proposed gas pipelines in the area. Chris added that many older maps can be found at historicalaerials.com. Fred also had a side report about a workshop he attended on Offshore Wind Best Management Practices, another venture to produce energy.

4. River Trails Grant & Project Update: Fred reported that the \$5500 grant project for river signage in Atlantic County Parks is going well, and is on track to perhaps provide for 2 more installations.

5. River Herring and Menhaden Protection Update: Fred reported that the NJ Div of Fish and Wildlife has closed commercial fishing of these two species.

6. Disney Nature Impact Grant: Fred has submitted a grant proposal for \$22,600 through the national Park Foundation to provide 8 Middle School river education program cruises and reports. There has been no response yet, but the proposal could be used for other grant opportunities.

7. Other Items of Interest: Fred ended his report with photos from a GEHWA member’s river trip made 2/17/14 – fast and Brrrr!

8. Other Items of Interest:

Adjournment:

Upon motion by Dick Colby and second by Bill Christman, the meeting adjourned at 8:00 PM.