

RI STATE CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

2283 Hartford Avenue

Johnston, RI 02919

MEETING MINUTES

December 10, 2014

RIDEM, Room 340 C

235 Promenade Street, Providence, RI 02908

Chair Maria Mack called meeting to order at 9:10.

Present:

RISCC Members: Maria Mack, Ken Ayars, Clarkson Collins; RISCC

Staff: Ramona LeBlanc;

ERICD: Jessica Blackledge; NRICD: Gina DeMarco; SRICD: Kate Bousquet, J. Eric Scherer. RIACD: Dick Went; RI DEM: Bev Migliore;

NRCS: Chris Modisette, Eric Boettger;

Absent:

RISCC Members: Paul Dolan, Emerson Wildes

I. Minutes: A motion to approve the minutes of the November 12, 2014 meetings was made by Clarkson Collins, seconded by Ken Ayars. Motion passed unanimously.

II. Financial Reports: A motion that RISCC is in receipt of the financial reports was made by Ken Ayars, seconded by Clarkson Collins. Motion carried unanimously.

III. Agreements:

A. Newly hired staff began working on Engineering Handbook Agreement on 11/24/14.

B. NRCS requested that some of the funds remaining on 2014 Engineering agreement be used to hire an engineer currently working with an NRCS program participant to revise submitted design to meet NRCS standards. A motion to agree to the NRCS request was made by Clarkson Collins, seconded by Ken Ayars. Motion passed unanimously.

C. RCPP: The three Conservation Districts decided to withdraw RCPP proposal after additional NRCS funding cuts and restrictions reduced staff time for the five partners to \$112,000.00 over five years. A motion was made to support the decision of the Districts was made by Ken Ayars, seconded by Clarkson Collins. Motion passed unanimously.

Gina DeMarco volunteered to draft a letter to Jason Weller, Chief of NRCS, expressing disappointment and frustration at having to withdraw the proposal which had taken a significant amount of staff time to develop and brought together a statewide partnership of state, municipal and non-profits organizational as well as the Districts because rules changed repeatedly through the application process.

IV.

IV. Old Business

A. FFOS: Small working group will meet again after 12/10/14 RISCC meeting to further explore how NRCS CAPs might meet FFOS farm conservation plan requirements

B. Strategic Planning/Legislative Changes: A meeting will be scheduled in January.

V. New Business:

A. NOFA: Tabled until January meeting as NOFA representative unable to attend.

B. New Engineering Position: It was agreed to explore hiring second staff member to work on two concurrent NRCS Engineering agreements.

C. District Board Appointments:

A motion to appoint Russ Smith as a Director of ERICD was made by Clarkson Collins, seconded by Ken Ayars. Motion passed unanimously.

A motion to appoint Jean Lynch as a Director of NRICD was made by Ken Ayars, seconded by Clarkson Collins. Motion passed unanimously.

D. Envirothon Request: A motion to contribute \$100 to the RI Envirothon was made by Clarkson Collins, seconded by Ken Ayars. Motion passed unanimously.

E. 2015 Meeting Schedule: Meetings will be held in NRCS Conference Room in 2015. For months of January-March, meetings will begin at 10:00.

V. Reports:

A. RIACD:

- 1. Elections recently held; D. Went re-elected as Chair, Jean Lynch as Vice-Chair and Clarkson Collins elected as Treasurer.**
- 2. NACD Regional Conference resulted in a net gain of approximately \$4000.00.**
- 3. RIACD will offer several \$150 scholarships for District staff/Directors to offset cost of attending regional and national conferences.**

B. ERICD: Written report will be distributed electronically.

C. SRICD: Written report emailed and distributed.

D. NRICD:

- 1. Grant application to address water quality in Woonsocket area was declined.**
- 2. Champlin Foundation will fund structural upgrades at Snake Den Farm including a new roof, gutters and chimney lining.**
- 3. Applications for residential and agricultural tenants for Farm being reviewed. NRCS has conducted a few trainings on site and a conservation plan has been developed.**

E. RWU:

Districts have been invited to address two sustainability classes to discuss on-going projects and potential work study opportunities for students.

F. NRCS:

1. New Farm Bill will link crop insurance subsidies with conservation compliance.

2. RI NRCS is one of 17 states undertaking a multi-year administrative transformation. Changes will include appointment of an Assistant State Conservationist for Management and Strategy, participation in a national servicing delivery team for contracts/agreements and regional sharing of human resource and ethics issues.

3. NRCS is working on a new strategic plan to address climate change. The regional climate hub will be Durham, NH.

A motion to adjourn was made at 10:34 by Clarkson Collins, seconded by Ken Ayars. Motion carried unanimously.