

2283 Hartford Ave, Johnston, RI 02919

401-934-0842

MEETING MINUTES

January 18, 2012

9:15 AM

Chair Eric Offenberg called the meeting to order at 9:15.

Present: Eric Offenberg, Chair; Dick Went, RIACD; Ken Ayars, DEM; Paul Dolan NRICD; Emerson Wildes, ERICD; Harriet Powell, Clarkson Collins, SRICD; Ramona LeBlanc, NRCS; Susan Korte, What Grows On in RI.

I. Minutes: A motion was made to accept the minutes of the November 9, 2011 meeting: Harriet/Emerson; unanimous.

II. Financial Report: A motion was made to accept the financial reports as presented: Harriet/Emerson; unanimous.

III. Old Business:

A. FFOS:

1. Farm Plan Reviews:

- **Eric Scherer has reviewed several farm conservation plans developed by ag techs. He was satisfied with content. NRCS will also review and comment.**

2. Recommended Values:

- **The RI Ag Partnership has authorized \$4000 expenditure to review values. They would like match funds to be obtained to supplement cost of study. Contact with URI's Ag economist will be made to discuss process and cost estimate.**
- **For this year, recommended values will remain the same, and a letter stating that will be sent to Dept of Administration for dissemination to tax assessors.**

B. NRCS Agreements:

1. Ag Inventory:

- **Towns of Scituate and Glocester have been updated to include crop growers and non-industrial forest landowners. Middletown, Warren, Bristol, Warwick, Cranston and Cumberland will be fully surveyed beginning in spring.**

2. Geese Abatement:

- **Outreach for trainings, originally scheduled for early January, is underway.**
- **Outreach for field work is planned for end of January.**
- **Outreach for workshops is planned for early February.**

- Egg oiling trainings are planned for end of January and NRCS workshops are planned for February and March.

3. Outreach:

- Workshops on NRCS programs were held in each District in December. Follow-up contact continues to be made with attendees.
- Attendance was good at all workshops and a significant number of new NRCS applications have been processed.
- A second round of workshops is scheduled for February.

4. Engineering:

- An engineering tech began work on NRCS engineering projects on January 2. Currently she is getting extensive training while waiting for computer access.
- A PE has also been hired to provide support to the ag tech and to work on other projects. In addition, an engineering firm, DiPrete Engineering, has agreed to provide additional support and oversight on an as-needed base.
- In addition to NRCS work, this engineering team will be able to do fee for service engineering work for specialized needs.

5. Watersheds:

- A list of waterways and waterbodies in ERICD has been compiled. Research and Outreach is underway to identify resource concerns for each. A prioritized list will be submitted to NRCS by 2/28.

6. EWP:

- **The SCC has been asked to act as sponsors for contracts for 1) The Pocasset River and 2) The Wood, Pawcatuck, and Queen Rivers. Contracts have not yet been signed. Frank Vogel will be administering to projects for the SCC.**

C. Appointments to SCC & FFOS:

- **A letter to Governor requesting appointments for vacant SCC seats has been submitted.**
- **There are also vacancies on the FFOS Subcommittee. Those candidates submitted for consideration to previous administration will be contacted to see if they are still willing to serve. All three tax assessors, whose terms expired, have expressed their willingness to continue to serve.**

D. RIACD Website:

- **A meeting with webmaster was held and she will be developing a new central website on which each CD will have part. Links to separate sites will also be included.**

E. MOU/Consolidation Policy:

- **A motion was made to accept proposed changes to the consolidation policy: Harriet/Emerson; unanimous.**
- **Changes adopted do not require any changes to the MOU between SCC and Districts.**

F. Other:

- **A motion was made to appoint Jean Lynch as Director of NRICD Board. Harriet/Paul; unanimous.**
- **A motion was made to appoint Emerson Wildes, Walter Elwell and Richard Hart to serve as Directors of ERICD Board: Harriet/Paul; unanimous.**

IV. New Business:

A. Fee for Service Menu:

- **A preliminary meeting was held and a list of services that are not being currently provided was developed.**
- **The next step will be to identify existing staffing and potential new staff positions required to provide these services.**

B. Staffing:

- **Candidates for a new staff position for existing contracts which require additional staff, on FFOS conservation plans, and/or on fee for service work will be sought.**

V. Reports:

A. Chair: Not present.

B. Districts/Advisors:

1. DEM:

- **Legislative package focuses on agriculture and food policy.**
- **The newly structured Districts are in a position to participate in DEM programs.**

2. NRCS: written report distributed.

- **\$6.5 million for EWP has been allocated.**
- **NRCS is undergoing reorganization on many levels.**

- **NRCS is still waiting for impact of budget cuts.**
- **Locally a conservation technician and a soil conservationist are being hired.**

3. SRICD:

- A proposal for a stormwater contract has been submitted to South Kingstown. Board has hired a consultant to develop a strategic plan.

4. ERICD: written report distributed.

- Requests for municipal funding are being made.
- Directors are attending 1) Aquaculture Program at Roger Williams University, and 2) workshop for non-profit organizations.

5. NRICD:

- Seedling sale will be held on April 20 & 21.
- PWSB theme for current year is agriculture, promoting conservation farms as good neighbors.
- Gina will be presenting on 3 topics at NACD Conference.

6. What Grows On in RI:

- Sue will be conducting outreach to organization with volunteers to see what works and what doesn't.
- Sue sees need to connect organizations with volunteer forces with groups who need volunteers.
- She is developing a new site "Where the Gardens Used to Be," tracing RI's agricultural heritage.

7. RIACD:

- The President of the New England Association will request a NE Waterways Initiative.
- Dick will be submitting a resolution to request NRCS funding of

some projects on municipal land.

- **There will be a vote on a proposed by-law change at the NACD annual meeting which would prohibit members from voting unless their District has paid full amount of assessed dues.**

Meeting adjourned at 11:25.