

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 November 14, 2023

at Cornwall Consolidated School (subject to approval at the next meeting) and via Google Meet

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

William R. Tingley, Chairman – Sharon – P
Phil Hart, Vice-chairman – Cornwall – P
Barton Jones – Cornwall – P
Jesse Klingebiel, Secretary – Kent – P
Pending new commissioner– Kent – A
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; Mike Jastremski and Rodrigo Pinto – HVA.

Mr. Tingley called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m.

The minutes of the October 10, 2023 meeting were approved with the following corrections:

Pg 1, 3rd para from end Whereas the Housatonic River Coordinating ~~committee~~ Committee (the ...

Pg 3, River Access Canaan Dam - ...Once that is done, ~~a viable project can get underway we can start conceptualizing a project.~~

Mr. Klingebiel made a motion to approve using federal funds for October hours submitted by Susan Francisco pending a submitted contract. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

There was a brief discussion about where pay for the recording secretary will come from – HRC or Wild & Scenic federal funds, or split between the two. Time would need to be connected to a project. A contract will be forthcoming.

Treasurer's Report and NHCOC Financial Reports – Mr. Andreotto reported \$4,673.70 in the NHCOC-HRC subaccount. He then gave the NHCOC report. \$150K was awarded, 25% of which (\$37.5K) was put in the account at NHCOC so far. \$15K of that \$37.5K was released to HVA for the RIO program.

Communications

Mr. Tingley received a resignation letter from Kent commissioner Steve Robey. Mr. Klingebiel is in the process of getting recommendations for a new commissioner.

Zoning Permit Applications for HRC review

- 194 Housatonic River Road, Salisbury – Ms. Weiner visited the site of a ranch house at 194 Housatonic River Road. The owner proposes to construct a small screened porch, and she reported that it is not in the viewshed and will make no discernable difference to the property.

Mr. Andreotto made a motion to approve the construction of a small porch at 194 Housatonic River Road in Salisbury. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously. Ms. Weiner will sign off on the project.

Ongoing Issues/Updates

- **River Access**

- Ruggles Landing – The Process of filing for 501(c)(3) status has been initiated. Mr. Anstine indicated that the Friends group formed to manage Ruggles Landing is waiting for a lawyer to finish the paperwork.
- Canaan Dam – no news, although some comments were made about the state of the river by the dam – the broken dam is currently beset by huge tree blockages. Mr. Jastremski and Mr. Tingley are working to get a contract going to study the work necessary to clear the blockages.

- **Housatonic Railroad and Housatonic Herbicide Working Group** – Mr. Sinclair expects members of the group to attend the December HRC meeting.

- **Invasive species management** – no news.

- **Housatonic Meadows State Park** – Mr. Tingley said that planting has been completed, but also noted that plenty of work remains to be done along the river at the park. Mr. Hart was asked to write a note to the HMPA group thanking them for their involvement and all the work they have done.

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

- **Gaylordsville – stone dumping in the river** – Ms. Lacy has yet to hear back from the DEEP enforcement person she contacted, and is still looking for photos and comments

- **GE Settlement/PCBs** – Mr. Tingley read an excerpt from Matt Devine's emailed submission that "DEEP Fisheries is coordinating with Arcadis, an environmental sampling group out of Syracuse, contracted by GE to collect and perform fish tissue analysis as part of the rest of river management plan. They are testing for PCB contamination."

Project progress reports

- **Management Plan Update** – Ms. Dias is still looking for comments for the recreation section.

Ms. Dias announced that she has been hired as a full-time employee of the National Park Service and will be working part of that time as the NPS rep for the HRC. The deadline for having the management language in place will continue to be the end of December, but there will now be time to fine-tune the plan and to decide what should be in the plan and what is better suited to the website.

Ms. Dias reminded people that the legislation making the Housatonic Wild & Scenic indicated that the HRC will steward the river based on the updated management plan. Once a draft is ready, there will be brainstorming sessions regarding goals and actions.

- **Website development** – Julie Saxton is working with the website committee. Mr. Tingley read details of her proposed expenses, but as much of the content of the old website is from the old management plan, it is better to wait until the plan is in place. Mr. Tingley is working with a designer on a logo to present to the group.

