

Summary of Meeting 11
Citizens Advisory Committee
Greenwich Bay Special Area Management Plan
Wednesday, March 3, 2004 6:30-8:30 PM
Next Steps
Warwick Sewer Authority, RI

At the eleventh meeting of the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) for the Greenwich Bay SAMP, the group discussed whether the CAC should continue, and if so, what form the CAC should take. The Narragansett Indian Tribe speakers were unable to attend at the last minute. We will look to engage them at a later date. Regarding the CAC discussion, there was a declaration by the Defenders of Greenwich Bay (Defenders) that its support of the SAMP is contingent upon the inclusion of several goals. These should echo the Defenders' desire for solutions that will help preserve the "spirit" of residents' bay heritage and heartfelt interactions (swimming, small-boating, wading, beachwalking, etc.) with Greenwich Bay – a finite resource. Some of the actions that the Defenders of Greenwich Bay desire include:

- ? The expansion of Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC) management to at least 200 feet into the watershed tributaries (streams & wetlands).
- ? Solid research on topics such as pathogen loading regarding wild animals (ex: geese).
- ? A marina parking plan that would implement a per-boat parking ratio and restrict parking to sites contiguous to marina basins.
- ? Total shoreline public access and provision of boat ramps or points of entry for smaller boats.
- ? The creation of wildlife sanctuaries to counteract the loss of environment to marina development.
- ? Beach renourishment.
- ? Laws and policies to enable local people to clam again.

The Defenders recognize the importance of striking a balance between economic and environmental bay uses, but are increasingly seeing losses of environmental and public assets that are quickly decreasing residents' ability to enjoy vital bay activities such as swimming, small-boating, beachwalking, clamming, etc. While the Defenders mention that their position on nitrogen loading was incorrect and that boating impacts are nominal, they believe that the CAC meetings have done little thus far to resolve the contention between a primary economic sector, the marinas, and residents. The Defenders increasingly feel unable to trust the system or the "powers that be" to solve the problems that plague the bay. The Defenders hope to bring clarity to the process and provide a new opportunity to fast-track the SAMP by providing the listing of Defender demands and goals – some of which are listed above. The Defenders also requested to review drafts of SAMP chapters as soon as possible.

The comments by The Defenders was well received and supported by other CAC members. There were disagreements on how to structure a marina parking policy as an

indirect mechanism to controlling the number of boats in the bay. There were discussions on how policies can support the role and economic health of small marina operators (approximately 25% turnover annually).

Another topic of focus from resident groups was the poor maintenance and lack of community boat ramps for the low budget boaters to access the bay. This included maintaining the roads leading to the ramps. Linked to the small boat ramp discussion was the safety issues on the water for allowing children to sail in the coves. Due to the marina and mooring fields, neighborhood groups feel there is limited space to allow children and small boaters to recreate in safety.

This was the last scheduled CAC meeting. Therefore the discussions shifted to what role the Citizens would want after the SAM Plan is adopted for being stewards of the bay. A majority of CAC members present preferred a structure in which no new government or citizen bay group would form. Instead they saw annual meetings in which government agencies would update the public on activities, data collection and enforcement.

Next steps

- ? The CAC will be provided draft SAMP chapters within several weeks. Notifications will be sent out via the SAMP listserv and on the SAMP website.
- ? The CAC will review the drafts and then move forward with joint work sessions (CRMC, Technical Committees and CAC) to refine the chapters further.
- ? The CAC communications subcommittee will continue to meet at least once a month to move forward with speaking and media opportunities, printed materials and the expansion of the public process. The next communications meeting date is Wednesday, March 31 at 5:45 p.m. at the Warwick Sewer Authority. The date will be sent out to all CAC members via the listserv and posted on the website.

Attendees

CAC and Public

Jack Early, Defenders of GB
Leah Robinson, BBC
Dick Langseth, BBC
Carol Fritz, CTPA
Dan Geagan, Warwick
John Williams, Warwick Cove Marina
Jerry Meyer, EG Chamber
Linda Green, URI
Sharon Fitzgerald, Old Buttonwoods
Lincoln Ross, CTPA

Management Staff & Technical Committee

Michael Tikoian, CRMC Chair
Grover Fugate, CRMC Ex. Director
Megan Higgins, CRCM
Virginia Lee, URI Coastal Resources Center
Glenn Ricci, URI CRC
Sue Kennedy, URI CRC