



EAST PROVIDENCE CONSERVATION COMMISSION



2012 Annual Report

Lorraine Nik, Chair

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The East Providence Conservation Commission continued its stewardship of our City's natural resources and conservation areas in 2012.

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. Former member Frank Dias was thanked for his considerable contributions to the Commission, in particularly for his great efforts at Commission work events. We welcomed Marie Esten of Riverside as a new member. Marie has an extensive environmental background and is a fine addition to the group.

City Liaison Wayne Barnes of the Planning Department provided monthly updates on City projects of interest to the Commission including the East Bay Bike Path Sewer Force Main Project which was completed during the Spring, the recently completed Boyden Heights Pump Station project, procedures involving the East Providence Budget Commission, and the status of new flood insurance maps for Providence County. Commission Member Keith Gonsalves monitored progress on the Ten Mile River Fish Ladders and at Boyden Heights, and Commission Secretary Jim Boyd kept the group informed regarding coastal issues and conservation-related statewide legislation.

In April, the Commission participated in Earth Day clean-up activities for the second year, this time at the Hunts Mills Historic Site "Terrace Garden" area. Trash was removed, as were invasive vines and shrubs; and mulch along the trail in this area was replenished. The group also improved the trail by placing stepping stones to span a seasonally wet area where there is drainage from a higher part of the parcel. Native plants that we installed in 2011 were inspected and were doing well. The Commission will continue minor enhancements in this compact but very diverse natural area in 2013.

The Boyden Heights Pump Station Project had a major impact on our Boyden Heights Conservation Area, where a swath of trees up to 30 feet wide was removed over a distance of about 350 feet. This project effectively removed the Conservation Area's trailhead at the East Bay Bike Path. The Commission has been working with the City to restore elements of the trail system that were affected, and has been monitoring the steep hillside in the disturbed area for any signs of slumping or localized



Utility Right-of-way at Boyden Heights, October 2012.

erosion. Favorable intervals of rainfall during the year seemed to help new grass that was planted along the slope to take hold. Daily use of the trail system by neighborhood residents is helping to reestablish the trail from the Bike Path to the woodland area.

The Commission performed other minor maintenance at Boyden Heights throughout the year. In June, the group inspected the Boardwalk, and sanded the railing and applied a sealant to provide protection from the elements. Our regular meeting for July was held at the Boyden Boulevard entrance, where we removed weeds and invasive vegetation. Hurricane Sandy caused some tree damage in the area in late October, but considerably less than what we saw from Tropical Storm Irene in 2011. Commission members cleared away material that was partially blocking portions of the trail system and removed brush encroaching on wetlands boardwalk. The boardwalk itself was unscathed by Sandy. Commission members will work in 2013 to improve the small stairway that leads onto the walk.

In other initiatives, Keith Gonsalves and Wayne Barnes attended the URI Land and Water Summit in March. Wayne provided a short presentation at the Summit on the Boyden Heights project and has been asked by a representative from the RI Association of Conservation Commissioners to update the presentation for the 2013 Summit. The updated presentation would include a look at this area's colorful history as an amusement park in the early 1900's, which the Commission will be researching in conjunction with the Planning Department.

The Conservation Commission looks forward to serving the City of East Providence in 2013 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

