

**Minutes of the Rivers Council Meeting held
14 June 2006, 4:00 PM**
Conference Room B
William E. Powers State Administration Building
One Capitol Hill, Providence, RI

ATTENDANCE:

A. Members Present

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

B. Members Absent

Dale Grogan
Patrick Hanner
Kevin Cute
Mike Walker

C. Watershed Councils in Attendance

Tom Ardito, SRHCC
Ann Morrill, KRC
Jenny Pereira, WRWC
Chris Tompkins, NRPA

D. Guests in Attendance

Keith Gonsalves, Ten Mile River

Public Hearing

The Chair opened the Public Hearing on the re-designation of the Pawtuxet River Authority, the Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council and the Kickemuit River Council as local Watershed Councils at 4:00 PM. The Chair asked if anyone would like to speak on the re-designations.

Ms. Pereira stated that the Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council values their designation as a watershed council and the partnership with the Rivers Council and hope to be redesignated.

Ms. Morrill said that the Kickemuit River Council feels the same.

No one else wished to comment nor were any written statements submitted.

Mr. Millar made a motion to close the public hearing, Ms. Sherman seconded and all approved.

RIVERS COUNCIL MEETING

The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:07 PM

ACTION ITEMS

1. **Approval of minutes May 10, 2006.** Mr. Millar moved approval, Ms. Sherman seconded, all approved.
2. **Re-designation of Pawtuxet, Woonasquatucket and Kickemuit Watershed Councils.** Mr. Nelson reported for the re-designation committee. He said that the committee recommends approval of the re-designation. They would like to recommend that the PRA and the KRC consider expanding their area of designation. The committee would like the KRC to consider including the entire town of Bristol and the PRA to consider the portions of the Quinebaug watershed that are in RI. Initial conversations with the PRA suggest that they are amenable to this recommendation. The committee also had some concerns about items in the KRC's workplan. Mr. Callendar has offered to work with the KRC on these monitoring issues.

Ms. Sherman abstained from voting. Mr. Nelson made a motion to approve the three re-designations. Mr. Millar seconded. All approved.

3. **Move state funds from WRB to RINHS (\$9,850).** Ms. Kerr reported that the \$9,850 remaining in FY06 Legislative Funds needs to be moved to the RINHS. A contract covering that move was distributed and reviewed. Mr. Millar moved approval, Ms. Sherman seconded and all approved.
4. **Allocation of \$6,000 state funds previously allocated for PRA and BBC.** Ms. Kerr recommended that the Rivers Council use the \$3,000 previously earmarked for the PRA to hire an intern to research access sites along the Pawtuxet River. The research will be baseline information for the Blueway project. She said that she had also talked with the Buckeye Brook Coalition and they asked for help with a riparian buffer restoration project and reviewing DOT RIPDES permits. She recommended using their \$3,000 for an intern who could help with these projects.

Mr. Nelson said that he was in favor of the Water Trail project because it was of statewide benefit. He was not in favor of the BBC project because it was not well enough defined and was of only local value. Ms. Sherman moved approval of the PRA allocation with continued dialog on the BBC allocation. Mr. Millar seconded and all approved.

5. **Adopt procedures for re-designating watershed councils.** Mr. Nelson presented revised procedures for re-designating watershed councils. He said that he recommends deleting the requirement that a watershed council have a member from each municipality in the watershed. The Council reviewed the procedures. Ms. Sherman moved approval, Mr. Millar seconded and all approved.

6. **Report from nominating committee, selection of officers.** Mr. Kearns reported that his nominating committee met; he made a recommendation for Mr. Kerr – Chair, Mr. Millar Vice Chair. Mr. Nelson made a motion that the Council select Ms. Kerr as Chair and Mr. Millar as Vice Chair. Ms. Sherman seconded.

Discussion – Ms. Sherman suggested the addition of a treasurer as soon as a full council was appointed; she made a point to say she was happy with the way things were being done but felt the Chair should be assisted with this task on a more organized level; Mr. Kearns said that he agrees; will cover this in his committee report; Mr. Nelson suggests the addition of a secretary as recommended by the last nomination committee.

Motion approved by all.

7. **Support for CLF work in Blackstone.** The item was tabled.
8. **Committees – adopt charge and preliminary workplans and report on recent activities**

Funding committee – Mr. Kearns

Committee of Mr. Kearns, Mr. Walker and Ms. Staniszewski met last week. They plan to add members with grant writing, fund raising, development experience. They suggest / plan development of a powerpoint presentation to be used for meetings with house finance committee and elected officials; explaining what we do; who we are. They would also like to connect with businesses that use rivers and request support / funding. Looking for new committee chair; looking for members of committee to support work of RC Chair.

