

## Executive Committee Meeting

Zoom Meeting

November 10, 2020

10:00am to 12:00pm

### MEETING NOTES

#### ATTENDEES

Laura Blake, Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP)  
Caitlin Chaffee, Rhode Island Coastal Resource Management Council (CRMC)  
Richard Friesner, New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission (NEIWPCC)  
Sue Kiernan, Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM)  
Regina Lyons, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA—Region 1)  
Heidi Ricci, Mass Audubon  
Jonathan Stone, Save The Bay  
Susan Sullivan, NEIWPCC  
Caitlyn Whittle, EPA—Region 1  
Mike Gerel, Narragansett Bay Estuary Program (NBEP)  
Julia Bancroft, NBEP

#### INTRODUCTION

Regina Lyons our Chair for this month called the meeting to order at 10:00am, introduced everyone on the call. Mike Gerel next reviewed the agenda. The meeting minutes from the May 12, 2020 and September 11, 2020 were approved with motion and a second. Regina then turned it over to Sue Kiernan and Mike Gerel for an update on the work of the Nominating Subcommittee.

#### NOMINATING SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

Sue Kiernan reported out on the Steering Committee nominating process. The goal was to fill in some gaps in expertise within the existing committee, including fisheries and wildlife, local government, environmental justice, and financial management to name a few. Sue noted that five existing committee members are up for re-appointment. Since Cassius has not participated in some time, Mike noted that staff will be working with Catalina Martinez to reach out to the Narragansett Tribe over the next year to learn their needs and perhaps find a representative that will be able to participate. Nominating Subcommittee members next presented the nine potential nominees included in the 2020 slate. It was noted that it was a good idea to add someone from RIDOT to pair with our existing member from MADAT. Susan Sullivan also emphasized the importance of finding local community groups and citizens to participate, perhaps through a citizen's advisory committees like that used by Lake Champlain Basin Program and Long Island Sound Study. Sue asked that group for their concurrence to move the current slate of five reappointments and nine new members forward to the Steering Committee. The Executive Committee unanimously agreed to move this slate forward. Mike

noted that there are three more steps before the new members join us, including Steering Committee approval, provision of an invite letter to the nominee, and formal acceptance of the invite my submittal of a signed *Steering Committee Expectations* document.

Caitlin Chaffee reminded that group that we are still in need of a Chair. It was acknowledged those in the position in the past was a heavy-lift, burn-out position, but as envisioned today, the position now predominately involves running the Executive Committee meeting and serving as a occasional sounding board for Mike on organizational issues. All agreed this position must be filled soon, even if not for the full three-year term. Regina Lyons announced that she will take on the Chair role for the next few months and will evaluate whether she is able to take on the position longer-term.

## PROGRAM UPDATE

Richard Friesner next offered a current financial report. Since the last update, NBEP has added two new contracts with Dan Codiga to expand on his excellent work on eutrophication in the Narragansett Bay and Shining Seas Fisheries Consulting to evaluate and explore applications fisher’s knowledge data about the Bay. There was a question of why the balance for FY15 money was so high and if there are concerns for spending it down. Richard noted that four ongoing projects billing to that code that are expected to be completed in the second quarter of FY2021. The biggest concern is the FY19 monies allocated to the Aquidnick Island project, which has been stalled due to staff turnover for some time.

Next, Mike highlighted 10 areas of work where staff focused since the last meeting. The table below provides an overview of these accomplishments.

Activity Highlights	
<b>1. Annual Performance Reviews</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completed for all four staff</li> <li>Julia Twichell promoted to Environmental Analyst III</li> </ul>	<b>6. Annual NEPORT Report Submitted</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Included \$1,926,106 leveraged, and 1200 acres of habitat restored</li> <li>Does not do an adequate job of quantifying our work</li> </ul>
<b>2. New EPA NEP Funding Guidance released 10/14</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reviewed and commented on guidance</li> <li>EPA meets with NEP Directors and NEIWPC soon</li> </ul>	<b>7. NBEP Resilience Projects</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provided EPA Region 1 a comprehensive write up of 20 NBEP resilience projects from 2016-2020</li> </ul>
<b>3. Vision 2032 Progress</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plan to submit fast-track ICR materials to EPA this week</li> <li>Major functional enhancements to Vision2032.org</li> <li>Drafting materials for first focal area workgroup meets</li> </ul>	<b>8. Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plan to hire a consultant to do an organizational JEDI assessment that will inform next steps (training, subcommittee, etc.)                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Strongly recommended as 1<sup>st</sup> step by Catalina and consultants</li> <li>✓ Interviewed 3 so far, one planned for Dec, work in Spring</li> </ul> </li> <li>New EJ Story Map to be released spring 2021</li> </ul>
<b>4. Science Working Groups rolling</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SAV 9/9, Salt Marsh 10/6, Social Science 10/26</li> <li>Exploring contract facilitation support</li> </ul>	<b>9. New NBEP Website</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Near final draft looks great!</li> <li>EPA/NEIWPC review soon, present to SC and launch in December</li> </ul>
<b>5. Land Use Science Update</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Now includes new 2016 NLCD land use data</li> <li>Developing 4-page paper by spring 2021</li> </ul>	<b>10. Outreach</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff have been doing extensive outreach and education of late</li> <li>Quote in Whitehouse National Estuary’s Week release</li> </ul>

