

**Minutes of the Rivers Council Meeting held
12 October 2005, 4:00 PM**
Conference Room B
William E. Powers State Administration Building
One Capitol Hill, Providence, RI

ATTENDANCE:

A. Members Present

Dale Grogan
Meg Kerr (Chair)
Stephen Kearns
Scott Millar (Vice Chair)
Kevin Nelson
Will Riverso
Mike Walker

B. Members Absent

Kevin Cute
Diane Feather
Elizabeth Gowell
Guy Lefebvre
Sharon Pavignano
Jane Sherman

C. Watershed Councils in Attendance

Ann Morrill, Kickemuit River Council
Greg Gerritt, Friends of the Moshassuck
Arthur Plitt, Friends of the Moshassuck
Edward Callender, Salt Pond Coalition
Bob Nero, Pawtuxet River Authority and Watershed Council

D. Guests in Attendance

Don Pryor, Brown University
Jennifer West, Narr Bay National Estuary Research Reserve
Juan Mariscal, RI Water Resources Board
Lynne Harrington, Greenwich Bay Watershed Group
Evan Matthews, Quonset Development Corporation

CALL TO ORDER:

1. The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:08 PM

ACTION ITEMS:

2. **Approval of minutes September 14, 2005.** Mr. Kearns moved approval, seconded by Mr. Riverso, all approved.

3. **Friends of the Moshassuck application for recognition.** Ms. Kerr reminded the Council that recognition of the Friends of the Moshassuck at this time is outside the timeframe established by our policies. Mr. Kearns made a motion to move forward with this second round of watershed council applications, Mr. Millar seconded and all approved. Mr. Millar reported on the committee's review of the Moshassuck application. He commended them for their work and pointed out several areas of needed work. The discussion of education programs provides a good summary of past actions and the committee requests additional detail on programs planned for the future. The committee also recommends more outreach to municipalities in the watershed. A letter to each community, introducing the watershed organization and describing programs planned for the year would strengthen the application. The committee also requests more information on how the watershed council will seek members in the watershed communities. Mr. Millar asked the Rivers Council to table action on the application until such time as the Moshassuck can provide additional information. Mr. Gerritt thanked the Council for reviewing the application and asked for time on the December agenda for a second review and action. Mr. Nelson made a motion to put the Moshassuck application on the December agenda, Mr. Kearns seconded and all approved. Ms. Kerr alerted the Council to three watershed council designations (Kickemuit, Woonasquatucket, and Pawtuxet) that are coming up for renewal in 2006. The Council agreed to make June 2006 the date for finalizing this review (consistent with Rivers Month).

4. **Pawtuxet River Authority and Watershed Council 2004 and 2005 Grants.** Ms. Kerr reported that the Rivers Council letter on the grants had been sent to Mr. Nero. The letter summarized the Rivers Council's concerns: 1) the 2004 grant needs to be expended, 2) the Rivers Council needs reports on the 2004 grant, 3) the PRA-WC proposal for 2005 funds was not acceptable to the Council. The \$5,000 has been transferred to the RINHS and has been charged a 7 % administrative fee. Mr. Nero reported that the PRA-WC is working at an accelerated pace on the FY04 grant. He anticipates that funds can be fully expended by December 05. Mr. Nero did not provide the Council with written documentation on the 04 grant. Mr. Nero reported that the PRA-WC would like to spend the 05 grant on public outreach for the fish passage project at Pawtuxet Falls. The funds would be used for salary for an outreach coordinator. Mr. Millar asked Mr. Nero for written documentation of both the 04 and 05 projects with firm deadlines. Mr. Nelson voiced concern with distributing funds to watershed councils who are having administrative difficulties. He made a motion to consider the PRA-WC application for FY05 funds conditional upon receipt of adequate financial information on the FY04 grant. If approve the FY05 grant would be on a reimbursable basis. Mr. Kearns seconded and all approved. Mr. Millar added that the PRA-WC should be aware that if the requested information is not submitted or is not adequate, the Rivers Council could re-allocate the funds.

