

HUDSON RIVER VALLEY GREENWAY
Combined meeting of
Greenway Conservancy for the Hudson River Valley, Inc.,
Hudson River Valley Greenway Communities Council,
and
Greenway Heritage Conservancy HRV, Inc.
June 8, 2022
Via Zoom
MINUTES

Attendance

Conservancy Members Present

Brown, Kristin Cole, Conservancy Member
Burke, Kevin, Conservancy Chairman
Daniels, Jane, Conservancy Member
Jacks, Betsy, Conservancy Vice-Chair
Idleman, Sara, Conservancy Member
Lanzetta, Cindy, Conservancy Member
McLaughlin, Jayne, Conservancy Treasurer
Olson, Sarah, Conservancy Secretary
Weiss, Daniela, Conservancy Member
Williams, Jeanne, Conservancy Member
Yarabek, Stefan, Conservancy Member

Conservancy Members Present by Proxy

Murray, Dennis, Conservancy Member

Conservancy Delegates Present

Cocozza, Jennifer, for Conservancy Member Hon. Marcus Molinaro

Council Members Present

Aldrich, J. Winthrop, Acting Council Chair
Altieri, Vincent, Rockland County Council Member
Carlquist, Jennifer, Putnam County Council Member
Downey, Margaretta, Dutchess County Council Member
Elliott, Robert, Westchester County Council Member
Galef, Hon. Sandra, Council Member
Head, Betty, Albany County Council Member
McNamara, Mary, Ulster County Council Member
Piscitelli, Anthony, New York City Council Member
von der Heide, Linda, Rensselaer County Council Member
Yaun, Johanna, Orange County Council Member

Council Members Present by Proxy

Castillo, Carla, Council Member

Schneid, Matthew, New York City Council Member

Joint Delegates Present

Cooper, Linda, Joint Delegate for Commissioner, NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

Dunwell, Fran, Joint Co-Delegate for Commissioner, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation

Leo, Christian, Joint Delegate for Commissioner of NYS Office of General Services

Wynter, Damali, Joint Delegate for Commissioner of NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets

Advisory Members Present

Croft, Scott, Hudson River Boat & Yacht Club Association

Greenway Staff Present

Arana, Cody, Assistant Event Coordinator

Campochiaro, Beth, Trails and Community Outreach Director

Day, Shannon, Director of Operations

Jeanson, Daniel, Project Director

Keller, Scott, Executive Director

Call to Order

Chairman Kevin Burke called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m.

Agenda Review

Chairman Burke called for any comments on the agenda. No comments were made.

Appointment of Scott Croft to Advisory Board

Executive Director Scott Keller noted that Scott Croft, Vice President of Public affairs for Boat US, the premier boating advocate in the US, was nominated to replace the late Frank Bergman on the Advisory Board in a non-voting capacity. Mr. Keller noted that he has worked with Mr. Croft for the past several years on the Hudson River Harbor Safety Committee, and that Mr. Croft also serves on the Hudson River Estuary Management Committee Advisory Board.

Chairman Burke called for a vote on the appointment of Mr. Croft. On a motion from Meg Downey (Sarah Olson second), the appointment was unanimously approved.

Proclamation Recognizing Lori Ensinger

Acting Chairman Wint Aldrich read a proclamation recognizing the service of Lori Ensinger to the Board of the Communities Council. Ms. Ensinger has been a Board Member since 2019 and is resigning her position on the Board.

Proclamation Recognizing Fran Dunwell

Acting Chairman Aldrich read a proclamation from the Board recognizing the service of Fran Dunwell, Hudson River Estuary Coordinator, to the Greenway Board. Fran has been a joint delegate to the Board of the Department of Environmental Conservation since 1995, and is now retiring from DEC. Acting Chairman Aldrich thanked Ms. Dunwell for her long and dedicated service to the Greenway and the Hudson Valley, as did many other Board Members including Assemblywoman Galef, Meg Downey, Sarah Olson, Cindy Lanzetta, Linda Cooper, and Executive Director Scott Keller. Chairman Burke added his thanks and noted that Fran has been the author of many books on the Hudson River that have enhanced our knowledge of this resource. Fran noted that it had been a pleasure serving in her capacity on the Board.

