

# 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 of February 13, 2018 with the Coordinating Committee (subject to approval at next regular meeting) at Cornwall Consolidated School**

Lynn Fowler – North Canaan – P  
Christian Allyn – North Canaan – P  
Karl Munson – Canaan (Falls Village) – A  
Ellery Sinclair – Canaan (Falls Village) – A  
Gordon Whitbeck – Salisbury – P  
Stacie Weiner – Salisbury – 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 – New Milford – P  
Robert Gambino – New Milford – P

(Acronyms listed on last page)

Also present were: Jocelyn Ayer, NHCOG; Mike Jastremski, HVA; and Mike Humphreys, CT DEEP.

### **Mr. Tingley called the meeting to order at 7:32 p.m.**

There was a moment of silence to honor George Kiefer, who died on Saturday, February 10, 2018. George was appointed as an HRC commissioner on September 14, 1977.

**The minutes of the January 8, 2018 regular meeting were approved with the following correction: page 2, paragraph 2 – Standing Reports – There is still no progress regarding the consent-decree EAB decision.**

**Treasurer's Report** – Mr. Whitbeck reported \$133.01 in checking and \$5,325.58 in savings.

### **Communications**

Ms. Fowler announced a Massachusetts SubCouncil of the Housatonic River Trustee Council Open House to be held at the Town Hall in Lenox on Thursday, March 29 “...to showcase completed restoration projects from Rounds 1, 2 and 3 (2004 – 2017) of the Massachusetts Housatonic River Watershed Restoration Program and to discuss Round 4 of the restoration.”

Mr. Allyn suggested that commissioners read the emailed chapter titled “Are ‘Alien’ Plants ‘Bad’?” from an upcoming book by entomologist Doug Tallamy.

Mr. Klingebiel mentioned the ice dams on the Housatonic and flooding that occurred in Kent and affected Kent School.

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

- HVA – updates on any initiatives related to River Management Plan strategies

Mr. Jastremski spoke about linking river management plan recommendations with Greenprint: sensitive zones, analysis, connections between core forests, land use changes, healthy sub-watersheds, and protecting riverfront land. Ms. Ayer noted that NHCOG used HVA/Greenprint mapping of high priority conservation areas when developing the regional plan of conservation and development – this mapping is in the final version of the Plan posted online.

Mr. Jastremski handed out information on HVA’s “Watershed Management Planning and Implementation in High Priority sub-watersheds” with a map of the watersheds. The “Housatonic Mainstream W&S watershed” is not being worked on now but could be in the future. Currently they are working on the Still River, Blackberry River, and Ten Mile which feed

into the Housatonic. HVA is also working with communities on reducing impervious surfaces (runoff) and are hoping to expand their work from main waterways into tributaries. They are also looking at recreation; overuse and/or misuse of active points of access.

Regarding water quality, Mr. Jastremski distributed a paper covering details of “RiverSmart: Changing behaviors through public outreach,” addressing homeowners, youth, and businesses. A major focus is those behaviors that impact water quality by reducing polluted stormwater runoff:

- Pesticide and fertilizer use
- Cleanser & solvent use/disposal
- Basic landscaping & residential property management practices
- Petroleum, Household hazardous waste and business waste disposal
- Litter & Pet waste responsibility

The website covering program components <http://BeRiverSmart.org> (HVA is a core partner) will be online in late spring 2018.

It was noted that wildlife conservation is not part of the HRC management plan, but HVA is looking at road/stream crossings and identifying barriers to wildlife crossings.

- River stewards program

Mr. Jastremski explained that HVA is looking to add more summer interns, so that along with HVA work, they could act as river stewards, rotating on summer weekends. There is a potential for Eversource funding for this. Comments included reviving a sense of watchfulness at active use points along the river, the benefit of having stewards to observe and talk with river users, as well as report on activities. Stewards could also be people who use the river, as well as people who live along the river and are present. It was noted though, that rules first need to be posted in order to be able to enforce them.

