

River Council of the Great Egg Harbor National Scenic and Recreational River
Regular Bi-Monthly Meeting Minutes
February 17, 2021

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.), Carol Foster (Corbin City), David Brown (Egg Harbor Twp.), Jim Owen (Estell Manor City), Greg Conway (Folsom Boro), *Paul Ludgate (GEHWA), Bill Christman (Hamilton Twp.), John Keenan (Hammonton), Rick Coe (Monroe Twp.), Greg Gregory (Somers Point City), Bill Handley (Upper Twp.), Susan Stiles (Weymouth), *Clark Sprigman (Winslow Twp.)

Board Members Absent: All municipalities had representation.

Quorum Present – Yes

GEHWA Trustees in Attendance: Carol Jones, * Board Members in Attendance are GEHWA Trustees

Others Present: Fred Akers (River Administrator), Paul Kenney (NPS), Lynn Maun (Coordinator), Kathleen Federico (Alt. Corbin City), Tom Baum (Alt. Egg Harbor Twp.), Bill Reinert (Alt. Somers Point), Bill Stuempfig (Alt. Upper Twp.), Brooke Handley (Stockton Intern – GEHWA Marine Debris Project), David Reilly (Ex. Director Coastal Resources Conservancy), Dylan O’Brien (Watershed Ambassador WMA15), Steve Zellers, Ralph Cooper (Upper Twp. Green Team)

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 GEHWA website calendar.

Nomination and Election of Officers of the River Council: Fred Akers introduced the existing slate of officers as the nominees for 2021 and inquired if there were any other nominations to be made. None were made and the following motions were made to accept the slate of officers listed below:

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

Bill Christman made the motion to accept the nomination of **Greg Gregory** as Chair, **Rick Coe** as Vice Chair, **Dick Colby** as Treasurer, and **Fred Akers** as Secretary. Bill Handley seconded the motion. Motion carried.

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

Resolution 1-2021: Designating Depository of Funds and Fiscal Agent.
Resolution 2-2021: Designating Official Publications.

Resolution 3-2021: Notice of Meetings of the River Council

A motion was made by Bill Christman, and seconded by Greg Gregory, to approve Resolution 1-2021. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Rick Coe, and seconded by Bill Christman, to approve Resolution 2-2021. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Julie Akers, and seconded by Bill Handley, to approve Resolution 3-2021. Motion carried. Bill Christman made a motion to accept corrected meeting dates, Bill Handley seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes: Rick Coe made a motion to approve the minutes of the December 16, 2020 meeting. Bill Handley seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Public Portion: Fred introduced David Reilly, Executive Director of the Coastal Resources Conservancy. Dave spoke about the goals of his organization. Greg Gregory spoke about the Great Egg Harbor Reef committee and their concerns and goals. He asked if the Conservancy would be interested in a partnership to help save the reef. Dave suggested reaching out to Stockton for help too.

Education & Outreach Coordinator Report (Lynn Maun)

In Schools, Nature Center, and Outdoor Classroom: Continuing to reach out to teachers.

Williamstown Middle School: Lynn is scheduled to virtually teach the 5th grade students from the science classes at Williamstown Middle School the end of February and throughout March about water quality, stormwater runoff and groundwater.

Events, Meetings and Continuing Education:

GEHWA: The GEHWA Member Meeting was held on Tuesday, January 26, 2021 at 6:30 pm via Zoom, where the new interactive GEHWA “Mission Map” and “Marine Debris Map” were presented.

Environmental Stewards: The 2021 NJ Environmental Stewards classes are being held via Zoom. In the past the Environmental Stewards classes were held at different locations around the state. Because of Covid, one statewide class is held via Zoom with a 2-hour presentation followed by 1-hour breakout groups that focused on different regions of the state. Fred and Lynn participated in the breakout group focused on “Local Water Quality and Related Issues” that was hosted by Amy Menzel from the ACUA on Tuesday, February 9, 2021.

Upcoming Events and Meetings: Fred and Lynn continue to virtually attend a variety of continuing education programs.

GEHWA: The Annual GEHWA Members Meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 23, 2021 at 6:30 pm via Zoom. Program to be announced.

ACUA Earth Day Celebration: The 2021 ACUA Earth Day celebration has been cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

NPS Report (Paul Kenney): The NPS Washington office approved the 2021 budget amount of \$165,000.00 for GEHWA. This is an increase of \$15,000.00 from 2020. Yesterday, Congress and

Department of Transportation approved the Pinelands National Scenic Byway and Bayshore National Scenic Byway.

Old Business: None

Other Old Business: None

New Business: None

River Councilor Reports for each Municipality

Buena Vista Twp.: (Julie Akers): Julie stated that there is nothing to report along river. She also stated that they are dealing with a big development project within the township.

