

Meeting Minutes
Weir River Estuary Park Committee
Tuesday February 14, 2023, 4:30pm
Remote - Call in Meeting

This is a Tri-Town Committee, appointed by the Boards of Selectmen for Cohasset, Hingham and Hull, not a non-profit Watershed Association. Formed in 2002 approved in 2005, the goals of the WREP Committee are; to **Preserve** the rare and idyllic setting, **Expand** public access and low impact recreational opportunities, **Protect** the historical and geological integrity, **Protect** and restore natural resources and biological diversity, **Conserve** a contiguous corridor of open space and healthy habitats, **Develop** educational opportunities and foster stewardship, **Establish** Community support for land and estuarine habitat protection and maintain working relationships with Town Selectmen, Conservation Commissions, Planning Boards and Advisory, Open Space and Harbor Development committees, local Land Trusts, Land preservation organizations, and related regional state and federal agencies.

1. **Call to Order** by chair Sharon Allen (Hin), Dick Avery (Coh) Tom Bell (Coh), Judeth Van Hamm (Hul), Scott Plympton (Hul), Mark Buonagurio (Hin). Meeting called to order with quorum at 4:48.
2. **Minutes** from the meeting 01/10/23 were reviewed with corrections (Scott to revise) and approved for posting.
3. **Opening:** Sharon informs members of Remote Meeting Law details.
4. **Updates by Town:**
 - Cohasset:**
 - Eagles were spotted on Straits Pond, the estuary, and Foundry Pond.
 - Hingham:**
 - a. The Hingham Cleaner Greener movement plans to restrict the sale of plastic bottles.
 - b. Mark discusses the WREP Facebook page. No backup for administration exists. Mark to make Scott a backup administrator. If anyone has some nice pictures of the estuary, please send them to Mark.
 - c. Sydney Pond needs a clean-up effort. The trail is overgrown and needs repair. Downed trees noted. New trail blaze markers are needed. This activity may be added to our clean-up day.
 - d. At our last meeting, Tom Bell discussed the issue of where farm animal urine discharge is within a salt marsh area. Horses should not be within 50' of the estuary.
 - e. As previously noted, the dam at Foundry Pond is hazardous to fish migration. Improvements (boards and barriers) are needed at the spillway, to divert water to the fish ladder and prevent fish from going over the falls. Riprap was installed in the 90's to support the dam. As fish go over the falls, they perish on the rocks. This is role for the Hingham DPW and Conservation.
 - Some herring 'scouts' have been observed making it all the way to Triphammer Pond, but due to overuse and pumping the river dry in the summer, combined

with the issues with the dam, make it near impossible for successful fish migrations.

Hull:

- a. Scott reports on 'The Walking Path to the Island in Straits Pond via Eastman Road project':
 - a. The project is seeking funding from Mass Trails.
 - b. Scott shared the current draft plans with the committee.
 - c. Observations:
 - It appears that the trail will follow as close to the water as possible. They are proposing a DEP Compliant Wetlands crossing. Why are we not using access along Eastman Road which runs adjacent to Gratta's? The Town owns the road, why not use it? Why is the town not asserting its property rights.
 - The project proposed wooden boardwalks. This will be expensive. If they are used, they will deteriorate over time and a maintenance plan is necessary.
 - There is concern about the proposed removal of trees to accommodate a boardwalk.
 - d. Scott will invite Chris Krahforst to our next meeting to discuss the project.
- b. Solar Personal Rapid Transportation:
 - a. No update. Judeth is in Columbia and will back in late March

5. Annual Estuary Clean-up Day:

- a. April 22
- b. Scott will discuss the removal of the hobo camp (tent) at the hummock by the GWB Bridge with the DPW. Another site exists over by Avalon.
- c. Mark is in discussion with Mass DOT and County Sheriff on cleanup coordination and trash bags.

6. Tri-Town Annual Report:

- a. Highlights of each town's yearly activities have been submitted to Sharon.

7. Next Meeting:

- a. Next meeting on Tuesday, April 11, 2023 at 4:30. This will be a Zoom call
- b. **Meeting Adjourns:** 5:59 PM