HRC Member Updates

- **NHCOG** – no report

- **NPS** – Ms. Dias's responsibilities will cover rivers, trails, conservation, and much more. Ms. Lacy will be working closely with her at the start.

- **HVA** – Mr. Pinto gave a PowerPoint presentation on the RIO Program - 2023 Summer. There were two river stewards visiting sites on any given weekend day. For a sense of the scope of work, stewards were out at sites 29 days, missing only three days the entire summer. They completed 258 site assessments and handed out Instagram account stickers to keep communication going both ways. They continue to review data including trends of various activities. It was very helpful to have bilingual and trilingual communications, in-person as well as online and it was good to have all sites open this year. Mr. Tingley said it might be interesting to know the extent of commercial activity on the river.

The Wild and Scenic River Program Coordinator/Conservation Grant Manager position to be shared between HRC and HVA was posted today on the HVA website. He urged people to share the posting.

- **CT DEEP** – Matt Devine [email submission (abbreviated)]

Trout stocking- 10,800 trout were stocked in mid-October, split between the Cornwall Trout Management Area (TMA) and Bulls Bridge TMA. Housatonic Valley Regional High School students assisted on October 17.

Ruggles Landing Update – DEEP is getting quotes for well abatement, building demo, and other projects.

EnCon – “I am working with EnCon to take them on stocking runs, learn the spots we stock fish, and interface with the public. So far, they have been out on all but two trout and salmon stocking runs, including the Housatonic. This is exciting and intended to lead to a greater presence on the river, increased enforcement, and public relations.”

- **FirstLight** – Finding out who owns the Canaan Dam is turning out to be difficult.

New Business

- **2024 Housatonic River Commission Meeting Schedule**

Mr. Gambino made a motion to approve the 2024 Schedule of HRC Meetings. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

2024 MEETING SCHEDULE

Hybrid meetings will be held on the 2nd Tuesday of the month at **7:00 p.m.** at Cornwall Consolidated School, 5 Cream Hill Road, West Cornwall, (unless otherwise indicated), and via Google Meet or Zoom. Note that if Region One Schools are closed due to inclement weather, the meeting will be canceled.

January 9	May 14	September 10
February 13	June 11	October 8
March 12	July 9 – site to be determined	November 12
April 9	NO AUGUST MEETING SCHEDULED	December 10

Mutual Concerns & Future Agenda Items

Mr. Allyn brought up the Honey Hill proposed subdivision (approximately 20 houses on five-acre building lots) in North Canaan, on the east side of the river. He asked at the last public hearing on November 13 about the application that is required to be submitted to HRC. He stated that neither he

nor Mr. Anstine, as river commissioners, nor the HRC, has received any of the documents from the applicant or North Canaan Planning and Zoning. Both have the responsibility through North Canaan P&Z Regulations and the mandate with North Canaan, to submit those documents for advisement. There are 30 days for comments. Mr. Tingley and Mr. Allyn will work on comments to submit. The next P&Z meeting will be December 11.

It is important for all HRC members to have knowledge about what's going on in the towns and to communicate with zoning officers. Ms. Lacy suggested taking a portion of an upcoming meeting to explain the process of W&S reviews. HRC needs to be familiar with Section 7 of W&S to better understand how to talk about W&S projects. She also offered that she or Ms. Dias could accompany commissioners if they plan to speak to town commissions or boards.

Mr. Gambino reminded HRC that zoning issues go first before town wetlands commissions. Both commissions need to be informed that applications also need to go to HRC. A document speaking to this issue would be helpful.

A discussion of the coming workplan and budget status will be on the December agenda.

There was a brief discussion of regulations concerning tributaries. It was noted that even if something is going on further up on a tributary than ¼ mile, and it was affecting the river, then the commission would be interested.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:28 p.m.

Recording Secretary,



Susan Francisco

Next regular meeting – December 12, 2023 [Housatonic River Commission - \(weebly.com\)](https://www.housatonicrivercommission.com)

BLEC – Berkshire Litchfield

Environmental Council

CCC – Citizens Coordinating Council

**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 Off