

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 September 12, 2023 at HVA offices in Cornwall Bridge (subject to approval at the next meeting)

Christian Allyn – North Canaan – A
Jack Anstine – North Canaan – A
Matt Gallagher–Canaan (Falls Village)– P
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 – P
Jesse Klingebiel, Secretary – Kent – P
Steve Robey – Kent – P
Marc Andreotto, Treasurer – New Milford – P
Robert Gambino – New Milford – A

(Acronyms listed on the last page)

Also present were: Rob Phillips – NHCOC; Liz Lacy and Jackie Dias – NPS; Mike Jastremski and Rodrigo Pinto – HVA; Andy Brydges – FirstLight; Tim Abbott – North Canaan; Mike Benjamin – Kent Land Trust; one Kent resident.

The minutes of the July 11, 2023 meeting were approved as presented.

Treasurer's Report – Mr. Andreotto reported \$4,841.20 in the NHCOC-HRC subaccount. Invoices to towns for the 2023-2024 fiscal year will be sent out this week. Ms. Lacy will be putting together a spreadsheet of all workplan projects to share with Mr. Andreotto.

Old Business

- The October 10 meeting (hybrid) will be held at CCS.

Wild & Scenic

- Procurement Policy – This policy is based on what other wild and scenic rivers have in place and covers going out to bid on projects, and amounts of money available. It covers restrictions and a code of conduct.

Mr. Jones made a motion to approve the Housatonic River Commission Project Procurement Policy as presented. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

- Contract with HVA – There are several Workplan projects slated to be undertaken by HVA. The process for payment follows: HVA invoice goes to HRC for approval, and HRC sends the approved invoice to NHCOC for payment. Ms. Lacy said that this year an after-the-fact invoice could be created to cover up to \$15K for the 2023 summer RIO program.

Mr. Jones made a motion to agree to spend up to \$15K for preapproved expenses for HVA's 2023 RIO program and if there is a surplus it can be applied to RIO for 2024. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

- Administrative assistant – The feasibility of sharing an employee between HRC and HVA was discussed. Mr. Tingley noted the advantages of trying it out. Neither HRC nor HVA need to fill a full-time position, so there would be two separate job descriptions with payment from each organization. Ms. Lacy suggested figuring out a cap on what HRC could spend. Ms. Lacy and Mr. Tingley will work on a job description.

Mr. Jones made a motion to authorize Mr. Tingley to negotiate with HVA, with terms to be determined, for a shared staff position. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

- First read of Amending HRC Rules of Procedure (Coordinating Committee) - NHCOC and DEEP have been non-voting members of HRC since the beginning. Other current members of the

Coordinating Committee would become non-voting members of HRC. The second reading will be at the October meeting.

Housatonic River Coordinating Committee – member updates

- NHCOC – Mr. Phillips said that NHCOC has moved their offices to the Ed Advance campus in Litchfield. Their budget was approved, they received a Regional Services grant, there was an increase of over \$1MM for the continuation of rural health programs, they have more employees, and are themselves looking for a part-time administrative assistant and regional planner.
- NPS – Mr. Tingley asked about the management plan progress. Ms. Dias said that people have been responding, and the next ADHOC committee (to review and plan for upcoming HRC meetings) will meet via Zoom on September 19 and then the week before the October meeting.
- HVA – RIO Report – Mr. Brydges was pleased to share that FirstLight had given \$5K to HVA to support the summer RIO program. Work in the fall revolves around maintenance. Mr. Pinto thanked FirstLight for helping to fund river work.

Ongoing Issues/Updates

- River Access
 - Canaan Dam – Mr. Tingley reminded people that the Canaan Dam was destroyed in 1938 and the area is rubble-strewn, impassable, and needs attention. Archeologically, some elements should be saved. On August 10 he met with Kevin Mendick, Ms. Lacy, and Ms. Dias – NPS, and Brian Wood and Dan Timlake of FirstLight at the Canaan Dam site to discuss the process to improve the site. Mr. Wood is investigating ownership of the property.
 - Ruggles Landing – The Friends of Ruggles Landing is in favor of public access, but there are still many issues to be worked out.

