

East Providence Conservation Commission

Meeting Minutes

April 18, 2015

City Hall Room A

7:30 PM

Members present: Keith Gonsalves (Chair), Wayne Barnes, John Burrridge, Marie Esten, and Ernie Germani

Members absent: Jim Boyd (Secretary), John Rose, and Lorraine Nik

Public present: None.

Call to Order - Chair K. Gonsalves called the meeting to order at 7:35 PM.

Review of Minutes - The March 23, 2015 meeting minutes were reviewed. Wayne noted that the Commission webpage's internet address had changed and that this should be reflected in the minutes. The minutes accepted pending this change on a motion to approve by M. Esten and seconded by E. Germani.

Planning Department Update

- **Parks/Playground Update** – Six (6) contractors have picked up bid material for the Silver Spring. The project is on schedule for this construction season. A well-attended and successful public meeting was held on April 15th to discuss the Central Avenue/Anna Moniz John Playground Project.

Correspondence

- **East Providence Recreation Department** – Save-the-Date postcard- Summer Camp Community Garden Opening and Clean-up at the Pierce Field complex, Saturday May 2, 2015 from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm.

Old Business

- **Status of Commission Appointments** - John Burrridge and Ernie Germani were re-appointed, and appointed, respectively by City Councilor-at-Large Tracy Capobianco at the Council meeting of April 7th and both are official Commission members. The Commission welcomes Ernie to the Commission and thanks Councilwoman Capobianco for her assistance with both appointments.
- **Earth Day activities - Review**– Commission members along with members of the Ten Mile River Watershed Council and the Providence County Hiking Club performed a clean-up of the waterfront portion of the Boyden Heights Conservation Area and also clean areas near the wetland boardwalk and along the loop trail. Two EPHS high school students also participated. Fourteen large yard waste bags worth of trash was collected along with four tires. The trash was to be picked up by the City's DPW. At least two groups of bike path users thanked the

group for the clean-up on their way by the area. Wayne will get some information on the event onto the Commission's webpage.

- New City website and Conservation Commission webpage - The City's new website is now "live" and the Commission's webpage is now easier to get to and navigate. We'll have options to include more information including maps and links. The address has been greatly simplified, it is now www.eastprovidence.com/conservation . A link to Ernie's excellent trail blog will be posted pending some updates to the blog.

New Business

- National Trails Day Opportunity – June 6, 2015 - The Ten Mile River Watershed Council and Providence County Hikers will perform work at Hunts Mills on National trails Day including clean-up, trail clearing and trail blazing. The Commission is invited to participate. Ideas include improvement of the Terrace Garden trail segment and its inclusion as part of the continuous loop trail that spans the whole property. Mulch is available from the Recycling Division to re-define the Terrace Garden segment; this work could be performed on Trails Day along with clearing of invasives around the mountain laurel plants. The group discussed a trail alignment proposal where the trailhead would be near the Gazebo so as to be close to parking, and the "viewshed" area would be allowed to fill in. Marie suggested looking into plantings as an aid to filling it in and helping to crowd out knotweed. Meanwhile, Ernie will investigate acquiring trail markers to install along the length of the trail. We will plan for the Trails Day event at the May meeting.
- Mapping/Local Information – Ernie has produced a sample trail map/brochure for Hunts Mills and asked for comments and suggestions regarding content/design. The brochure was very well received and several suggestions were offered. The completed brochure would be easily updatable and could be posted on the webpage with hard copies made available in a small kiosk at Hunts Mills. In future years, this type of brochure could be produced for other areas including Willett Pond, Boyden Heights and the Turner loop trail.
- Hunts Mills pocket wetland areas - Jim Boyd has been monitoring these two small areas within the Hunts Mills lawn area near Pleasant Street. The DPW Director was approached last fall about leaving these areas unmowed and was not very open to it for purposes of appearance and more time needed to mow around these areas. Keith reports that these areas were actually just mowed in the last couple of days.

Commission Member Items

- John Burridge will present his moveon.org highway embankment/median milkweed petition to the Governor on Wednesday April 29.
- Keith noted that the last cofferdam has been removed from the Paul Bettencourt Omega Pond Dam and that he and numerous others have seen fish getting to the Hunts Mill ladder and beyond, even as far upstream as Armistice Blvd. in Pawtucket.
- Keith also suggested a George Kent Memorial Bench potential location at the old Fire Dept. storage building at Hunts Mills if this area is improved via use of the building/picnic area development. He also mentioned that there is a memorial tree garden at Slater Park in Pawtucket; that could be an option for East Providence at one of our conservation areas or elsewhere in the City.

- Wayne mentioned Planning Department interest in some City-produced publicity on the completion of the decade-plus long Ten Mile River fish ladder project. The Department will work with the Conservation commission on development of this material. Keith expects that the Army Corps of Engineers will hold a ribbon-cutting type of ceremony to acknowledge the completed fish passage in May.

Adjournment - The Commission voted to adjourn the meeting at 8:32 pm on a motion by E. Germani and seconded by M. Esten.

The next regularly scheduled Conservation Commission meeting will be held on **Tuesday, May 19th at 7:30 p.m.** in Room A (1st floor) East Providence City Hall.

Respectfully submitted,
Wayne Barnes, City Liaison for James Boyd, Secretary