Minutes of March 9, 2022 Combined Meeting of the Hudson River Valley Greenway Communities Council, Greenway Conservancy for the Hudson River Valley, Inc., and Greenway Heritage Conservancy HRV, Inc.

Chairman Burke then asked for a motion to accept the minutes of the March 9, 2022 Greenway Joint Meeting. On a motion from Betsy Jacks, (Meg Downey second) the minutes of the March 9, 2022 Combined Meeting of the Hudson River Valley Greenway Communities Council, Greenway Conservancy for the Hudson River Valley, Inc., and Greenway Heritage Conservancy HRV, Inc. were unanimously approved.

Minutes of May 26, 2022 Meeting of the Hudson River Valley Greenway Grants Committee

Chairman Burke called for a motion to approve the minutes of the May 26, 2022 meeting of the Hudson River Valley Greenway Grants Committee. On a motion from Sarah Olson (Meg Downey second) the minutes of the May 26, 2022 meeting of the Hudson River Valley Greenway Grants Committee were unanimously approved.

Hudson River Valley Greenway Communities Council

Call to Order

Acting Council Chair Wint Aldrich called the Council meeting to order.

Communities Council Grants

Mr. Keller reviewed the grant applications that had been received for the Communities Grant Program.

The Town of Easton, Washington County is seeking, and the Grants Committee recommends, \$10,000 for a Comprehensive Plan-Phase I Visioning.

The Town of Lloyd, Ulster County is seeking, and the Grants Committee recommends \$10,000 for a Phase I Visioning of a Comprehensive Plan Update.

Communities Council Compact Grants

Mr. Keller reviewed the grant applications that had been received for the Compact Grant Program.

The Town of LaGrange, Dutchess County is seeking, and the Grants Committee recommends \$10,000 for an Open Space Plan.

The Village of Rhinebeck, Dutchess County is seeking, and the Grants Committee recommends, \$10,000 for a Comprehensive Plan Update.

Acting Chair Wint Aldrich called for a vote on the Greenway Communities and Compact grants recommended by the Grants Committee. On a motion from Bob Elliott (Fran Dunwell second), the grants were approved unanimously.

Greenway Conservancy for the Hudson River Valley, Inc.

Call to Order

Chairman Burke called the Conservancy meeting to order.

Update on Empire State Trail (EST)

Mr. Keller noted that Andy Beers had retired on May 19th, 2022 and will be joining the Board at an in person meeting so the Board and staff can thank him for his work. On May 27th Andy was hired back to serve as a part-time Program Manager for the Albany-Hudson Electric Trail (AHET). Andy will be working up to 15 hours per week on AHET projects and he will serve as the institutional memory for issues relating to EST if needed.

On May 24th long-term operational control of the Empire State Trail Program was transferred from the Greenway to the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. With this transfer, responsibility for program management across the state, including the website updates, map distribution, public information requests, reports of trail damages, and trail closings are all in park's purview. Molly Reilly and Chris Morris will be the main program contacts, with backup from regional and public affairs staff. As noted, Andy Beers will field EST related questions as OPR has them. Molly and Chris are both very competent, experienced people and the EST program is in good hands with them.

Under the terms of the transfer, the Greenway retains management of all funds currently appropriated to us under the EST program as well as Albany-Hudson Electric Trail Program Management. Nothing in the agreement with parks changes the Greenway's responsibilities about the HRV Greenway Trail System, including those portions that are part of the EST.

Saw Kill Red Hook Trail Designation

Mr. Keller announced that Winnakee Land Trust had requested designation of the 2.25-mile Saw Kill Red Hook Trail in Rhinebeck. Beth Campochiaro attended the ribbon cutting for this trail last Saturday as part of National Trails Day celebrations across the nation.

