

East Providence Conservation Commission

Meeting Minutes

April 19, 2016

East Providence City Hall

7:30 PM

Members present: Keith Gonsalves (Chair), Ernie Germani (Vice Chair), Wayne Barnes (City Liaison), James Boyd (Secretary), John Burrridge, and Cheryl Vieira

Members absent: Marie Esten

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

Review of Minutes - The March 15, 2016 meeting minutes were approved as read on a motion by E. Germani and seconded by J. Burrridge.

Public present: None

Public Comment: None

Planning Department Update

- Wayne noted that there is a \$35M open space bond referendum question pending before the General Assembly this session. If approved, RI voters will have the opportunity to consider the bond for approval during this coming fall election.

Correspondence

- Wampanoag Trail property - The City Clerk referred a letter from the property owner regarding a potential land donation to the City.
- Hoppin Avenue property - The City Clerk referred a letter from the property owner regarding a potential land donation to the City.

Old Business

- Boyden Heights fence removal - Wayne indicated that he will be filing a DEM Trails Grant application in May for proposed improvements to the parking area to include removal of the existing chain link fence and replacement with some type of parking barrier along the perimeter for public safety.
- Earth Day activities - Commissioners discussed the proposed clean up of the Boyden Heights Conservation Area shoreline on April 23 starting at 9:00am.
- National Trails Day activities - A trail cleanup and planting of native shrubs will be conducted by the Ten Mile River Watershed Council on June 4 at Hunt's Mill.
- Trail maps and brochure development - Ernie presented a combined map brochure depicting trail maps and some descriptions for four major City properties: Boyden Heights; Hunt's Mill; Turner Reservoir; and Willet Pond. Commissioner's reviewed the fold-out brochure and discussed some minor revisions. It is hoped to have the map available online at the Commission's website and in map holder boxes at each of the four trail areas.
- 1424 Wampanoag Trail update - Wayne reported that he has several times tried contacting the current property trustee without success in seeking a potential land donation to the City.

However, despite Commission and City interest, it appears that the Trustee may not be interested in a donation at this time.

- Memorial tree selection - Wayne and Ernie reported that plans have been made to pick up the 2-inch caliper Thornless Cockspur Hawthorne tree for planting next to the Commission bench along the East Bay Bike Path at Boyden Heights Conservation Area.

New Business

- East Providence Arts Council event - Wayne reported that the Arts Council was planning an event on June 26 at Hunt's Mill, and they were inquiring whether the Commission would want to have a presence at the event. The Commission will discuss further at the May meeting.
- Wampanoag Trail office condo property - Commissioners discussed the Iannucelli parcel and the request for a tax assessment abatement for a land donation. However, the Commission has no interest in the parcel because it does not directly abut any City open space or conservation lands and it is also isolated. Thus, it serves no purpose for conservation efforts.
- Hoppin Avenue property - Commissioners discussed a potential land donation to the City. Although the parcel does not link to other trails or open space, it does help protect existing wetlands in the area. Discussion included benefits of the City retaining ownership of wetland parcels, flood abatement potential, green corridors and water quality improvements. Commissioners agreed to recommend that the City accept the land donation.

Commission Member Items

- Jim described his experience on the April 10 bus tour of historic Rumford homes, observations of herring at Hunt's Mill fish ladder, and the upcoming May 3 public stakeholder meeting for the CRMC Shoreline Change Special Area Management Plan.
- Wayne indicated that he was drafting a letter of appreciation to former Commission Chair Lorraine Nik for her service to the Commission. The letter will be reviewed at a subsequent meeting.
- Ernie noted pending state legislation by Senator Josh Miller to ban plastic bags, styrofoam containers and some other plastics.
- Keith noted that herring counts during April 1st and 2nd had many more fish than in the previous week. DEM had stocked trout at Hunt's Mill for opening day.

Adjournment - The Commission adjourned the meeting at approximately 9:20 PM.

The next regularly scheduled Conservation Commission meeting will be held on **Tuesday, May 17, 2016 at 7:30 p.m. in Conference Room A at the East Providence City Hall.**

Respectfully submitted, James Boyd, Secretary