

**Minutes of the Rivers Council Meeting held  
8 November 2006, 9:00 AM**  
Conference Room B  
William E. Powers State Administration Building  
One Capitol Hill, Providence, RI

**ATTENDANCE:**

**A. Members Present**

Jane Sherman  
Meg Kerr (Chair)  
Sharon Pavignano  
Guy Lefebvre  
Joe Baer  
Kevin Nelson  
Juan Mariscal  
Patrick Hanner  
Will Riverso

**B. Members Absent**

Scott Millar (Vice Chair)  
Mike Walker

**C. Watershed Councils in Attendance**

Ann Morrill, KRC  
Ted Callender, Salt Ponds Coalition  
Mark Bullinger, Salt Ponds Coalition

**D. Guests in Attendance**

Keith Gonsalves, Ten Mile  
Claudia Staniszewski, RI LISC  
Rachel Sholly

The chair called the meeting to order at 9:05 AM

**1. World Monitoring Day**

Ms. Pavignano reported on the water quality monitoring activities she led with a home school group was successful and fun. A video of the event will be shown at the next meeting. Ms. Pavignano commented that this event would be good for watershed councils to participate in every October.

**ACTION ITEMS**

**2. Approval of Minutes October 11, 2006**

Ms. Sherman recommended that the complete MOU be attached to the minutes. Ms. Kerr agreed and will attach the document. Mr. Baer moved approval, Mr. Nelson seconded, all approved.

### **3. Approval of nomination committee for Secretary and Treasurer**

Ms. Sherman will chair the nomination committee. Mr. Baer asked if the Secretary and Treasurer must be members, which Ms. Kerr confirmed. Mr. Baer asked how many vacancies there are in the Council. Ms. Kerr reported that there are 3 or 4 vacancies. Further discussion will occur at the next meeting.

## **REPORTS**

### **4. Chair (M. Kerr) – attached at end of minutes**

Ms. Sherman suggested that we ask the Attorney General's office if the Rivers Council is allowed certain powers under the River Council Act. Mr. Mariscal, Ms. Pavignano, and Mr. Nelson will develop appropriate questions.

### **5. Program Committee – (S. Pavignano)**

Watershed Stewardship Program – Ms. Pavignano reported planning for next year's class has begun. The class will focus on the Aquidneck Island watershed. Past WSP participants have been invited to help design next watershed stewards class.

Environmental Awareness at the Beach Day – Ms. Pavignano will coordinate the Environmental Awareness Day which is scheduled for Saturday, July 14<sup>th</sup>.

### **6. Funding Committee – (J. Baer)**

Mr. Baer presented the Council's financial report. He then suggested that the Council discuss plans beyond Dec. 31, particularly staffing plans. He posed a possible agenda item: What is our strategy as the legislature reconvenes? It was mentioned that we won't know if we have received the RIF grant by next meeting (Dec. 13<sup>th</sup>).

Ms. Sherman asked if a separate monthly financial report could be created for the Land and Water Partnership. Ms. Kerr agreed to create a separate report.

The Council briefly discussed the format and terminology of the financial report. Mr. Baer will reconfigure the one-page report and tweak it as needed.

Mr. Baer returned to the larger question: What kind of budget do we envision? This will be an agenda item for the next meeting.

### **7. Policy Committee**

Mr. Nelson raised questions about the Classification Plan. The Watershed Management section is still not complete and DEM has not been able to work with us to complete it. Do we have the expertise to have a complete chapter on watershed management? How should we proceed? Ms. Sherman suggested that the matter be placed on the January agenda so as to give members sufficient time to peruse and comment on the section, ensuring informed decisions. Mr. Nelson said that the Planning Council is now ready to consider the Rivers Plan. The Council agreed to e-mail the section to all members again and place the matter low on the December agenda.

## **8. Legislative Committee**

Mr. Riverso will continue to monitor legislation at the state level. Ms. Kerr announced that a presentation is being created to show legislators what the Rivers Council does. There was a short discussion about identifying key legislators to talk to and who is going to do it.

Mr. Nelson announced that a DEM bill was passed that requires DEM to develop regulations governing the disposal of state properties with regard to evaluating its potential open space value. He is on the working group which will meet next week. Mr. Nelson asked for suggestions to contribute on behalf of the Rivers Council. He will e-mail the Council with notes from the working group meeting.

## **9. Flood Hazard Mitigation Meeting (S. Pavignano)**

Ms. Pavignano reported that she attended the Flood Hazard meeting which included discussion of the formation of a non-profit by the RI Emergency Management Agency. This organization would provide training, buy stream gauges, and do other things that may be of interest to the Council. Ms. Pavignano will keep track of that project.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **10. Greenwich Bay SAMP (Do we participate on implementation team? Who? How?)**

Ms. Kerr opened the topic for discussion. Ms. Sherman asked which watershed councils would be impacted, to which Ms. Kerr replied Buckeye Brook Coalition and Greenwich Bay, and added that there may be more emerging, not yet recognized groups.