Greenway Conservancy Trail Grants

Mr. Keller reviewed the applications for Greenway Conservancy Trail Grants which had been recommended for funding by the Grants Committee.

The Esopus Creek Conservancy, Ulster County is seeking, and the Grants Committee recommends, \$20,000 for the South Bridge Replacement Project in the Esopus Bend Nature Preserve.

The Harlem Valley Rail Trail Association, Dutchess County is seeking, and the Grants Committee recommends, \$10,000 for an Interpretive Signage Project.

The Open Space Institute, Ulster County is seeking, and the Grants Committee recommends, \$38,000 for restoration of the Walkkill Valley Land Trail – Rosendale Section.

Changes to Maximum Individual Grant Amounts

Mr. Keller announced that, beginning with the next round of grants, the Grants Committee has approved an increase in the maximum amounts that may be applied for in our Trails Grants program. This is to address concerns that some grants are not large enough for the targeted project types. The changes are as follows:

Trail Grants: Trail Construction: from \$100,000 to \$250,000, Trail Design or planning: from \$40,000 to \$75,000, Trail Rehabilitation or Improvement projects: from \$20K to \$100,000, Trail Education or Interpretation projects: from \$10,000 to \$25,000, Natural Disaster Recovery and Reconstruction: New category, up to \$250,000

Water Trail Grants: Construction, design or planning: from \$25,000 to \$250,000, Rehabilitation or Improvement projects: from \$10,000 to \$100,000, Education or Interpretation projects: from \$10,000 to \$25,000, Natural Disaster Recovery and Reconstruction: New category, up to \$250,000.

Adoption of Budget

Mr. Keller reviewed the updates to the Conservancy Budget. The budget was reviewed individually by the Finance/Executive Committee. There is a decrease in Conservancy Operations from 2021-22 when there were two retroactive years of increases paid to staff, resulting in a higher-than-normal cost. The EST budget is primarily for completing the ongoing resurfacing projects. New programs in this year's proposed budget include HRNERR's Piermont Marsh Restoration project, a mitigation project for the Mario Cuomo Bridge and in the NHA we are supporting the HRMM's Seven Sentinels film about the seven remaining lighthouses on the HR. The film is

designed to raise awareness of these historic sites and to help raise funds to conserve them. Also, in the NHA program is work beginning on the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a project Eleanor Roosevelt was deeply involved in. Mr. Keller noted that it is not expected that the Conservancy will expend funds on this project in this state fiscal year, however it is possible that the program will progress more quickly than anticipated, and thus a placeholder is present. Programs expected to finish this year include the HRG Trail Guidebook with PTNY, which should launch in mid-July and the Martin van Buren Ambassador Program.

Approval of PARIS Documents and Financial Plan

Mr. Keller reviewed the mandates for a PARIS Budget and the updates for this fiscal year. The Conservancy, as a NYS Public Benefit Corporation, is required to annually file a series of financial reports with the Public Authorities Reporting Information System (PARIS). About 115 pages of the Conservancy's Board packet are taken up with these documents, most of which do not change from year to year. Mr. Keller noted that the audit is ready to be finalized, however one confirmation letter is still to be returned before that can happen. (The auditor plans to issue an unqualified opinion, with no items on the management letter.) The Board will vote on accepting the audit at the next meeting.

Chairman Burke called for a vote on the Trail Designation, the Conservancy Trail Grants by the Grants Committee, the Conservancy Budget, and approval of the PARIS documents. On a motion from Sarah Olson (Jeanne Williams second), the trail designation, grants, budget and PARIS documents were unanimously approved.

Chairman Burke then called for a motion on the proclamations recognizing Lori Ensinger and Fran Dunwell. On a motion from Bob Elliott (Mary McNamara second), the proclamations were unanimously approved.

Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area

Call to Order

Chairman Burke and Acting Chair Aldrich called the National Heritage Area (NHA) meeting to order.

