

Great Egg Harbor National Scenic and Recreational River Council
Regular Monthly Meeting
December 17, 2003

Meeting Called to Order at 7:15PM by Rick Coe, Chairperson

Roll Call by Belinda Irizarry, Secretary

Board Members in Attendance: Julie Akers (Buena Vista Township), Bill Christman (Hamilton Township), Rick Coe (Monroe Township), Bill Egan (Weymouth Township), Andrew Mair (Winslow Township), John Brudon (Estell Manor), Joel Spiegel (Folsom)

Board Members Absent: Eugene Betz (Corbin City), Creed Pogue (GEHWA) Gregory Gregory (Somers Point), Keith Kendrix (Hammonton), Marc Thyrring (Egg Harbor Township) and Bill McDermott (Upper Township - resigned).

Quorum Present? - Yes

Others Present: Fred Akers (River Administrator); Belinda Irizarry (GEHWA Education Coordinator); and Mary Vavra (NPS)

Open Meetings Act:

Rick Coe states 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 the 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 and the Atlantic County Library in Mays Landing.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Bill Christman to approve the October 15, 2003 minutes of the River Council. Joel Spiegel seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Public Portion

Although no members of the public were present, the meeting was opened (and closed) to the public by motions made and seconded by Bill Christman and Joel Spiegel.

Old Business

River Council Members - Fred Akers reported that Bill McDermott resigned from the River Council for health-related reasons. Bill's contributions will be missed.

River Administrator's Report

- Fred Akers presented a power point presentation that he used at the Joint Ventures in Partnerships conference he attended in Los Angeles. Fred represented both the Great Egg Harbor and Maurice Rivers at the conference where he showcased the National Wild and Scenic Partnership River's Program and efforts to protect these two south Jersey rivers.
- Fred also educated River Council members about the stormwater issues at Adams Branch which are causing degradation to Babcock Creek, a tributary of the Great Egg Harbor River.

Fred conducted considerable research and presented his findings to the Hamilton Township Planning Board and Millie DeFeo (NJDEP Enforcement) who appreciated his efforts. Fred will continue to assist in the resolution of this stormwater issue.

National Park Service Report

- Mary Vavra updated River Council members on NPS activities in the last two months. An application for maintenance dredging from Conectiv for its plant near the Garden State Parkway Bridge was reviewed and no issues were identified. Mary mentioned the recent accident at this plant and stated that she has been trying to get more information to determine the extent of the oil spill. Fred Akers stated that he would contact a GEHWA member who works for Conectiv to gather more information.
- Mary attended a meeting in Trenton with other federal and state agencies to listen to a presentation by South Jersey Gas officials who are interested in extending their natural gas pipeline that will cross both South River and the Great Egg Harbor River. The company intends to use the existing Conective right-of-way and directionally bore 20-30 feet under both rivers. Initial reactions to the information presented is that there should be no adverse impact on outstandingly remarkable resource values if the project proceeds as described. South Jersey Gas will be applying to the NJDEP and USCOE for permits to conduct test borings in the very near future.
- Mary updated members on the FY 2004 budget for Partnership Wild and Scenic Rivers which received a \$300,000 increase. The budget for the 7 partnership rivers is now at \$900,000 and the Great Egg Harbor River should be receiving a modest increase in its appropriation for 2004.
- Joel Spiegel asked about the status of the enforcement actions for property owners in the Borough of Folsom which are well over a year old. Mary responded that she has contacted Scott Brubaker, NJDEP Enforcement Chief in Trenton, and requested a status report. Scott readily agreed although he has not yet provided the report. Mary will contact Scott again to find out what is going on.

Weymouth Township Request - Fred briefed River Council members on Weymouth Township's request to assist in the purchase (\$975) of a GIS printer for the environmental commission. The Township will be undertaking GIS-related projects and have agreed to share their expertise and system with neighboring environmental commissions. Bill Egan made a motion to approve the expenditure since Weymouth Township will be working with other municipalities. The motion was contingent upon Weymouth Township submitting a grant application to the River Council. Julie Akers seconded the motion. ***Roll Call Vote:*** Julie Akers - yes; Bill Christman - yes; Rick Coe - yes; Bill Egan - yes; Andrew Mair - yes; John Brudon - yes; and Joel Spiegel -yes. Motion carried unanimously.

New Business

Meeting Schedule - A suggestion was made that the River Council meets every other month. A discussion of this issue ensued. A decision was made to schedule meetings for 12 months and hold meetings as appropriate. Rick will prepare resolutions for the reorganization meeting addressing the meeting issue.

Administrative Issues - A number of appointments to the River Council will expire in early 2004. Mary Vavra will prepare letters to the Mayors for Rick's signature requesting that they either reappoint current representatives or authorize new ones. A different letter will be sent to those municipalities that have not had active participation (6 months) from their nominees requesting that the Mayor(s) appoint someone else to the River Council.

Review of River Administrator Position

Fred Akers made a recommendation that the Great Egg Harbor Watershed Association (GEHWA) be the employing organization for the River Administrator position. This suggestion was made to improve financial management and also to have the Administrator report to only one organization for direction and supervision. Julie Akers updated members on the increased workload that Belinda Irizarry (GEHWA Education Coordinator) will be carrying. Belinda will expand her educational and outreach efforts and include presentations to environmental commissions and other municipal organizations to promote the river and watershed. This service will be made available to River Council members and their municipalities. A discussion of the River Council's mission and objectives ensued. Bill Christman made a motion recommending that the River Administrator be an employee under GEHWA who will provide staff support to the River Council. Andy Mair seconded the motion. ***Roll Call Vote:*** Julie Akers - abstain; Bill Christman - yes; Rick Coe - yes; Bill Egan - abstain; Andrew Mair - yes; John Brudon - yes; and Joel Spiegel -yes. Motion carried. Rick Coe will review previous Resolutions covering the River Administrator position and draft a new Resolution accepting the River Administrator as a support person to the River Council.

Budget and Direction

Fred Akers provided a status report on projects funded through the River Council. Rick Coe updated members on the Monroe Township footbridge project. Fred will work with Rick to pursue additional funding for this project. Fred will followup with Weymouth Township and Estell Manor to determine their interest in pursuing the strategic planting project that they received funding for from the River Council.

Rick Coe presented an invoice for work performed for the River Council over a three-year period for \$709.75. A motion was made by Bill Christman to approve the expenditure. Bill Egan seconded the motion. ***Roll Call Vote:*** Julie Akers - yes; Bill Christman - yes; Rick Coe - abstained; Bill Egan - yes; Andrew Mair - yes; John Brudon - yes; and Joel Spiegel -yes. Motion carried.

Rick invited anyone willing to chair the River Council in 2004 to make it known since he will not be able to continue in that capacity. Members expressed an appreciation for Rick's leadership.

Adjournment

Andy Mair made a motion to adjourn at 9PM. Joel Spiegel seconded motion.