

East Providence Conservation Commission

Meeting Minutes

February 25, 2014

City Hall, East Providence

7:30 PM

Members present: Lorraine Nik (Chair), Wayne Barnes, John Burrridge, Marie Esten, Keith Gonsalves and James Boyd (Secretary)

Members Absent: John Rose (Vice Chair)

Public present: None

Call to Order - Chair L. Nik called the meeting to order at 7:34 PM noting that Vice Chair J. Rose was home recovering from a medical condition. The Commission wished him a speedy recovery. Additionally, Chair Nik stated that the January 21 Commission meeting was cancelled along with the City Council meeting that evening due to a snow storm. The February meeting, originally scheduled for February 18, was also called off due to snow. It was subsequently rescheduled to this date. Accordingly, this meeting is the first of 2014.

Review of Minutes - The Commission reviewed and approved the November 19, 2013 meeting minutes on a motion to approve by M. Esten and seconded by K. Gonsalves.

Public Comment - No public present

Planning Department Update

- Omega Pond Fish Ladder - Keith and Wayne reported that construction activities to relocate the natural gas line at the base of the dam were suspended during the cold weather to avoid any potential gas service interruption. Work is now scheduled to resume after the spring fish migration, likely late June or early July.
- Local Development Projects - Wayne briefed the Commission on some preliminary development proposals but did not provide any specific information due to project status. More details will follow at a subsequent meeting.
- FEMA Community Rating System (CRS) update - Wayne reported that the City will soon be part of the CRS after filing substantial documentation with FEMA. This action will provide a 5% discount on flood insurance premiums for some 350 City policy holders.
- Ten Mile River Draft TMDL report and meeting - RIDEM released a draft report and held a public meeting at the Weaver Library on January 8 to detail key findings and solicit public comment. Several Commission members attended the meeting.

Correspondence

- Northern RI Conservation District - Letter to the Commission requesting financial support.
- Audubon Society of RI - Request for volunteers to report sightings of wild plants. Interested members were encouraged to contact Audubon directly.

- RIDEM Wildlife Action Plan 2015 update - Survey sent to East Providence regarding wildlife habitat in the community.
- Corporate Authority memorandum to Boards/Commissions - Memorandum from City Solicitor stating that no Board or Commission may bind the City to any agreements without City Council authorization or delegation of authority.

Old Business

- Boyden Heights GPX mapping project - The Commission will consider the GPX mapping as a winter project.

New Business

- Commission 2014 Work Plan - The Commission discussed maintenance work for the Boyden Heights boardwalk to include sanding and sealing the hand rails, checking and repairing (if needed), and trail inspection. Other projects discussed were possible development of a new Hunt's Mill river trail, and trail maintenance along the Turner Reservoir.
- Review of Commission appointments - The appointment terms have expired for members J. Rose, J. Burridge, K. Gonsalves and L. Nik. Members with expired terms will need to contact their Council representatives to seek reappointment. It was presumed that members with expired terms may continue to serve until reappointment or replacement by the City Council.
- Election of Officers - The current slate of officers were reelected on a motion by M. Esten and seconded by J. Burridge. Reelected were Chair Lorraine Nik, Vice Chair John Rose and Secretary James Boyd.
- Review of Commission 2013 Annual Report - W. Barnes distributed a draft 2013 annual report for review, which highlights the Commission's activities during the past year. Commissioners were pleased with the report and thanked Wayne for his work in developing the report. On a motion by J. Boyd and seconded by M. Esten the Commission approved the report and asked Wayne to forward the report to the City Council.
- Narragansett Bay Commission (NBC) Earth Day Grant - Wayne indicated that the NBC was offering small grants to communities for Earth Day. It was decided that several additional Mountain Laurel shrubs would be purchased for planting along the Hunt's Mill loop trail. The shrubs would complement earlier plantings by the Commission to stabilize soils, reduce erosion, and help improve water quality for the Ten Mile River, which discharges into the Seekonk River.
- Rain Barrel sale consideration - The Commission discussed the possibility of holding another public rain barrel sale, but it was decided that there might not be enough public interest at this time.
- RIDEM Open Space Small Grants (Trails) - Commissioners expressed desire to have interpretive signage installed at Boyden Heights along the bike path that would show case the amusement park history. Wayne indicated that he would seek a DEM Historic Park grant to fund the signage.

Commission Member Items

- There was discussion of a possible walk along Annawamscutt Creek in Haines Park with nearby residents to review stormwater drainage and habitat issues. More details will be reviewed at a later meeting.

Adjournment

The Commission voted to adjourn the meeting at 8:55 PM on a motion by J. Boyd and seconded by M. Esten.

The next regularly scheduled Conservation Commission meeting will be held on **Tuesday, March 18, 2014 at 7:30 pm** in Room A (1st floor) East Providence City Hall.

Respectfully submitted, James Boyd, Secretary