Increases to Maximum Individual Heritage Development Grants

Mr. Keller reviewed the updates approved by the Grants Committee. The change is intended to address concerns that some grants are not large enough for the targeted project types. Heritage Development Grants will now be eligible for up to \$7,500, more for multi-applicant grants. This is an increase from the former maximum of \$5,000.

Review of NHA By the Numbers Report

Mr. Keller reviewed the annual reporting done by Mr. Keller and Dan Jeanson for the National Park Service regarding the National Heritage Area's activities throughout the year prior. All NHAs are required to submit these reports, which the NPS then combines into an annual report to Congress and the public. This year's report shows NHAs leverage \$76 million in cash and in-kind support for the \$22.8 million federal appropriation, engage over 8,000 formal and informal partners, and generate over

280,000 volunteer hours.

Program Bill Update

Mr. Keller reviewed the latest information regarding Program Bill S-1942. On May 3rd the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources advanced an amended version of the National Heritage Area Act, or S. 1942, that will provide long-term authorization for America's National Heritage Areas (NHAs) and a steady stream of federal funding for these critical designations. The Committee approved the legislation without opposition through a bipartisan voice vote. S. 1942 is originally sponsored by Senators Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) and Roy Blunt (R-MO) and has 15 bipartisan co-sponsors. Representatives Paul Tonko (D-NY) and David McKinley (R-WV) are sponsoring similar legislation in the House. This law would authorize annual appropriations of not more than \$1 million per heritage area. The funding cap would remain in place and would still require periodic increases, but this bill appears to remove the need for periodic reauthorizations to receive appropriations. This bill has gone to the senate floor.

Executive Director's Report

Before delivering his Executive Director's report, Mr. Keller announced that he had received word from Ulster County Council representative Mary McNamara that her predecessor, Vernon Benjamin, passed away Monday. When Vernon was an aide to then Assemblyman Maurice Hinchey, he worked to create the Greenway, as well as the Estuary Program. Mr. Keller extended the Greenway's sympathy to Mr. Vernon's family, and asked Conservancy Member Stefan Yarabek to speak about Mr. Benjamin and his many contributions to the Hudson Valley. Acting Council Chair Wint Aldrich also memorialized Vernon Benjamin, and his valuable contributions. Mary McNamara announced that Mr. Benjamin's daughters, Stacey Butcher and Rachel Bingham, were on the Zoom call, and asked them to speak. Both Stacey and Rachel expressed their thanks to the Board for honoring their father.

Scott Keller gave his Executive Director's report:

Join me in saluting our staff, who always accomplish more than I expect. I want to particularly note that Dan Jeanson has been maintaining the EST website throughout its various iterations and he is currently making himself available to provide technical assistance to the new state parks operators of the website, who have not previously worked in the Drupal web-environment.

Over the summer staff will be working to upgrade and modernize our grants management system into a one-stop resource for applicants and awardees. Currently we use 6 separate programs to manage and pay our grants. I would like to reduce that to two, or three at the most. We will keep you posted on our progress.

Finally, please also join me in congratulating our friends at Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor and the NYS Canal Corporation on the National Trails Day announcement from the Secretary of the Interior that the remaining sections of the NYS

Canalway Water Trail have been named a National Water Trail! The newly designated sections of the canal system join the Champlain Canal, which was designated in 2012 as part of the Hudson River Greenway Water Trail's designation, and the Bronx River as National Water Trails in NYS. With this designation, 62% of the 1200-mile Empire State Water Trail is now designated as National Water Trails."

New Business

Skip Piscatelli updated the Board that the indemnification bill for the Greenway had passed the legislature, which includes a five year extension on protections for Greenway Communities.

Future Meetings

The 2022 Joint Board meetings are scheduled for
Wednesday, October 12, 2022
Wednesday, December 14, 2022

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 10:58 a.m. by acclamation.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Campochiario
Meeting Secretary