Corbin City: (Carol Foster): Carol reported reaching out to Amy Greene Environmental to see if they could do a study to address the erosion issues at the Corbin City Park. She stated that measures that have been taken in the past have not alleviated the problem. Greg asked if any “Action Now Grant” funds could be used. Fred will work on additional mapping.

Estell Manor City: (Jim Owen): Jim reported that construction has not been completed in Estell Manor Park.

Hamilton Twp.: (Bill Christman): Bill reported that the Mill Street Bridge replacement project is ahead of schedule. He also reported that there is a tree in the middle of the channel near Sunshine Park.

Hammonton: (John Keenan): John reported that the Hammonton Environment Commission is working to adopt their 2021 work plan. The EC is also planning to provide a program supporting the implementation of the single use plastic bag ban. The EC is also working to update the Natural Resource Inventory and Open Space Plan. The Township Planner has been given the Local River Management Plan for the Master Plan revision.

Monroe Twp.: (Rick Coe): Rick reported that the Planning Board is updating its Master Plan.

Somers Point: (Greg Gregory): Bill Reinert is monitoring 2 eagle nests. The eagles in Somers Point are sitting on eggs. Greg said they are looking for a Boy Scout who would be interested in helping to restore the reef as an Eagle Scout project.

Upper Twp.: (Bill Handley): Bill stated that a bid has been accepted for Beesleys Point Park. The bridge on Marshallville Road that connects the community is not repairable. The plan is to remove the bridge and replace it with a pedestrian walking bridge. Bill Stuempfig has been looking to see if the eagle’s nest that was blown down last year is being rebuilt. Bill H. reported that the Township will help with removal of the marine debris as long as it can be reached by the County’s Public Works trucks.

Winslow: (Clark Sprigman): Clark reported that New Brooklyn Lake Dam has a strong flow going over the spillway.

Other New Business: None

Administrator's Report (Fred Akers):

1. Staff Activity Annual Reports: Fred showed a slide of the annual staff activity report for FY 2020 with a comparison of FY 2020 and FY 2019 detailing the negative impact Covid-19 has had on Education and Outreach

2. PWSRs FY 2021- FY 2022 Appropriations Update: Fred shared slides detailing NPS funding of the PWSR program, current funds allocated to the rivers and GEHR funds since 2006. The PWSR's "White Paper" will ask congress to support funding of the rivers in the amount of \$3,925,000.00 for FY 2022. The NPS plans to fund all the rivers equally for FY 2021 in the amount of \$241,000.00.

3. GEHR Planning for the Future: Since NPS funding has stabilized in recent years, Fred then spoke about the need to plan for the future by increasing staffing costs so as to hire an Assistant River Administrator after 10/1/2021. It would be either a full or part time position with the plan for that person to take over for Fred by 9/30/2022. Fred would like to form a selection subcommittee that would be responsible to find someone to fill that position. Greg G. suggested that Fred and Lynn create job descriptions. He also suggested the need for job descriptions for any other positions that assist in the operation of the GEHWA and GEHR. Paul Kenney, Rick Coe and Greg Gregory would like to serve on the selection committee.

4. Winslow Township Basin Study Update: Head of the Winslow Road Department called Fred and was not overly concerned about making any changes to the basin. After Fred talked to him and pointed out how improvements to the basin would help to alleviate flooding complaints, the Dept. Head showed more interest.

5. GEHWA Mission Map Update: The RCs saw a live demonstration of the GEHWA "Mission Map". All are encouraged to check it out and make comments, as work on it is still in progress.

6. GEHR Marine Debris Program Update: Brooke Handley presented an update on the Marine Debris Program. She showed a map of currently identified debris, spoke about the creation of a "Marine Debris App", and setting of teams of RCs to monitor marine debris and work as teams on clean-up. A suggestion was made to create a flyer for the RCs to distribute to local residents about the formation of clean-up teams. Brooke received positive feedback from the River Councilors.

7: Estell Manor ORV Park: Fred showed slides where a property owner created an ORV park within the Pinelands Forest area, in a Residence-10 zone. The Pinelands Preservation Alliance contacted Fred about this issue in Estell Manor.

8: 2020 Avian Species Reports: Fred shared current data regarding the Osprey Monitoring and Banding" program. A total count of chicks in the Great Egg Harbor/Ocean City area averaged 2.14 chicks per nest. Total nest sites to be monitored in 2021 will decline by 5 with the removal of the old transmission tower structures that crossed the bay. No chicks were banded in 2020.

9. Other Items of Interest:

Adjournment:

Upon motion by Bill Christman and second by Carol Foster, the meeting adjourned at 8:35 PM.