



The Rhode Island Rivers Council

c/o RI Water Resources Board
235 Promenade Street
Providence, RI 02908

Minutes of the Council Meeting held April 8, 2009

Conference Room B, William E. Powers State Administration Building,
One Capitol Hill, Providence, RI

ATTENDANCE:

A. Members Present

Ted Callender
Eric Schneider
Paul Gonsalves
Jane Sherman (Co-Chair)
Guy Lefebvre (Co-Chair)
Will Riverso
Claudia Staniszewski
Charlie Vandemoer

B. Members Absent

Joe Baer
Mike Walker

C. Guests in Attendance

Ann Morrill – Kickemuit River Watershed Council
Karen Scott – Statewide Planning

1. Call to Order:

Ms. Sherman called the meeting to order at 4:10 and noted a quorum was present. The members introduced themselves to Ms. Scott.

2. Discussion and vote on minutes for the February 2009 meeting

The minutes were distributed to the board prior to the meeting.

With a motion by Mr. Callendar, seconded by Mr. Schneider the minutes of the February 2009 meeting were approved.

3. Action Items

Appointment of Committees to review Watershed Council Designation and Redesignation Applications: Six Watershed Councils are due for redesignation: Blackstone River Watershed Council, Buckeye Brook Coalition, Wood Pawcatuck Watershed Association, Saugatuck River Heritage Corridor, Salt Ponds Coalition and the Narrow River Preservation Association. All were duly notified by email about the deadline of May 1, and were given copies of the redesignation criteria. To date, Mr. Lefebvre has received notice from three of the groups that they will be applying. No one has heard from the representative of the Blackstone. Ms. Staniszewski indicated that this group did not apply for a grant this year and has been non-responsive to requests for information about last year's grant. Since both have been using the same contact information, RIRC members were asked to forward any contact information about the Blackstone to Mr. Lefebvre so that he can inquire of other representatives of the organization.

New designation information has been send to a group organizing on Aquidneck Island, two groups who have been organizing in the Hunt River watershed, the Hunt River Watershed Council and the Friends of the Hunt River Watershed and the Ten Mile River Watershed Council. Mr. Lefebvre reported the Ten Mile group said they were not interested in designation. The following members of the RIRC volunteered to serve on the designation and redesignation committee. Redesignation Committee: Mr. Gonsalves (Chair), Ms. Sherman and Mr. Vandemoer Designation Committee: Mr. Callendar (Chair), Mr. Schneider and Mr. Riverso.

Kickemuit Request re: LNG Tankers: Ms. Morrill requests the RIRC send a letter to FERC opposing the LNG siting in Mt. Hope Bay. She stated the multiple concerns expressed by her organization, various state bodies, and private citizens. Mr. Schneider questioned Ms. Morrill about the standing of the organization, and Ms. Morrill noted that the Kickemuit has legal standing to testify on this matter. Mr. Vandemoer noted that RIRC could consider the project based on its potential impacts to natural resources, but noted that the RIRC is not able to evaluate the impact on winter flounder and other issues. Mr. Schneider and Mr. Gonsalves agreed that we could send a letter expressing serious concerns. Mr. Vandemoer moved that we draft and send a letter from the RIRC to FERC with regard to the LNG plan and express our concerns relative to its impact on natural resources. The motion was seconded by Mr. Callendar and unanimously approved. Mr. Vandemoer agreed to draft the letter and circulate it to members for their comments prior to sending.

Beach Day/Green Drinks Event: Ms. Staniszewski reported that Beach day is scheduled for July 18 at Narragansett Town Beach. We reviewed the list of tasks to be completed by the RIRC. We will have a display table for a watershed model. Mr. Scott Millar at DEM has one, as does Mr. Art Gold at URI. The former is a simple table model, while the latter is a more extensive model which is excellent, but Mr. Callendar noted that the demonstration is time consuming and probably inappropriate given the nature of the event. It was agreed that Mr. Schneider will ask Mr. Millar for the use of the DEM model. Ms. Sherman will inquire if EPA has youth oriented materials that can be distributed. Mr. Vandemoer will provide a fish mold, paints and paper for a youth activity, and has 8-foot tables if we need them. Ms. Staniszewski also has some paints that we might use. We will need volunteers for the table/activities and also to assist Ms. Pavignano. Ms. Staniszewski will draw up a schedule and circulate it among our members. Mr. Callendar requested that we include Beach Day on the agenda for next month to finalize our plans. Ms. Sherman will circulate information about "Green Drinks" to the RIRC members.

4. Discussion Items

Workplan for 2009: Mr. Lefebvre distributed the summary sheet of our discussions in January, which highlighted our workplan priorities for 2009. Mr. Gonsalves reported that he and Mr. Kevin Nelson are focusing on revised policies for the State Guide Plan, and that they are working to make sure they are consistent with other ongoing policies and initiatives. Mr. Callendar asked for updates on the notification rule, and if we were going to follow up on the notice. Ms. Sherman responded that our memo, the rule, and a sample letter was sent by mail to each of the designated watershed councils. The memo requested that we be contacted if organizations found implementation difficult, and no one has responded. At Mr. Callendar's suggestion, we will wait a few months and then recontact the councils. In general we are on track towards completing our 2010 goals.

5. Reports

Annual Report: Ms. Staniszewski has completed much of the report and is waiting for the updated vision section. The draft will be sent to RIRC members when completed.

Co-Chairs Report: Mr. Lefebvre reported that the Governor's proposed '10 budget has level funding for the RIRC as a line item in the WRB budget. He and Ms. Sherman met the new WRB manager, Ken Burke, and discussed mutual concerns and common goals. The WRB will provide us a desk and Internet connection when they move to their new offices at The Foundry, hopefully no later than the end of the month. Mr. Vandemoer confirmed that he has a relatively new computer that he will place on extended loan to the RIRC. Mr. Lefebvre, representing the RIRC, reported that he will express two concerns in this comment round of the TF Green Airport Improvements EIS. They are: 1. As pointed out by Mr. Rhodes of Statewide Planning, the principal maps of the alternatives do not show the cumulative effects of the development, thus making it more difficult to evaluate the real environmental impact, and 2. The new development at TF Green should comply with the new stormwater regulations due to be released by RI DEM in July.

Mr. Lefebvre also noted the successful display of the illustrated panels providing information about the Woonasquatucket River Watershed. The panels are on the first floor of Providence Place Mall, and were the result of grants awarded by the EPA and RIRC. Mr. Lefebvre also distributed a Providence Journal article that included a picture depicting our member Mr. Gonsalves at the event!!

Finance Committee: The financial report prepared and distributed by Mr. Baer prior to the meeting was approved on a motion by Mr. Callendar and seconded by Mr. Lefebvre.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:40 pm. Our next meeting is May 13, 2009.