

Housatonic River Commission

“to coordinate on a regional basis the local management and protection of the Housatonic River Valley in northwestern Connecticut”

Minutes of the Special Meeting on July 11, 2023 at HVA offices (subject to approval at the next meeting)

Christian Allyn – North Canaan – P
Jack Anstine – North Canaan – P
Kent Allyn – Canaan (Falls Village) – A
Ellery Sinclair – Canaan (Falls Village) – P
Stacie Weiner – Salisbury – P
Gordon Whitbeck – Salisbury – A
Jim Saunders – Sharon – P

William R. Tingley, Chairman – Sharon – P
Phil Hart, Vice-chairman – Cornwall – P
Barton Jones – Cornwall – A
Jesse Klingebiel, Secretary – Kent – P
Steve Robey – Kent – P
Marc Andreotto, Treasurer – New Milford – P
Robert Gambino – New Milford – P

(Acronyms listed on the last page)

Also present were: Liz Lacy and Jackie Dias – NPS; Rodrigo Pinto – HVA; Matt Devine – CT DEEP; and Andy Brydges – FirstLight Power

Mr. Tingley called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.

The minutes of the June 13, 2023 meeting were approved as written.

Treasurer's Report – Mr. Andreotto reported \$4,921.20 in the NHCOC – HRC subaccount.

Communications – Mr. Klingebiel responded to a website question about airborne PCBs in Great Barrington.

Old Business

Mr. Gambino made a motion to hold the September meeting with the Coordinating Committee as an in-person meeting at the HVA office and via Zoom. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Wild & Scenic – Bart Jones is working on wording to be reviewed and discussed in September about adding to the current non-voting membership (NHCOC and CT DEEP) of the HRC. Current Coordinating Committee members (HVA, NPS, FirstLight Power) will join HRC and the Coordinating Committee will be disbanded.

There was a discussion about the need to hire someone to do administrative work on record-keeping, outreach, and project management. Ms. Lacy will put together a job description (approximately 20 hours per month) and share it with the group. The start date would be October 1. Suggestions about where to advertise once requirements are established followed. Meanwhile, commissioners were asked to consider potential people for the position. The current budget will also need to be amended.

Mr. Hart made a motion to make the following adjustments to the budget:

indirect costs \$13,500 to 13,636

direct costs from \$135,000 to 136,364

line 10 Grants to Project Assistance

line 12 Educational Programs \$5,000 to 4,864

The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

It was noted that the timing is uncertain, but that funds may be available this summer. Mr. Pinto reported that a contribution came from FirstLight for the Rio program, and that Eversource was also on board to contribute.

Ms. Lacy talked about the ad hoc committee convening to discuss the management plan and the necessary rewrites. Mr. Tingley, Ms. Weiner, and Mr. Gambino would appreciate help from others to participate in the process.

Whichever town commissioners have not yet met with selectmen or distributed the questionnaires to the town groups, should do so right away.

Ongoing Issues/Updates

River Access – Ruggles Landing/Canaan Dam

Mr. Allyn spoke about the establishment of the Friends of Ruggles Landing. Papers for the group are being filed. Although it is a separate group, it might become one of many separate groups in a (potential) North Canaan Conservation Commission. Mr. Devine added that the new Bureau Chief at CT DEEP, Andy Fisk, is interested in all aspects of river access and involvement with the project. Mr. Devine suggested setting up a meeting regarding access issues.

Ms. Lacy shared a link for a Management Society - River Access Planning Guide – [River Access Planning \(river-management.org\)](https://river-management.org/).

Housatonic Railroad (vegetation spraying)

Mr. Sinclair read a letter he had sent to the *Lakeville Journal* regarding a change in spraying in Cornwall. Mr. Allyn wanted everyone to understand that the reality regarding the railroad is that the right of way must be maintained. To that end, many different types of vegetation need to be dealt with, and each one requires a different type of product, i.e., it is very complicated.

Ms. Weiner spoke with Ryan Casman, her contact in Congresswoman Jahana Hayes's office. It was suggested that a presentation package be developed to share with Congresswoman Hayes to solicit help from the federal perspective.

Mr. Sinclair said that a meeting at the end of June with CEQ members and the HHWG went very well. DEEP is the agency to approach for help in testing water in the river shortly after herbicide spraying.

It was suggested that the railroad (and herbicide application) should be included in the rewrite of the management plan. It would be helpful to have baseline data to include.

It was noted in the discussion that agricultural runoff has not been part of the discussion.

Ms. Lacy suggested that the HRC should be contemplating water quality monitoring, which might be contracted out to HVA. Each town needs to be in charge of what happens above the high-water mark.

Invasives management – Both the Salisbury and Sharon maps of JKW have been completed. On August 3 there will be a training for town crews on dealing with invasives.

Housatonic Meadows State Park – More planting has been done and Mr. Tingley asked Mr. Devine if CT DEEP could assist with some of the maintenance.

Wastewater Management Project in West Cornwall – no updates

Gaylordsville – stone dumping in the river – Mr. Devine said that the Army Corps of Engineers has enforcement jurisdiction and was going to contact the land owner but nothing has come of it. Ms. Lacy will follow up with Cori Rose and set up a meeting about resolving the issue. Mr. Brydges was asked to bring up the issue of remediation with Brian Wood (FirstLight).

GE Settlement/PCBs – no updates

New Business

HRC Zoom account – Mr. Allyn and Mr. Andreotto will work on the HRC website, along with Julie Saxton, who established the Weebly.com site and will be available to continue updating the new site.

Mr. Gambino made a motion to allocate up to \$400 to reimburse Mr. Allyn for purchasing the HousatonicRiverCommission.org website and the appropriate website builder software. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Recording Secretary,



Susan Francisco

Next regular meeting with Coordinating Committee in-person at HVA offices and via Zoom – September 12, 2023

BLEC – Berkshire Litchfield

Environmental Council

CCC – Citizens Coordinating Council

CEQ – Council on Environmental Quality

DEEP – Department of Energy and

Environmental Protection

DOT – Department of Transportation

EPA – Environmental Protection Agency

FERC - Federal Energy Regulatory

Commission

GE – General Electric

H.E.A.L. – Housatonic Environmental

Action League

HMPA – Housatonic Meadows Preservation

Action

HHWG – Housatonic Herbicide Working

Group

HMSP – Housatonic Meadows State Park

HRC – Housatonic River Commission

HRCCC – Housatonic River Coordinating

Committee

HVA – Housatonic Valley Association

JKW – Japanese Knotweed

NCD – Northwest Conservation District

NHCOG – Northwest Hills Council of

Governments

NPS – National Park Service

RIO - River Information and Outreach

W&S – Wild and Scenic

ZEO –Zoning Enforcement Officer