Mr. Sinclair introduced Matt Gallagher as a new commissioner from Canaan/Falls Village, replacing Kent Allyn. He is the current Director of Programs and Operations at Green Mountain Forest.

- Housatonic Railroad – Mr. Sinclair reported on an Herbicide Working Group meeting in August. They decided to ask selectmen to speak directly with the railroad. Suggestions were made of other individuals and offices to approach about the continuing problem of herbicide spraying along the railroad. A meeting is scheduled for next week
- Invasives management – Mr. Robey noted that the island at the end of the covered bridge in Kent is covered in tree of heaven.
- Wastewater Management Project in West Cornwall – Mr. Jones said that the previously selected site is in a floodplain, so the search for a site continues.
- Gaylordsville – stone dumping in the river – Ms. Lacy has been in touch with the Army Corps of Engineers representative and with DEEP and will keep HRC informed.
- PCBs – Mr. Tingley, Mr. Pinto, and Matt Devine (CT DEEP) paddled and inspected the 10.5 miles between Fred Garner Park in Pittsfield and the Lenox Dale Dam in Lenox, which is the next stretch of river to be dredged and remediated in the Rest of River. They reported that no work has been done to date, also discovering almost two miles of JKW on the riverbanks and then Woods Pond entirely covered with water chestnut.
- Honey Hill – North Canaan – Mr. Abbott is the chairman of the North Canaan P&Z and talked about a 114-acre parcel on which owners want to build 20 homes (not affordable housing). He has recused himself from the issue of permitting. North Canaan currently operates under 1971 subdivision regulations. Although the land (north of the Canaan Dam) has 1,351' of river frontage, goes right to the Blackberry River, and is visible from the river, no application has been submitted to NHCOC. Ms. Lacy noted the importance of local controls (which would include restrictions on

development). She suggested that HRC send a letter before the North Canaan October 10 public hearing.

- Mr. Tingley mentioned that a real estate ad for a property at 492 Route 7 was brought to his attention by Mr. Saunders. Photos in the ad indicated that the riverfront had been altered in direct opposition to the original agreement with HRC. Ms. Lacy reiterated that it's important that landowners know what can and cannot be done

New Business

- Recording Secretary pay – the payment has always been based on a per-meeting basis, but as there is considerably more work to be done now:

Mr. Gallagher made a motion to change the pay structure from a per-meeting amount to an hourly rate of \$30. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

- Promotional materials for presentations – Ms. Lacy and Ms. Dias can help to develop materials to be used and distributed at events.

- Request from Salisbury Association for an HRC Letter of Support – Mr. Tingley was authorized to submit a letter of support to the Salisbury Association for the Preservation of 297 Acres at Twin Lakes in Salisbury through an Open Space Grant from CT DEEP.

- Kent Land Trust application – Mr. Jastremski said that a Connecticut Recreational Trails Grant had been received and that the Kent Land Trust wishes to construct a viewing platform at the river's edge.

Mr. Jones made a motion to approve the application from Kent Land Trust to create a 500' gravel path to the edge of the river to an 8' x 14' public access and handicapped viewing platform at 170 Kent Road in Kent. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

- Google Workspace and Zoom account updates and OWL – Ms. Francisco will follow up with Ms. Dias on best practices for creating an online space for HRC documents and communications, and a solution for virtual and hybrid meetings.

Mutual Concerns & Future Agenda Items

There will be a roster at the October meeting for people to sign up for subcommittees.

Mr. Sinclair will be presenting a talk on the American Chestnut in Falls Village on Sunday, September 17. <https://housatonicheritage.org/heritage-experiences/heritage-walks/>

Adjournment

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

Recording Secretary,



Susan Francisco

Next regular meeting – October 10, 2023 [Housatonic River Commission - \(weebly.com\)](https://housatonicheritage.org/heritage-experiences/heritage-walks/)

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 Officer