



South Shore Blueway Trail Advisory Committee Meeting Summary

Monday, June 17 2013

11:30 AM – 1:00 PM

Freeport Water Taxi

195 Woodcleft Avenue, Freeport, NY 11520

Attendance: Barbara La Rocco, Zhennya Slootskin of Going Coastal, Inc.; David Berg, Cameron Engineering & Associates LLC; Sean Jordan, Town of Oyster Bay Dept. of Environmental Resources; Steve Macdonald, North Atlantic Canoe & Kayak; Tara Schneider Moran, Town of Hempstead Dept. of Conservation & Waterways; Brian Schneider, Nassau County Dept. of Public Works; Nora Sudars, Village of Freeport; Mariann Webb, Town of Oyster Bay Dept. of Environmental Resources

Middle Bay Tour (map attached)

Freeport Water Taxi operator Captain Rick Cohen provided a courtesy boat tour of potential launch sites in Middle Bay departing from the Esplanade on the Nautical Mile.

The points of review included:

- Sea Breeze Park A potential *destination stopover* for paddlers accommodated at the transient docks where there are showers and they can dine and explore the Nautical Mile. A cautionary note that there are strong currents in this channel and extremely busy motor and commercial boat traffic, so may be best for experienced paddlers in groups.
- Waterfront Park The *launch* at a small DEC beach cleared of debris provides good access to calm waters of Baldwin Bay making it an ideal launch for beginners to paddle around the grass island just off shore. The park has restrooms, parking, grills, water fountain and a spigot for boat rinsing. Of note is the shore erosion along the southern bulkhead and the need to approve any access infrastructure with DEC. At high tide shore access can be difficult. Within the bay, paddlers should be advised to stay close to the 5 mile-per-hour channel, as outside the channel motor boats cruise at accelerated speeds.
- Baldwin Park A beach *launch* is at the southwest edge and may need grading. There is a natural area on the east side of the park with trails, sports fields and facilities.
- Marine Nature Study Area Offers a *destination stop* at a beach on Beddell Creek on the west, which leads to nature paths and restroom facilities.
- Oceanside Park The *potential launch* at a small beach at the southeastern edge of the property, which could be improved by adding a gate opening in the chain-linked fence and a get-down to the water and shore grading for better access.

Funding for the South Shore Blueway Trail has been made possible by the Village of Freeport, a Local Waterfront Revitalization Program grant from the New York State Department of State under Title 11 of the Environmental Protection Fund, and the Nassau County Environmental Bond Act Program.



CAMERON ENGINEERING & ASSOCIATES, LLP

- Shell Creek Viewed from a distance, the park is all bulkheaded shore and does not offer suitable access. It would require new infrastructure such as a ramp and floating dock, possibly in the canal directly off the parking lot down the path just below the tennis courts, though this is a busy motor boat canal. There may also be parking concerns.
- West Marina The *boat ramp launch* shared with trailered motor boats provides good access and nearby is Nickerson Beach campground (Nassau County) the only camping available within the south shore bays. There is a paved boat ramp off a large parking lot and restrooms. Site improvements suggested for making the ramp more paddler-friendly included the addition of nonskid ramp cleats. Steve recommended rope supports to help paddlers balance during put-in and take-out. Offshore is a busy boat channel, which must be crossed to reach grassy islands of western Middle Bay. East of the ramp caution should be taken traversing the bridge underpass where currents tend to be strong.

Steve noted that paddlers will leave cars at the destination site, shuttle to the launch and paddle back. East Marina was brought up as a potential alternative to West Marina, but upon further discussion was eliminated due to a lack of space to accommodate nonmotorized craft.

Sean suggested having additional water tours of the other bays, since it provides an invaluable perspective on potential sites and routes. Steve tendered the possibility of organizing a similar trip in Oyster Bay for up to eight people. Additionally, paddling tours may be arranged for some launch sites.

Outreach -

Barbara La Rocco went over the Stakeholder Outreach Report and Paddler Survey Summary, which had been forwarded to attendees prior to the meeting for review.

Kyle Rabin expressed the need to expand Blueway partnerships to build and develop a broad coalition with elected officials, business community, chambers of commerce, community leaders, local universities, etc. Brian Schneider suggested reaching out to State Senate (Senator Charles J. Fuschillo, Jr.) and Assembly (Assemblyman Harvey Weisenberg) for water trail advocacy and for potential future funding needs. He mentioned that Operation SPLASH has a strong relationship with Adelphi College, to contact Rob Weltner for a good contact there. LI Visitor and Convention Bureau and I Love NY campaigns were mentioned as good industry partners to raise awareness of the project. Tara recommended reaching out to the local tourism offices, TOH publicity and parks department. Nora Sudars suggested NY Sea Grant and will help find a contact at Hofstra University. Maryann Webb provided a contact at Adelphi that TOB works with.

Barbara said that many of the community leaders were on the email list, however it was difficult to get through the filters. She suggested sending a letter introducing the project, which Barbara and Kyle will draft. It was emphasized that more than just introducing the project, the letter should have a specific “ask”, such as funds or local support. First have the Draft Plan out so that community leaders and elected officials know more specifics about the proposed trail.

David Berg mentioned that the NYS Consolidated Funding Application deadline was coming up and a grant does provide funding for recreational watertrail projects. At this time a letter of intent may be all that is needed and as the draft plan is developed it will offer the basis for a proposal.

Trail Planning

Barbara reported that local paddlers throughout the month of May have assessed potential launch sites. Going Coastal was then ground-truthing sites during different tidal conditions. David Berg was visiting these sites and pinpointing those for further analysis by Cameron Engineering & Associates.

Project Timeline

Barbara noted that she had requested an extension of the project agreement with the Village of Freeport, since year-to-date agreement was due to end in August. Nora will follow up with DOS regarding the extension.

Kyle Rabin thanked Capt. Cohen and Freeport Water Taxi for providing the complimentary tour of the bay.

The boat docked, the meeting adjourned.