



EAST PROVIDENCE CONSERVATION COMMISSION



2011 Annual Report

Lorraine Nik, Chair

Contact: Wayne Barnes, East Providence Planning Department
(401) 435-7537

wbarnes@cityofeastprov.com

The East Providence Conservation Commission remained an active City commission in 2011 in fulfilling its mission regarding the preservation and promotion of our City's significant natural resources.

The Commission began the year with the installation of officers, re-electing Lorraine Nik as Commission Chair, John Rose as Vice-Chair, and James Boyd as Secretary.

The purchase and installation of a bench in memory of longtime Commission member George Kent was researched at length early in the year, with a number of options for its location considered. An appropriate design was chosen by the Commission, but lack of available funding resulted in the project being put on hold for the time being. The Commission will investigate sources of funding for the bench project over the coming months.

The Commission performed minor maintenance projects throughout the year at the Boyden Heights Conservation Area. Tropical Storm Irene late in August left the newly completed wetlands boardwalk unscathed, but the storm brought down numerous trees in the conservation area, blocking or partially blocking nearly every trail segment. A property walk-through late in the year revealed that someone (likely area residents) had gone through and opened up a few of the segments. The Commission will work with the City's Parks Department early in 2012 to aid in making the remaining trail segments in this popular conservation area passable again.



On Saturday, April 16th, 2011 the Commission participated in Earth Day clean-up activities (see photo, left) for the first time. Eleven residents including commission members and friends removed lumber, tires and other trash from the small beach below the Boyden Heights Conservation Area, with trash bags, work gloves and refreshments provided through the City's Recycling Division. Our enthusiastic group of volunteers removed a total of ten bags of trash and eight tires as well as other large debris from the shoreline and tidal waters at this location.

The Commission displayed material and provided information at the National Trails Day event on Saturday, June 4th at the Newman YMCA in Seekonk. Commission members Lorraine Nik, Jim Boyd and Wayne Barnes staffed the display and fielded inquiries from a number of local residents.

Late in the year, the Commission embarked on an exciting new project at the Hunts Mills Historic Site. Grant funding from the Blackstone Valley Historic Corridor Commission was obtained by the City Planning Department to perform some enhancements to the new trail system developed earlier in the year near the John Hunt House. This funding enabled the Commission to install several shade-loving native plants along the trail as a start, (see photo, right) and will work on additional small enhancements in this compact but very diverse woodland portion of the Hunts Mills site which includes upland areas, a small wetland, and a seasonal stream.



The Commission, reviewed and number of projects and, as requested, provided comments to the Planning Department. These projects included:

- Waterfront residential modifications in Riverside needing Coastal Resources Management Council approval;
- Construction plans for the new major sewer force main proposed along the East Bay Bike Path between Watchemocket Cover and the Wastewater Treatment Plant, and
- The proposed street abandonment at the Boyden Heights Conservation area to support the construction of a new pumping station along Boyden Boulevard with connection to the new sewer force main.

Commission member Jim Boyd kept the group updated on conservation and development-related legislation at the State House.

City Liaison Wayne Barnes provided monthly updates on City projects of interest to the Commission including the Forbes Street Solar Project and the East Bay Energy Consortium's wind turbine proposal, and Keith Gonsalves and Wayne provided updates on the Ten Mile River Fish Ladder project and the Seaconke Trails Committee project, which is largely in Seekonk but connects to the City's established trail system in the Turner Reservoir area. When completed, it will provide an extensive trail system linking both communities.

The Conservation Commission looks forward to serving the City of East Providence in 2012 and welcomes interested members of the community and other conservation interests to our meetings, which are scheduled on the third Tuesday of each month at 7:30 pm at East Providence City Hall. Meeting agendas are posted in the lobby of City Hall, with agendas and minutes of past meetings available on the City's Conservation Commission webpage, available on-line at <http://www.eastprovidenceri.net/content/662/684/694/1115/default.aspx>, and on the RI Secretary of State's webpage.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lorraine Nik
Commission Chair