

**Minutes of the Rivers Council Meeting held  
13 July 2005, 9:00 AM**  
Conference Room B  
William E. Powers State Administration Building  
One Capitol Hill, Providence, RI

**ATTENDANCE:**

**A. Members Present**

Meg Kerr (Chair)  
Stephen Kearns  
Guy Lefebvre  
Scott Millar (Vice Chair)  
Kevin Nelson  
Sharon Pavignano  
Will Riverso  
Jane Sherman  
Mike Walker

**B. Members Absent**

Kevin Cute  
Diane Feather  
Elizabeth Gowell  
Dale Grogan

**C. Watershed Councils in Attendance**

Ann Morrill, Kickemuit River Council

**D. Guests in Attendance**

**CALL TO ORDER:**

1. The Chair called the meeting to order at 9:07 AM

**ACTION ITEMS:**

2. **Approval of minutes June 8, 2005.** Mr. Nelson moved approval, seconded by Mr. Millar, all approved.
3. **Report from Nomination Committee.** Mr. Nelson reported that the committee discussed adding positions for a Secretary and Treasurer. They contacted potential candidates and identified candidates, but recommend that the Council postpone filling these positions until the SOP legislation is finalized. Ms. Sherman asked if we should nominate an interim treasurer. Mr. Nelson said that Mr. Kearns as chair of the Funding and Development Committee is serving the role of treasurer, so there is no urgency. Ms. Sherman made a motion that the Council accept the recommendations of the nominating committee, Mr. Kearns seconded, all approved.  
The Council discussed the current SOP bills (S1219, H5816) and agreed that S1219's provision that the WRB, EDC, CRMC and League of Cities and Town become non-voting

members is not something the Rivers Council wants. Ms. Kerr agreed to contact Senate and House Policy staff about this issue.

4. **Election of Officers.** Tabled.
5. **Rhode Island Foundation Proposal.** Ms. Kerr recused herself from the discussion and the vote. The draft RIF proposal was distributed to members prior to the meeting. Ms. Sherman complimented the proposal and asked that it include technical assistance to watershed councils on non-point source pollution, identify and review, with watershed councils, any changes in legislation, policies, and/or regulations that will improve their ability to promote their water quality goals, and develop and advocate for 2006 legislation and/or policy and regulatory amendments based on input from watershed councils. Mr. Nelson made a motion to approve the proposal, Ms. Sherman seconded, all approved.
6. **Final approval of Notice Rule.** The Rivers Council Notice rule public hearing was held on July 8. All comments were in support of the rule. Ms. Sherman moved approval by the Council, Mr. Millar seconded, all approved. Ms. Kerr was asked to email the final rule to all Rivers Council members with a summary of next steps.

## REPORTS

7. **Report from the Chair.** Ms. Kerr thanked Mr. Kearns for organizing the RC Awards event on June 23. Despite noise from nearby construction, it was a big success. Ms. Kerr also thanked the Water Resources Board for donating their surplus computers to the Rivers Council and recognized watershed councils. WPWA, the Kickemuit River Council and the Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council have all benefited. The Environmental Awareness Day at Narragansett Beach is Saturday July 16. Ms. Pavignano has done an excellent job with the organization. Ms. Kerr is preparing a letter requesting technical assistance from the National Park Service River and Trails program on developing a conceptual framework for a river trail system. Letters are due on August 1.
8. **Report on Bay, Rivers and Watersheds Coordination Team and Metro SAMP.** Mr. Walker reported the Coordination Team is developing a workplan for the systems level plan, synthesizing existing goals and objectives and working towards a plan that is manageable and achievable. The Metro SAMP is identifying catalytic projects that will move the process forward and model the desired coordination. CRMC, with technical support from the URI CRC, is drafting urban coastal buffer policies. A draft policy should be available within a month. Ms. Sherman asked whether the Coordination Team was funded. Mr. Millar responded that he believes the funds are in the DEM budget.
9. **Professional Development/Education.** Mr. Lefebvre showed the Council a photo of the first Watershed Stewards class. The second program is planned for September 27 – November 1 at the South Kingstown (Peace Dale) Guild. The Town of SK Recreation Dept. is handling the registration and will help with press and promotion.
10. **Funding and Development.** Mr. Kearns noted that the Rivers Council needs a permanent staff position and the RIF funding, although extremely helpful, will not provide long term funding to the Council. The Funding and Development Committee will be

developing a strategy to obtain sustained state funding for the Rivers Council and a director's position. He welcomed input from all RC members. Mr. Lefebvre recommended 2 on 1 meetings with key legislators to build support for the Rivers Council.

Recent grants for Rivers Council projects:

Champlin – for YSI monitoring equipment to share with watershed councils. Ms.

Pavignano wrote the proposal and will provide technical oversight of the equipment if we are successful.

Jessie B. Cox – Ms. Kerr wrote a proposal to fund an urban module of the Watershed Stewards program.

11. **Legislative Committee.** H5816 passed the Legislature and was vetoed by the Governor. S1219 (discussed earlier in the meeting) changes the membership of the Council. The Cesspool phase out legislation did not pass, the MTBE bill passed and was signed by the Governor.
12. **Policy Committee.** Ms. Sherman reported the Committee is working on the land use portion of the plan.
13. **Airport EIS.** Ms. Kerr read a letter from John Silva, giving the Rivers Council a seat on the Inter-agency Coordination Team. The Team has a meeting tentatively scheduled for September 28. Ms. Sherman made a motion that the Rivers Council appoint Kevin Nelson as our representative to the EIS committee with Mr. Lefebvre as the alternate. Ms. Kerr was asked to notify Mr. Silva of these appointments. Mr. Millar noted that Ron Gagnon is the DEM representative on the Team.
14. **Rivers Council vacancies.** Ms. Kerr notified the Council that Mr. Ionata's resignation is final and that the Council now has 2 vacancies. Ms. Sherman suggested that the Council identify the areas of expertise of the existing members and identify needs.
15. **2006 Legislative Platform.** Ms. Sherman suggested that the Council identify perceived obstacles to improving rivers and water quality and use this information to develop a legislative platform for 2006. Mr. Walker asked if the Council wants to be a catalyst for new legislation or respond and comment on legislation that has been introduced. Ms. Sherman suggested that the Council be involved with the drafting of legislation. Mr. Lefebvre recommended that the Council take a stronger role in buffer policies. Mr. Nelson added water allocation to the list of priorities. Mr. Millar pointed out that the enforcement of existing regulation is often the problem. For example, as DEM and the Woonasquatucket Watershed Council work on buffer restoration, they are finding that many sites have notices of violation that go back years. These outstanding violations making dealing with the sites very complicated.
16. **Other Business.** Mr. Millar asked for a presentation from Statewide Planning on their development of a new State Guide Plan element on low and moderate income housing. The Plan will include an identification of areas where affordable housing is appropriate. He requested that the Chair write a letter to Statewide Planning asking that they consider density impacts on watersheds as the project moves forward. The Rivers Council should review and comment on the Plan as it is drafted.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 11:00 AM.

**Next meeting August 10, 2005 at 4:00 PM (This meeting was canceled). The next meeting is September 14 at 9:00 AM.**