## THE EC/SC IN 2021

Mike walked through a list of seven key elements of Executive and Steering Committee meetings, suggested some ways to proceed to stimulate discussion, and asked members for feedback. The goal of this exercise was to assure that the Committee designs its own meetings for 2021. Mike worked off the table below.

Meeting Element	Suggestion For Discussion	Key Change
1. How often should the EC and SC meet?	EC meets 6 times a year and SC meet quarterly (EC to meet a month before SC)	No change
2. How long should EC and SC meetings be?	If virtual, 90 minutes; in person, EC 2 hours and SC four hours w/lunch	Reduce all virtual meetings from 2 hours to 90 minutes
3. EC stay virtual permanently?	Keep at least 2 EC meetings a year virtual	n/a
4. Rotating Chair assignments for both committees	Assign a Chair to EC/SC meets at start of year	Assign in advance instead of just prior to each meeting
5. Meeting materials delivery	Continue to send out at least a week before meetings	No change
6. Meeting format and content input	Continue shift to shorter general program updates, more detailed updates on 1-2 projects, and a mix of speakers; add partner presentations; and clarify asks of EC/SC in advance.	Prior to meetings, provide in writing the specific questions to be answered or decisions requested of the EC/SC that are anticipated to require substantive discussion or a vote
7. Meeting notes	Get them out faster.	Out 2 weeks after instead of a month

Susan Sullivan suggested finding a way to coordinate with other regional groups as she has meeting conflicts on Tuesday's and Wednesday's of the month. Caitlyn Whittle added that she liked the highlight slide used today as a program report, which helps save time on going over the whole report at the meeting. She felt members could read the full report prior to the meeting as they have been getting out before the meeting date. Additionally, Caitlin Chaffee said she liked the Post-It note participatory exercise we used at the last meeting to keep people engaged at the meeting and stimulate useful feedback. Mike agreed and said that moving forward he knows of a wide range of participatory exercises that can be used when appropriate.

The group agreed that the Executive Committee should continue to meet six times a year for up to two hours depending on the agenda. There was support for shorter 90-minute Executive and Steering Committee meetings if possible. Meetings should continue virtually for a while. However, there was consensus that a hybrid approach that would allow virtual participation once in-person meeting begin again would be more efficient by reducing time spent commuting back and forth. Jonathan offered that Save The Bay offices has added a video system in their conference room that would support hybrid meetings. It was stated that offering the virtual option especially for Steering Committee meetings would be a good way to bring presenters and panels from outside the region. Use of a rotating Chair will be continued until someone agrees to fill the seat full time; Mike noted that a few nominees for the Steering Committee would make excellent Chairs in the future. He also noted he will continue to share the meeting materials at least one week before scheduled meetings. Committee members also suggested NBEP staff direct members to review specific parts of the Program Report or other provided

materials (particularly those supporting a decision requested of the committee) to allow the group to spend its time in providing input.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Jonathan Stone: The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) will be issuing decisions on wind energy development permit applications in December and there will be a lot of activity around port development and supporting that industry in the region. Heidi suggested checking the coalition for offshore wind website for more information.

## ACTION ITEMS

1. Mike to fix typo on page 3 of today's PPT to say that there are five reappointments to the Steering Committee proposed today.
2. Mike will include consideration for approval of the full slate of reappointments and new members presented today in the December Steering Committee meeting agenda.
3. Regina will serve as Chair for the next few months and will consider longer.
4. Mike to share a Google Form to gather any additional input on future meeting design.

## UPCOMING MEETINGS

1. Blackstone River Watershed Needs Assessment Project Meeting #5, Thursday, November 19, 2020 from 1-3pm.
2. Steering Committee, Tuesday, December 15, 2020 from 1-2:30pm.

Meeting adjourned at 11:58am