

Summary of Meeting 9
Citizens Advisory Committee
Greenwich Bay Special Area Management Plan
Wednesday, February 4, 2003 6:30-8:30 PM
Public Access and Framework for Management Meeting
Warwick Sewer Authority, RI

At the ninth meeting of the Citizens Advisory Committee for the Greenwich Bay SAMP, guest speakers mostly discussed public access issues in the Greenwich Bay area. The members recommended policies for protecting public access and developing safeguards to ensure that the Greenwich Bay shoreline is not overwhelmed and compromised by construction of residential and private docks. Attendees chose as a group to stick to the public access discussion and delay review of the Framework for Management portion until a future meeting. A handout summarizing the chapter is available online at the GB SAMP website.

Public Access

Jeff Willis, deputy director of the Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC) gave an overview of the council's right-of-way designation process and advised the CAC to think of funding opportunities – having municipalities share legal resources and finances, for example – that could help local communities pursue designations in as timely a manner as possible.

Neil Ross, a marina consultant, gave a powerpoint presentation about the proliferation of private docks in Greenwich Bay. He said that many of the docks are built along dangerous, exposed portions of the bay – a situation that could prove quite costly were a significant hurricane to come along. In terms of access, Ross said that while groups of private docks can take up as much space as marinas, these docks aren't subject to the kinds of strict regulatory controls that commercial marinas are held to. The domino effect – one private dock permit clearing the way for many more adjacent permitted docks – is a growing problem for public access, Ross said, as is the cumulative environmental impacts of these new docks. After the presentation, Willis advised CAC members to develop policies that will help local government and the state evaluate whether dock applications are suitable for a particular area. CAC members made several policy recommendations to protect the remaining shoreline and the bay for public use and enjoyment:

CAC Recommendations

- Create a one-stop-shopping contact system for citizens so people know who to call with questions about access and dock-related safety and environmental concerns.
- Construction of a new private dock should be contingent on the owner supplying some compensatory form of public access.
- SAMP policies should be tailored with the shoreline conditions of Greenwich Bay in mind so that specific recommendations about dock construction can be made regarding dock heights, widths, numbers, appropriate locations and access ways.
- The SAMP should include archeological information that could help local and state decision-makers evaluate the appropriateness of potential dock placements.

- Decision-makers should consider implementing a moratorium on dock building until public access protections are balanced against economic investment considerations and are incorporated into the application process.
- The SAMP should direct the creation of municipal beach nourishment programs so local dredge materials can be used to replenish shoreline erosion exacerbated by dock construction and boating.
- Municipal and state governments should place right-of-way information in an easily accessible web site.
- Alternative forms of boat storage, such as boat stacking, should be considered to alleviate shoreline pressures and keep access ways open.
- Put 5-year hold on amending final SAMP document.
- SAMP should drive a restructuring of state water classifications so they are better tools for determining the appropriateness of dock and development applications.

Action Items

- CRMC will invite their geologist and dredging experts to the recreational use chapter meeting.
- CRMC will send out over the listserv the upcoming public meetings with Town Councils and other community groups. CAC members are encouraged to participate.

Next Meeting

The CAC will meet next on February 18 from 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. at the Warwick Sewer Authority. The focus of the meeting will be on recreational uses in Greenwich Bay.

Attendees

Public

John Williams, Warwick Cove Marina
 Leah Robinson, Buttonwoods Bay
 Commission
 Dan Geagan, City of Warwick
 Stephen Medeiros, RISA
 Lincoln Ross, CTPA
 Jerry Meyer, EG Chamber of Commerce
 Ed Keaney, RISA
 Jim White, RISA
 Leo Martin, HLM
 Karen Way, BBGC
 Peter Dersy
 Linda Green, URI
 Bob Moeller, RISA
 Lee Raymond, Greenwich Bay Marina
 Lauren Slocum, Central RI Chamber
 Carol Fritz, CTPA

Michelle Komar, Buckeye Brook
 Coalition
 Chris Ruhling, Brewers Yacht Marina
 Catherine Murphy, Defenders of
 Greenwich Bay
 Glen Moore, East Greenwich Cove
 Commission

Management Staff & Technical Committee

Michael Tikoian, CRMC Chair
 David Abegdon, CRMC Council
 Jeff Willis, CRMC Dep. Director
 Virginia Lee, URI Coastal Resources Center
 Glenn Ricci, URI CRC
 Sue Kennedy, URI CRC
 Michael Campana, URI CRC