

# 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 Regular Meeting on June 13, 2023

**at Cornwall Consolidated School (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 – A

(Acronyms listed on the last page)

William R. Tingley, Chairman – Sharon – P

Phil Hart, Vice-chairman – Cornwall – P

Bart Jones – Cornwall – P

Jesse Klingebiel, Secretary – Kent – P

Steve Robey – Kent – P

Marc Andreotto, Treasurer – New Milford – P

Robert Gambino – New Milford – P

Also present were: Liz Lacy and Jackie Dias – NPS; and Rodrigo Pinto – HVA.

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

**The minutes of the May 9, 2023 meeting were approved as presented.**

**Treasurer's Report** – Mr. Andreotto reported \$5,026.20 in the NHCOC-HRC subaccount.

**Communications** – Mr. Pinto was introduced as a new HVA rep on the Coordinating Committee at this first in-person meeting in several months. It was also the first in-person meeting for Jack Anstine and Jackie Dias.

**Old Business** – the July meeting will be a Special Meeting held at the HVA offices in Cornwall Bridge (hybrid capabilities).

Mr. Tingley will be paddling the section of the river below Fred Garner Park, the point where GE and the EPA finished remediation work. Other commissioners should contact him if interested in joining.

**Wild & Scenic Updates** – There was a brief discussion about the budget and money designated to NHCOC for administrative work and its role as fiscal agent for HRC regarding all things Wild and Scenic. The budget year ends on September 30. It is uncertain when federal money will go into the account and become available.

Ms. Lacy will inform commissioners on how the finances work and the steps to be taken to request funding for projects. The question came up about who will be managing small grants and projects linked to W&S, as it is not an NPS responsibility. W&S Partnership Rivers have different ways of dealing with this.

Mr. Tingley said that an executive committee (members from HRC and HRCCC) will need to be named to review operations and other critical aspects of Wild & Scenic going forward. Rules developed around procurement (how potential projects get reviewed) will be included in the Management Plan. Please contact Mr. Tingley.

Mr. Jones explained that NHCOC and DEEP have always been non-voting members of HRC, and other groups currently on the Coordinating Committee will be invited to become non-voting members as well. He will draft wording to be included in the rules and by-laws.

It was clarified that money must be allocated for the river and must be tied to the Management Plan.

A letter for commissioners to update with their names and towns will be distributed within the next few days along with a questionnaire. Commissioners need to get these to their town selectmen/mayor very soon so responses can get back to NPS before the next HRC meeting.

Mr. Tingley reiterated that what the HRC is doing or plans to do regarding any river projects helps the river and therefore all towns along the river, Ms. Lacy adding that it's analogous to the NHCOC helping all towns in its sphere.

Ms. Lacy stated that the Management Plan will include a section on operations where questions regarding terms and other issues will be made very clear.

Mr. Jones suggested that HRC subscribe to a Zoom account of its own, and the consensus was to go ahead with that.

There also needs to be a platform where all records can be kept and shared digitally and online to improve functionality. Mr. Allyn recommended that the shared space be a Housatonic River Commission website. It was suggested that people check out [nps.gov/wsr](https://www.nps.gov/wsr) to see what other partnership river sites look like, as well as to see the kinds of projects they are working on. Mr. Allyn and Mr. Andreotto will investigate this process.

**Mr. Jones made a motion to authorize Mr. Allyn to purchase a website. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.**

### **Housatonic River Coordinating Committee – member updates**

**NHCOG** – letter of agreement with NHCOG – in place.

**HVA** – Mr. Pinto reported that five river stewards, some with bi-lingual capabilities, have been hired for the RIO program. Ms. Lacy is working to make some money available for the program. Mr. Pinto added that there is, as yet, no firm commitment for assistance from FirstLight or Eversource.

**NPS** – covered in Wild & Scenic.

**CT DEEP** – Mr. Anstine passed around draft signage about what fish caught in the Housatonic can be eaten.

**FirstLight Power** – no report.

### **Ongoing Issues/Updates**

**River Access** – Ruggles Landing/Canaan Dam – There was a meeting at Douglas Library centered around creating a friends group similar to Friends of Beckley Furnace. Another meeting will be held next week at the Douglas Library to add names.

There was discussion about reparations money DEEP received, some of which could/should come to North Canaan.

**Housatonic Railroad (vegetation spraying)** – Mr. Sinclair had written to the advisory Commission on Environmental Quality (CEQ) about the herbicide spraying problem. After a meeting with Gordon Ridgway and a lawyer for the railroad, some changes were talked about, but Mr. Sinclair said they are not all favorable. The HRWG will meet next Thursday. They hope that Rep. Maria Horn will continue to be supportive and involved.

Ms. Weiner learned recently that in New York a Department of Environmental Protection is attached to the attorney general's office. She will see if Connecticut has something similar. Mr. Sinclair will write a letter to CEQ with HRC concerns. It was noted that Bruce Bennet, Anna Timmel, and Heidi Cunnick, all of Cornwall, have been extraordinarily helpful on the HHWG.

It was noted that the higher federal standards should be in effect along the Housatonic.

**Invasives management** – continues.

**Housatonic Meadows State Park** – Massive planting by HMPA members and other volunteers took place recently and Mr. Allyn will complete the final application on invasives next week.

**Wastewater Management Project in West Cornwall** – no news

**Gaylordsville – stone dumping in the river** – no action has been taken.

**Honey Hill** – Mr. Allyn said that although no formal application has been received, development at Honey Hill appears to be going ahead.

**GE Settlement/PCBs** – Mr. Anstine mentioned an article in the *Berkshire Eagle* about citizens taking a bus to Lee to appeal the decision to take contaminated sediment to a landfill in Lee, MA.

## New Business

Added to the agenda: application for work at 122 Wildcat Hollow Road in Salisbury. The location is not in the inner corridor and it has been approved by TAHD.

**Ms. Weiner made a motion to approve the application for building a 7' x 13' plunge pool and accompanying landscaping at 122 Wildcat Hollow Road in Salisbury. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.**

## Mutual Concerns & Future Agenda Items

Mr. Sinclair signed off on the proposed construction of a house in the sand pit area on Lime Rock Station Road in Falls Village. It was brought to him by Susan Kelsey (Inland Wetlands). It will be quite a distance from the river and will have no impact on the view from the river.

Mr. Allyn asked if anyone knew about the dismantling of the Hal Borland house on Weatogue Road in Salisbury.

Regarding continuing on as HRC commissioners, Mr. Sinclair has spoken with Kent Allyn Canaan (Falls Village) and Mr. Tingley has spoken with Gordon Whitbeck (Salisbury).

It is important that commissioners get responses from the questionnaire (they will receive it in the next couple of days) to Ms. Dias and Ms. Lacy before the July HRC meeting.

**The meeting was adjourned at 9:26 p.m.**

Recording Secretary,



Susan Francisco

Note: Mr. Allyn was able to purchase the website [housatonicrivercommission.org](http://housatonicrivercommission.org)

**Next meeting will be a Special Meeting (change of venue) at HVA offices – July 11, 2023**

BLEC – Berkshire Litchfield Environmental Council CCC – Citizens Coordinating Council CEQ – Commission 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 NHCOC – Northwest Hills Council of Governments NPS – National Park Service RIO – River Information and Outreach TAHD – Torrington Area Health District W&S – Wild and Scenic ZEO – Zoning Enforcement Officer
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