

Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management

Natural Heritage Commission Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

July 28, 2011

Members Present:

Kevin Nelson
Karen Saucier
Mark Carroulo
Lisa Primiano
Larry Taft

Others Present:

Gregg Cassidy
Paul Jordan
Allison Logan

Meeting called to order at 9:05 AM.

1. Review of meeting minutes of July 20, 2011 and July 21, 2011

Review of meeting minutes postponed to last meeting on August 4, 2011.

2. Grant Requests

a. West Greenwich Land Trust – Parente

There is collective review, discussion, and scoring of the grant proposal.

The committee discussed the whether there are benefits to attaining a conservation easement over a fee simple in the cases of certain properties. It is determined that when reviewing the rules and regulations, they should address the criteria for when an easement is preferable, as they provide limited public access.

The property contains wetlands, and is not in a heritage area, though it contains habitat within 400ft.

b. Audubon Society of RI – Quaiapen

Larry Taft is determined ineligible to score, as he is the applicant and affiliated with the Audubon Society of Rhode Island.

There is collective review, discussion, and scoring of the grant proposal.
The property contains critical and uncommon habitats, prime and important farm soils, and is in a heritage area. It is contiguous to a large stretch of protected land, and is also contiguous to the Queen River.

c. Aquidneck Land Trust – St. Mary’s Church

There is collective review, discussion, and scoring of the grant proposal.

The property may contain rare species. It also contains vernal pools, lots of wetlands, and is contiguous to other protected land. It is also located on a watershed of public water supply.

d. South Kingstown Land Trust – Wells Farm

There is collective review, discussion, and scoring of the grant proposal.

This property has been brought before the committee before. It has 900 ft. of frontage, and is in close proximity/abuts other protected land. Public access would be limited to prearranged, guided hikes. It has agricultural opportunity and is in a groundwater recharge/well head protection area.

e. Town of Narragansett – South County Dev. Corp.

There is collective review, discussion, and scoring of the grant proposal.

The Committee noted that the subject property appears to be two un-buildable lots that are contiguous to a river/stream. The property possesses some forest resources, but the extensive wetlands would limit recreational opportunity.

f. City of Pawtucket – Roosevelt LLC

- Mark Carroulo motioned to refer the project to the RI Recreation Resources Review Committee for consideration, seconded by Kevin Nelson. **Unanimously Approved.**

g. Town of Johnston – Vacca

There is collective review, discussion, and scoring of the grant proposal.

The property is adjacent to town forest and memorial park. In such a dense, developed place this amount of protected, contiguous land is important. Gregg Cassidy informs the committee that the property contains forest resources that are not only valuable to Johnston, but to the state. It is also in a wellhead protection area.

h. Smithfield Land Trust – Dodge Farm

There is collective review, discussion, and scoring of the grant proposal.

Both the Smithfield Land Trust and Gloucester Land Trust applied separately as each are responsible for their own match of the fund, though both are funding portions of the same property.

There is discussion as to whether the applicants can receive multi-community points, however, it is determined that they can not as they filed separate applications.

It is contiguous to 200 acres of land protected by Audubon Society of RI, as well as a river. It contains habitat protection, ponds, vernal pools, conifers, oaks, and interesting topography. If managed well, it has fantastic recreational opportunity.

There is a floodplain on the Smithfield side, as well as agricultural soils.

i. Gloucester Land Trust – Dodge Farm

The Committee noted that this application is integral to the preceding as both must be funded if the acquisition is to be successful.

j. Gloucester Land Trust – O-Donnell

There is collective review, discussion, and scoring of the grant proposal.

The property contains uncommon habitats/species, including Ground Hemlock. Gregg Cassidy informs the group that it is a mature forest that is scenic with recreational opportunities (trails). It is adjacent to community wellhead protection area.

k. Gloucester Land Trust – Steere

There is collective review, discussion, and scoring of the grant proposal.

The Steere property possesses lake frontage, but is not contiguous to any other protected land. It has the potential for public access and recreation, and is scenic.

l. Prudence Conservancy – Barre

There is collective review, discussion, and scoring of the grant proposal.

The property does possess recreational opportunities. It is un-buildable land with wetlands, and in a wellhead protection area.

m. Tiverton Open Space Commission – Baier

There is collective review, discussion, and scoring of the grant proposal.

This property is contiguous to protected land, and is in a Natural Heritage Area. It possesses forest and cultural resources, as well as trails throughout the property.

n. Westerly Land Trust – GSRI

There is collective review, discussion, and scoring of the grant proposal.

The property contains trails, a bridge, and a cabin (intended for educational use), and a small pond. It also has cultural and forest resources. The property is contiguous to a stream, and other protected lands.

3. Other Business

Kevin Nelson requested that the members receive a tally of the scores before the next meeting, in order to have time to review. All members agree.

Motion to Adjourn by Larry Taft, seconded by Kevin Nelson.

Meeting Adjourned at 11:00 AM.