

East Providence Conservation Commission

Meeting Minutes

February 23, 2015

City Hall Room A

7:30 PM

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

Members absent: Lorraine Nik (Chair)

Public present: Ernie Germani

Call to Order - Vice Chair J. Rose called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM and noted that this was the first meeting of the new year in 2015.

Review of Minutes - The November 18, 2014 meeting minutes were reviewed and accepted with corrections on a motion to approve by M. Esten and seconded by J. Burrridge.

Planning Department Update

- Omega Pond Fish Ladder - Keith reported that all concrete pouring has now been completed for construction of the fish ladder. Unfortunately the persistent cold winter has resulted in extensive ice and has delayed finishing the project. The next step is to install the gate between the ladder where it meets the granite blocks at the top of the dam. Project completion is expected by the end of March.
- Parks/Playground Update - Wayne reported that construction on the two playground/park projects in the City have been delayed by the winter weather. Groundbreaking is expected immediately following spring thaw.

Correspondence

- Land & Water Summit - The City received notice of the 2015 Land & Water Summit to be held at the University of Rhode Island on March 14.

Old Business

- 2015 City Comprehensive Plan Update: Goals and Objectives - Wayne reported that the Planning Department has been working to have draft elements of the comprehensive plan available for public review in April.

New Business

- Election of Commission Officers - Commission members discussed nominations for Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary as provided in the Commission's by-laws. John Burrridge put forth nominations that were seconded by Marie Esten as follows: Keith Gonsalves for Chair, John Rose for Vice Chair and James Boyd for Secretary. Without amendment all members present voted unanimously for the slate of officers as nominated.

- Commission appointments - John Burrige noted his appointment to the Commission had lapsed and he has been unable to get a response, despite numerous attempts, from his Council person for reappointment. It was suggested that he contact Council member At Large, Tracy Capobianco, to seek reappointment. Wayne indicated that he would obtain a full list of all members and their current appointment status from the City Clerk and distribute by email for Commission review.
- Commission member vacancy - Commission members welcomed Ernie Germani to the meeting. Ernie indicated that he was interested in joining the Commission and explained his interests and experience. He maintains a popular web site blog "Trails and Walks in Rhode Island" (and nearby CT and MA) that details the many hikes and trails available to the public. See: <https://trailsandwalksri.wordpress.com>. Members expressed their pleasure in having Ernie join the Commission and encouraged him to seek appointment through his City Council representative.
- 2014 Conservation Commission Annual Report - Wayne had distributed the draft 2014 report he had prepared for Commission review. After discussion the Commission moved to approve the report with some minor additions on a motion by J. Boyd seconded by J. Burrige. The Commission voted to approve unanimously and thanked Wayne for preparing the annual report.
- 2015 Commission Work Plan Ideas - Commissioners discussed potential projects for the new year including cleaning up the trails at the Hunt's Mill terrace garden and an alternate trail at Boyden Heights with continued trail maintenance. Wayne indicated that Earth Day grants are available this year again from the Narragansett Bay Commission. Commissioners determined that a cleanup of the Boyden Height's shoreline along the Bay and the tidal pond east of the bike path should be the focus for the 2015 Earth Day activities. It was decided that the cleanup will be held on Saturday, April 18. Final plans for the cleanup will be made at the next Commission meeting in March.
- Rhode Island Wildlife Action Plan - Wayne indicated that he had received suggestions from Commission members for including wildlife sightings within the City. RIDEM is now updating the state Wildlife Action Plan and it was suggested that information from that plan could be included within elements of the City's current draft comprehensive plan.

Commission Member Items

- J. Boyd discussed the completion by CRMC and other partners of the Sea Level Affecting Marshes Model (SLAMM) project with maps showing the likely response of coastal wetlands in Rhode Island to future sea level rise conditions. The maps and other information are available on the CRMC web site here: http://www.crmc.ri.gov/maps/maps_slamm.html.

Adjournment - The Commission voted to adjourn the meeting at 8:42 PM on a motion by J. Boyd and seconded by J. Burrige.

The next regularly scheduled Conservation Commission meeting will be held on **Monday, March 23rd at 7:30 p.m.** in Room A (1st floor) East Providence City Hall.

Respectfully submitted,
James Boyd, Secretary