

# East Providence Conservation Commission

## Meeting Minutes

November 15, 2016

East Providence City Hall, Room A

6:30 PM

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

**Members absent:** None

**Call to Order** - Chair K. Gonsalves called the meeting to order at 6:40 PM.

**Review of Minutes** - The October 18, 2016 meeting minutes were approved with corrections on a motion by E. Germani and seconded by J. Burrridge.

**Public present:** Amanda Freitas, RIDEM Wildlife Ecologist

**Correspondence** - None

### **New Business**

- RI Wildlife Action Plan and Community Wildlife Conservation Guide presentation - Amanda Freitas of RIDEM provided a synopsis of the recently updated State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) and concise recommendations for the City of East Providence and residents to implement in order to promote, maintain, and enhance wildlife habitat and species throughout the community. The SWAP details the threats to wildlife and important habitats with residential and commercial development identified as the primary threat to species and habitat. RIDEM has mapped Conservation Opportunity Areas (COA) throughout East Providence and the state. See:

<http://ridemgis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=63f3ef956b3e4711ab3f8d8349f346e>. The highest level COAs in East Providence are the corridors along the Seekonk, Ten Mile, and Runnins Rivers. The RIDEM has produced a fact sheet titled [Fifteen Small Things that Make a Big Difference for Wildlife](#). Ms. Freitas detailed specific actions that residents could take to implement SWAP goals, as follows:

1. Energy smart initiatives, such as installing solar panels and LED lights;
2. Conservation and management of urban forest and coastal marshes;
3. Low impact development stormwater management methods;
4. Education of the public on species and onsite ecology;
5. Native plant initiatives; and
6. Implement Dark Skies initiative (enact local lighting ordinances) to reduce nighttime light pollution.

## **Planning Department Update**

- Wayne updated members on the Honors Flight Park at Jones Pond project. Excellent volunteer turn out for the October 15 planting day, and a 2nd workgroup planting on October 29. In all over 800 native plants and cultivars were plants at the park to enhance habitat and aesthetics.
- Wayne also reported that the Planning Department was moving **within** the 2nd floor at City Hall.

## **Old Business**

- Minor trail improvements - Wayne alerted Commission members that some erosion caused by stormwater runoff was occurring along an upper section of the Boyden Heights trail system, but could easily be resolved with some diversion bars using fallen tree sections. Members scheduled a work morning for November 19. (Note: work completed). He also informed the Commission that the side slope along the Hunt's Mill loop trail would need some work this coming spring to address safety and maintenance issues. A work day will be scheduled in the new year.

## **New Business (cont'd)**

- Commission Annual Report - Wayne had previously distributed an electronic file copy of the draft annual report for Commissioner review. Members discussed the draft and made several suggestions to finalize the report. In addition, members thanked Wayne for a job well done in preparing the annual report, as it covered all the activities that the Commission was involved with over the past year.
- RIACC request - Wayne distributed a letter from the RI Association of Conservation Commissions inquiring as to whether state Conservation Commission would prefer to have their roles and functions be more regulatory, as in Massachusetts, or in an advisory capacity to their respective City/Town Council, as presently codified by state law. Commissioners discussed the pros and cons of each option and concurred that we prefer the present advisory role to the City Council and Planning Board.
- Upcoming Meeting Schedule - Commissioners discussed and agreed that there would be no December meeting.

## **Commission Member Items - None**

**Adjournment** - The Commission adjourned the meeting at approximately 8:31 PM.

The next regularly scheduled Conservation Commission meeting will be held on **Tuesday, January 17, 2017 at 6:30 p.m. in Conference Room A at the East Providence City Hall.**

Respectfully submitted, James Boyd, Secretary