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

5. **Kevin Flynn, Associate Director for the Division of Planning.** Mr. Flynn was not able to attend. Ms. Kerr read an email apologizing for the last minute schedule change and offering to attend the November 9 Rivers Council meeting. The Council asked for the meeting to be rescheduled. Mr. Nelson announced that the State Land Use Plan will be presented on Thursday Oct 13 to the State Planning Council (DOA Conf. Room C). Mr. Millar said that DEM has been reviewing the plan, but it is changing rapidly. He was impressed with the plan at a recent presentation at the Grow Smart technical advisory board meeting.

COMMITTEES

6. **Funding and Development Committee.** Mr. Kearns reported that the Committee has met with the Water Resources Board (Juan Mariscal, Kathy Crawley, and Dan Varin), with Ken Payne and Sandra Whitehouse and with Alma Green (Director Women's Development Corp) since the last Rivers Council meeting. Mr. Kearns made a motion stating that the Rivers Council supports the work of the Funding and Development Committee as they continue to work towards stable funding for the Rivers Council. Mr. Nelson seconded and all approved. Mr. Riverso abstained. Mr. Millar asked for time on the November agenda for an in depth discussion of the future of the Rivers Council.
7. **Legislative Committee.** Mr. Riverso reiterated his interest in working on legislation for the Rivers Council. Ms. Kerr reported that the cesspool phase out legislation is being revised by DEM. She distributed a power point from Elizabeth Stone (DEM) which summarized DEM's current thinking. Ms. Grogan pointed out that the bill only addresses cesspools near public wells, not private wells. Mr. Nelson asked for Ms. Stone to attend a Rivers Council meeting and brief the Council on this bill and any others of interest to the Rivers Council and watershed councils. Mr. Mariscal quickly reviewed the history of cesspool phase out bills in Rhode Island. Bills have been introduced for several years and have not been successful. The current bill is a compromise. Mr. Kearns asked if RI had considered legislation similar to Massachusetts Title 5. Mr. Millar said that it had been considered, but was extremely controversial. Mr. Nelson encouraged the Chair to invite legislators to the Council meeting to listen to the discussion.
8. **Policy Committee.** Mr. Nelson reported that the committee met last week. They have identified areas that need to be addressed but committee members' time is limited. He recommended that the Council discuss the level of detail for the plan and asked for a discussion at the December meeting.
9. **Professional Development/Education.** Ms. Kerr read an email from Ms. Pavignano reporting on the Watershed Stewards Program. The program is going well with 17 participants. Three classes are completed and the first Saturday workshop will be held on Saturday. We have invited graduates from the first WSP to join us for afternoon hiking and kayaking. We have collected project ideas from watershed councils, land trusts, and other partner organizations.

REPORTS AND DISCUSSION

10. **Report from the Chair.**
 - Members. The Council quickly reviewed the list of skills for Council members. Mr. Walker identified fundraising and non-profit management as missing skills. He challenged the Council to extend itself and seek members outside of the usual set of partners. He suggested Bryant's Small Business Development program, and developers working on waterfront projects.
 - Ms. Kerr announced that the Council's proposal to the Jessie B. Cox foundation was not successful. A proposal has been submitted to the NE Grassroots Environmental Fund for two fund raising workshops with Pat Munoz from the national River Network program. The proposal to the National Park Service River and Trails program for development of a water trail system was successful.
 - The 2006 Land and Water Conservation Summit will be held March 11. Ms. Kerr asked Rivers Council members to think of workshops that would benefit

watershed councils and distributed a list of workshops suggested by participants in the 2005 conference.

11. **FAA Interagency Coordination Team.** Mr. Nelson reported on the October 3rd meeting of the FAA Coordination Team. The meeting focused on defining a “purpose and need” statement for the EIS to address. The draft statement is to enhance safety and efficiency at the TF Green airport. Ms. Morrill stated that environmental protection should be included in the statement. Mr. Nelson reported that he has been asked by his office to step down from the committee. Mr. Walker recommended that Mr. Nelson remain the point of contact for materials and ask his DOA colleagues for briefings on meetings.
12. **Other Business.** Mr. Kearns reported that the Blackstone River Watershed Council made a presentation before the Smithfield Town Council on a proposed development in the watershed. This is an excellent example of the RC Notice Rule in action.

ADJOURNMENT

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 6:05 PM.

Next meeting November 9, 2005 at 9:00 AM