Policy Committee – Ms. Sherman

The Committee has not met but direction has not changed. They will start over on rivers classification plan incorporating land use plan. This is a critical function of the RC. Mr. Nelson spoke to clear up misunderstanding that WRB had wanted RC role with drinking water reviewed; WRB did not request any change or send any memos; the request was from Statewide Planning staff; the consensus is that the rivers plan should discuss importance of drinking water. Ms. Sherman has resigned as chair new committee chair needed.

Legislative – Mr. Rivero

Also stepping down as chair but still supportive of RC and committee
Cesspool hearing tomorrow; Mr. Rivero will attend.

Program – Ms. Pavignano

Reviewed info on beach day, watershed stewardship program and intern.
Mr. Millar discussed DEM Director's interest in having the Beach Day incorporated into the state's beach day; event would then be on state land; Ms. Pavignano agreed that it was a good idea for 2007 as the RC is not really involved in the event very much and coordinating with the state would bring more organizations and people to help.

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION

9. **Report from the Chair.** Attached report was distributed.

10. **Other business**

Mr. Ardito asked about SRHCC grant application; Mr. Kearns answered that finance committee just received and distributed final submittal; committee has not had time to review and make recommendation.

Mr. Ardito also handed out NBJs with center map of Narragansett Bay and info on RI rivers

Meeting adjourned at 5:15 PM. Next meeting July 12, 2006 at 9:00 AM

REPORT FROM THE CHAIR 6-14-06

COMMITTEES

- Developed a revised framework for RC committees in order to strengthen the Council's committees and engage watershed councils and other partners in our work. Distributed the framework to existing committee chairs, discussed changes, recruited new chairs as needed and began implementation.

POLICY

- Talked with Juan Mariscal and met with Kevin Nelson, Nancy Hess (DOA), Jane Sherman about concerns related to Rivers Policy and Classification Plan (see May 10 minutes). We agreed that the revisions to the Rivers Plan will briefly discuss drinking water protection and reference goals, policies and strategies from appropriate state guide plan elements. The full text of these goals, policies and strategies will be included in an appendix of the Rivers Plan.
- Attended meeting of the **Bays, Rivers and Watersheds Coordination Team** (May 24). Discussion focused on search for CT Chair, presentation on RI Clean Water Finance Agency.
- Attended meetings of the Narragansett Bay Estuary Program Steering Committee and the Stormwater Advisory Committee (<http://www.uri.edu/ce/wq/mtp/html/StormwaterHome.htm>).

SUPPORT AND EMPOWER WATERSHED COUNCILS

- **Watershed Council Grants.** Talked with Bob Nero (PRA) and Steve Insana about use of \$3,000 to support watershed council activities.
- **Infrastructure Collaborative – the Back Office Support project (members Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association, Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council, Rivers Council, Westerly Land Trust, Barrington Land Conservation Trust, Land**

Trust Council). Implementation of iMIS and Volunteer coordinator proceeding. WPWA is taking the lead on learning iMIS and training members of the collaborative. The volunteer program will initially focus on land and water stewardship activities as well as one-time clean up type events. Attended quarterly meeting of Third Sector New England (a grant requirement) and learned that additional funds will likely be available for competitive applications in 2007.

FOSTER PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN RIVER PROTECTION

- **Watershed Stewards.** Program now scheduled for September 19 – October 24. Flyer at end of report. Sharon Pavignano and I are working with Rachel Sholly on a web site to support the class.
- **Water Trail project.** Developed a site evaluation form for assessing put-in and take-out sites. Field tested the form with Alison Wald (volunteer) on 2 sites on the Blackstone River. Alison will continue to visit sites on the Blackstone River using paddling maps developed by the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council, and paddling routes published by the AMC, Ken Weber and listed on the RI Canoe and Kayak Association (RICKA) web site.
- **Rivers Month Calendar.** Completed by Sharon Pavignano and distributed via email. Also posted at Rivers Council web site.
- **Environmental Awareness Day and Narragansett Beach.** The event will be held on July 15. We are recruiting interested organizations.

STRENGTHEN THE RIVERS COUNCIL

- **Rivers Council Membership.** I have been working with the Governor's office on appointments to fill Rivers Council vacancies. Mr. Joe Baer and I have been appointed and information has been provided on additional candidates. I contact the Governor's appointments office regularly each week to keep our needs at the top of the pile. I have contacted Senator Sosnowski to request a confirmation hearing for the appointments that have been made. I have contacted the Senate Policy office for assistance and have been told that there is a huge back-log of advice and consent hearings. If the appointments are not confirmed during this session, we will need to start the process again from the beginning next legislative session. There are 4 additional seats that need to be appointed and confirmed (Dale Grogan – reappointed, Steve Kearns seat as he does not want to be reappointed and 2 vacancies), 2 seats that need confirmation (Joe Baer, Meg Kerr).
- **State Funding.** Our funding was cut in the Governor's budget. We are requesting that it be INCREASED to \$130,000. Watershed councils have contacted their legislators, partners have written letters of support, but monies are very tight.
- **Grant reporting.** Submitted final report to New England Grassroots Environmental Fund.