- NHCOG – Ms. Ayer – NHCOG received a grant from CIRCA and worked with the Northwest Conservation District to produce a (newly-released) design manual entitled “MORRIS, Low Impact Sustainable Development and Stormwater Management Design Manual” which can be found online at <http://northwesthillscog.org/environmental-planning/> and can be used as a guide for other towns. Low-impact development (LID) is “a construction philosophy that manages precipitation on-site in order to preserve water quality, prevent erosion, and maintain groundwater.” Ms. Ayer suggested that commissioners speak to P&Z members to see if this might be something they are interested in implementing in their town.

Ms. Ayer discussed a recent road supervisors meeting at NHCOG where Tom Zetterstrom and Mr. Allyn talked about how invasive species are being managed by the road crew in Canaan to encourage other towns to do the same.

- NPS- update on Wild & Scenic designation

The updated Housatonic River Evaluation was recently emailed to commissioners. The NPS will now be initiating an internal review of the document.

- HRC – invasive plant management and river access

Mr. Zetterstrom and Mr. Allyn are in the process of mapping invasives (particularly Japanese knotweed) along the Housatonic and its tributaries. Mr. Allyn described the long and complicated process of investigating biological control of invasives.

Mr. Gambino gave an update of the West Cornwall (just upstream of the Covered Bridge) Japanese knotweed program. They are assuming a good “kill,” will inspect the patch in May (dead plants are left standing), and monitor regrowth in June. This is a prime example of the problems that can come with contaminated landfill.

Mr. Tingley and Mr. Klingebiel will work on identifying as many river access points as possible, reviewing the itinerary of the most recent river trip to identify locations, noting that they need to make sense for all those who use the river.

- CT DEEP – Mr. Humphreys described some of the fish issues DEEP is working on. One such is protecting and looking for ways to improve the thermal refuges, key cold spots in the river where trout congregate, such as at the mouth of Mill Brook in West Cornwall. Currently fishing is not allowed in those spots from mid-June through mid-September.

### **Ongoing Issues/Updates**

- The Bend – Mr. Jastremski reported that HVA had been working on the insurance issue for the possibility of industrial contamination. Since no affordable policy exists, no one wants to “put shovel to ground” so HVA is starting again with a new design that does not involve excavation.
- Wastewater study in West Cornwall – nothing new to report.

### **Standing Report**

- GE Settlement/PCBs – Ms. Fowler

Of interest to the HRC are the comments from the CT DEEP to the EPA re: GE Biota Consumption Plan (Jan. 2018). Susan Peterson will ask for it to be discussed at the CT CCC meeting currently proposed for April. The EAB decision regarding the Rest of the River cleanup will also be on that agenda. Ms. Fowler asked if the HRC wanted to help with refreshments for the CCC meeting and offered to coordinate.

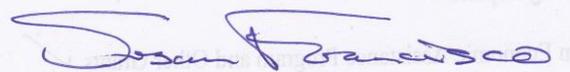
**Mr. Allyn made a motion to spend up to \$50 on refreshments for the CCC meeting (likely to be held at Housatonic Valley Regional High School). The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

**Mr. Klingebiel made a motion to reimburse Ms. Fowler \$29.15 for mileage to Lenox for a January CCC meeting. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

**The meeting was adjourned at 8:54 p.m.**

**Next regular meeting March 13, 2018**

Recording Secretary,



Susan Francisco

CCC – Citizens Coordinating Committee  
CT DOT – Connecticut Department of Transportation  
DEEP – Department of Energy and Environmental Protection  
EAB – Environmental Appeals Board  
EPA – Environmental Protection Agency  
FERC – Federal Energy Regulatory Commission  
FEMA – Federal Emergency Management Agency  
GE – General Electric

H.E.A.L. – Housatonic Environmental Action League  
HRC – Housatonic River Commission  
HVA – Housatonic Valley Association  
MOA – Memorandum of Understanding  
NCD – Northwest Conservation District  
NHCOC – Northwest Hills Council of Governments  
NPS – National Park Service  
NRD – Natural Resource Damages  
RSRS – Rail Service Restoration Society  
W&S – Wild and Scenic  
ZEO – Zoning Enforcement Office