Mr. Baer posed the question: Given limited staff and financial resources, why should we participate? Mr. Callender noted that staff does not need to go to meetings, other affiliated members could attend. Concerns about "mission creep" were raised. Ms. Kerr said that participation in the SAMP is consistent with the Council's mission – to foster local groups, develop and implement policy -- and would be good opportunity for local policy work. She added that we should be careful if we want to be involved in future SAMPs. Mr. Nelson agreed and suggested that the Council should not be deeply involved in implementation, but involved at a low level. Ms. Sherman agreed and added that we do not have capacity to be fully engaged, but we should encourage interested parties to participate. Watershed councils should be primary representatives for watershed and we should be their support. Mr. Lefebvre suggested that we play a similar role as we do with the EIS.

Ms. Sherman asked if the Council will be involved in all future SAMPs? Mr. Nelson suggested that when there is not a local watershed council, the RC should step up, but not necessarily commit to every SAMP.

Conclusions: Ms. Kerr will e-mail Jim Boyd saying we would like to be on the implementation team. Guy and Kevin will be our representatives.

### **11. Discuss 2007 Work Plan Components**

Meeting schedule – Ms. Kerr asked if alternating meeting times still works for everyone. No one objected. Ms. Kerr asked the Council to review the calendar and approve dates.

Ms. Kerr reviewed her draft of a 2007 work plan and opened discussion on: What happens if we don't get the RI Foundation grant?

The amount is \$55,000. Mr. Baer commented that building our own capacity to full membership would contribute to more vibrant organization and help us become more self-sustaining. He suggested that in order to build membership, we may have to reduce time being put into some projects. We should always ask: Is this vital to our mission?

Ms. Kerr asked if we should use legislative funds to pay RC staff? What do we want to do with staff? Ms. Staniszewski said that when funds are low, an organization needs to fund itself first.

Mr. Nelson asked which projects would lose funding. Ms. Kerr said the Watershed Stewardship Program, strengthening watershed council-municipal relations and fundraising are the three projects in the RIF grant proposal. Mr. Baer emphasized that we need to focus on building capacity for 2007, not abandon projects, but put some on hold. He also said it would be useful to develop a 3-year vision of funding outlook.

Mr. Lefebvre said we should develop policy that brings about better use of watershed approach in RI, find grants for capacity building, hire a staff person, and secure a sizeable grant to implement watershed approach. He was also in favor of cutting back some programming to work on capacity building, legislator relations, grant writing, etc. Ms. Kerr commented that weekly phone calls from RC members would help with legislator relations.

Ms. Sherman noted that the Council cannot afford to give watershed councils anything and that this is a critical year for developing the Council as a sustainable organization. She stressed the need to maximize funding possibilities in order to fund the most important things we need to achieve. Mr. Lefebvre suggested that capacity building should take the majority of funding.

Ms. Kerr led the Council through the workplan, estimating time needed for each task. The complete analysis will be provided to the Council prior to the December meeting.

**Next meeting - December 13<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 PM**

**Adjourn at 11:07 AM**



## REPORT FROM CHAIR November 8, 2006

### ADMINISTRATIVE

- **Grants.** Our revised RIF grant was well received by Debra Linnell, our project officer. A final report was filed for the RIF mini grant for the Watershed Stewards web site. Grant reports are due in December for the 2006 RC grant.
- **Personnel.** We are working on a contractual basis with Rachel Sholly (administrative support) and Sharon Pavignano. Our agreement with the RINHS needs to be updated on January 1, 2007.
- **Rivers Council 2006 Annual Report.** Was due on October 1. Sharon is taking the lead on preparing a draft for Rivers Council review. Chair has notified Beverly Najarian that the report will be late.
- **Training.** Legislation requires that the RC conduct training for newly appointed and qualified members within 6 months after their qualification. Training should include 46-28, 42-36, 36-14 and 38-2 specified in our updated legislation.
- **Rules Coordinator.** Filing is due.

### SUPPORT AND EMPOWER WATERSHED COUNCILS

- **Watershed Council Grants.** The SRHCC grant was disbursed (\$3,000). We still hold \$850 for the Friends of the Moshassuck.
- **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 is proceeding. Jennifer Styles is our shared volunteer coordinator. She is preparing a monthly calendar of volunteer opportunities, volunteer job descriptions, volunteer handbooks for participating organizations and lists of volunteer prospects. She will track volunteer hours for the member groups.
- **Land and Water Summit.** The Summit will be held March 24, 2007 at the URI Memorial Union. Rick Greenwood will give the keynote address on the history of RI's rivers. Lorraine Joubert is planning a track on municipal training and we have hired a consultant to help with conference administration.

### FOSTER PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN RIVER PROTECTION

- **Watershed Stewards.** The class was a huge success! The project now moves to the Program Committee of the Rivers Council.
- **Water Trail project/Blueway.** Attached summary of 2006 and plans for 2007.