

**Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management**

**Natural Heritage Commission Advisory Committee**

**Meeting Minutes**

**July 20, 2011**

Members Present:

Kevin Nelson  
Karen Saucier  
Mark Carroulo  
Lisa Primiano

Members Absent:

Larry Taft

Others Present:

Gregg Cassidy  
Paul Jordan  
Allison Logan

Meeting called to order at 9:30 AM.

1. Introductions

2. There is discussion of whether electing a chairperson is appropriate.

- Motion made by Mark Carroulo to appoint Lisa Primiano as chairperson, seconded by Karen Saucier. **Unanimously Approved.**

3. Review and Discussion of 2008 local grant projects

- Lisa Primiano introduced and summarized results of 2008 round of applicants.
  - 20 requests for grants, 18 projects funded, 8 were closed.
  - 54% of funds awarded were expended, and more than 50% of the total acreage was acquired or protected.
  - \$1.8 million remaining in local section of the bond.
  - If there are similar results this time, and not all of awarded grants are closed, there might be enough money to do another round of applications.

4. Discussion of whether or not the scoring process or rules and regulations should be altered.

- Karen Saucier asked whether listing both “Consistent with Local Comprehensive Community Plan” and “Consistent with Local Open Space Plan” under Planning Consistency as separate criteria for scoring was necessary.

- Kevin Nelson stated that all municipalities have adopted a Local Comprehensive Community Plan that includes an Open Space Plan as an element; therefore the two criteria are essentially synonymous. Mark Carroulo and Kevin Nelson suggest they combine them for a total of five points instead of ten. Everyone agreed.

## 5. Grant Requests

### a. Little Compton Agricultural Conservancy Trust – Sakonnet Vineyard

- Review, discussion, and scoring of the grant proposal.
  - Discussion of how it would be used.
    - No direct water access (Newport Water owns the waterfront)
    - Possibly recreation
    - Part of the drinking water reservoir, in the watershed
    - Difficult access, but contiguous to other protected land

### b.. Little Compton Agricultural Conservancy Trust – Cabot Farm

- Review, discussion, and scoring of the grant proposal.
  - Lisa Primiano described the property as a farmland preservation project. It has already been negotiated with Mrs. Cabot, and George Mason from LCACT is in need of some additional money.
    - The land is actively farmed, and extremely scenic
    - No public access, strictly an agricultural preservation project

### c. Barrington Land Conservancy Trust – Stanley Farm

- Review, discussion, and scoring of the grant proposal.
  - Lisa Primiano described the property as farm and forested land, contiguous to a river.
    - Not extremely accessible (enter through someone’s backyard)
    - Full public access – fee simple
    - Potentially used by surrounding neighborhood
  - Paul Jordan informed that the property falls within a heritage layer, is diverse, and contains a large amount of salt marshes, which are important to fisheries.
  - Question raised – how should urban be defined?
    - Kevin Nelson clarifies that the urban aspect of the scoring criteria was added as an attempt to give urban communities a better score, as most of the other criteria heavily favors rural communities. “Urban” is intended to identify heavily developed communities, not just developed neighborhoods.

### d. North Smithfield Land Trust/Town – Booth Pond

- Review, discussion, and scoring of the grant proposal.
  - Karen Saucier raises concern that the property is claimed to be mixed use (office/commercial), though the zoning has not yet been changed (rural).
  - Lisa Primiano highlights that the NSLT was previously awarded a small grant, and DEM approved to give a larger one if town was in cooperation. They are now working together.
  - The other side of Booth Pond is protected.
  - The property shows some groundwater recharge, and is in the drinking water reservoir.

e. Narrow River Land Trust – GSRI

- Review, discussion, and scoring of the grant proposal.
  - Lisa Primiano described the property as a 207 acre former Girl Scout camp that is an important acquisition, as it would be open for public use.
  - Kevin Nelson observes that it has no critical or uncommon habitats.
  - Comprehensive community plan is very general, and doesn't specifically mention the property.

f. Town of Smithfield – Tyler Brook

- Review, discussion, and scoring of the grant proposal.
  - Karen Saucier highlights that there is no plan for the restoration of wetlands, as there are currently pipes draining them.
  - Not contiguous to any protected land.

6. Other Business

- Lisa Primiano suggests creating a waiting list, so if some projects do not close after awarded the grant, the money can be allocated to other applicants.

Motion to Adjourn by Mark Carroulo, seconded by Karen Saucier.

Meeting adjourned at 10:28 AM.

Respectfully Submitted By:

Allison Logan