

RI STATE CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

2283 Hartford Avenue

Johnston, RI 02919

MEETING MINUTES

May 29, 2014

9:00 AM

Vice Chair Paul Dolan called the meeting to order at 9:00.

Present: RISCC: Maria Mack, Ramona LeBlanc; RIACD: Jean Lynch, Richard Went; ERICD: Emerson Wildes, Jessica Blackledge; NRICD: Paul Dolan, Gina DeMarco; SRICD: J. Eric Scherer, Clarkson Collins, Kate Bousquet; DEM: Ken Ayars, Beverly Migliore; NRCS: Walter Marshall; Eric Offenberg.

I. Introductions: Newly appointed members of the RI SCC Board, Districts, staff and advisors introduced themselves.

II. Board Election: A motion was made to elect Maria Mack as Chair of the RI SCC: Clark/Ken: unanimous. A motion was made to elect

Paul Dolan to a one year term as Vice-Chair: Ken/Clark: unanimous.

III. Minutes: A motion was made to accept the April 2, 2014 meeting with corrections: Emerson/Maria: unanimous.

IV. Financial Report: A motion was made to acknowledge receipt of a Profit & Loss, Budget vs. Actual Report, July 2013-April 2014: Clark/Maria: unanimous. A motion was made to acknowledge receipt of the April 30, 2014 Balance Sheet: Emerson/Clark: unanimous.

V. Agreements: A summary of current NRCS and DEM agreements as well as an update on each was given. Written report on DEM Geese agreement distributed.

Staff is working on pre-proposal to fund Geese program for an additional year through grants available through the Narragansett Bay Estuary Program

VI. Old Business:

A. FFOS:

1. Letters to current enrollees with farm designation the FFOS program will be sent with Maria Mack's signature. A list of recipients and a copy of the letter will be provided to Division of Agriculture.

2. URI Agricultural Economist will be asked to provide a scope of work and cost estimate for closer examination of formula currently used to determine recommended farm values for the FFOS program.

3. Review of soil type classification for Open Space classification in FFOS will be completed by end of July.

4. The RI SCC will coordinate with RI tax assessors to provide them with a workshop to explain the FFOS program and changes recently made to it.

B. SESC Handbook: After review period, the handbook is expected to be completed by June 30. It will be on next RI SCC agenda for approval. Eric Scherer will forward electronic copies of two appendices, which address update subscriptions for the handbook, for review before the next SCC meeting and they will also be on the agenda. Eric Scherer reported that URI expects a NEMO funded agreement to be signed in August. One component will be District led trainings for municipalities and contractors.

C. Legislative Changes: Discussion tabled.

D. CD's Services/DEM: DEM is exploring the services the CD's can provide and a way to institutionalize the relationship between DEM and the CD's. SRICD will provide a copy of an intergovernmental organizational document.

E. ERICD Status: Jessica Blackledge has joined the RI SCC payroll to complete work on agreements in ERICD. This will reduce cash flow issues involved with meeting bi-weekly payroll. The ERICD office remains open and the Board will decide on a month to month

basis whether to continue that status. Maria offered to explore opportunities for free office space.

F. Other:

- 1. Possible funding for anaerobic digester discussed. Eric Scherer will further discuss with Numi Mitchell and Ken Ayars.**
- 2. Ken discussed possible role for ERICD to work with landowners as part of effort to address nitrate in groundwater on Aquidneck Island.**
- 3. Ken also indicated that DEM is very pleased with NRICD's activities at Snake Den Farm and is open to similar lease arrangements in other parts of the State.**

VII. New Business:

A. 2014-15 RI SCC Budget: A motion was made to discuss the proposed budget: Maria/Emerson: unanimous. Revision will likely be needed several months into the new fiscal year to reflect any new NRCS agreements. A motion was made to accept the draft with that understanding: Paul/Ken: unanimous.

B. Municipal Contacts: Jean Lynch has met with all of the municipalities in NRICD to provide information about the CD's. She is willing to do so for ERICD if the District can provide information packets to her.

C. Jessica will pursue opportunity for CD's to work on transfer assistance for land linking grant being led by Land for Good.

D. Regional NACD meeting to be held in Newport August 24-26.

VIII. Reports:

A. ERICD: Written project report distributed.

B. SRICD: The Board continues to develop organizational capacity and is currently working on 2014-15 budget. New projects include trail and open space mapping for Hopkinton Land Trust, a farm conservation plan for SKLT, baseline surveys for North Kingstown. Potential projects include subscription management for SESC Handbook, and educational program at Frosty Drew Nature Center and continuation of Geese agreement with new funding source.

C. NRICD: Seedling Sale included pollinator seed mix and a demonstration. Providence Water contract expires June 30. New 5 year agreement being reviewed by Providence Water. Plans to sublet farmland at Snake Den Farm are on hold for this season. Instead the fields will be hayed.

D. NRCS: Farm Bill program applicant ranking dates have been announced: May 30, July 18, and August 15. FRPP is being changed to Agricultural Conservation Easement Program. Website is being updated with information as it is released.

E. RI R C & D: Work continues on NFWF and RDC Farm Energy grants. Paul will accompany Harriet Powell to national meeting in Alabama. RI will receive a regional award for work on SESC Handbook and Harriet will be recognized as National Council Member of the Year.

IX. Other

A. Beginning with July 9th meeting, the RI SCC will meet monthly on

the 2nd Wednesday of the month. The August meeting will be held at DEM.

Meeting adjourned at 11:17.