



Rhode Island Rivers Council

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

Meeting Minutes

March 10, 2010

RI Department of Administration
Conference Room B
Providence, RI 02908

ATTENDANCE:

A. Members Present

Ted Callender
Emily Cousineau
Paul Gonsalves
Guy Lefebvre (Co-Chair)
Lisa McGreavy
Jane Sherman (Co-Chair)
Claudia Staniszewski

B. Members Absent

Mike Walker
Charlie Vandemoer

C. Guests in Attendance

Ames Colt, RI Bays, Rivers and Watershed Coordination Team
Juan Mariscal
Ann Morrill, Kickemuit River Council

1. Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 4:10pm by Co-Chair Mr. Lefebvre, who welcomed Ms. Cousineau, our new RI WRB representative to the Council. Ms. Cousineau is the Implementation Aide for the WRB. She has a degree in Environmental Studies and among her many duties is serving as the liaison between the WRB staff and water suppliers.

2. Discussion and vote on minutes for the January 2010 meeting

The minutes were distributed to the board prior to the meeting. Ms. Sherman recommended deletion of two sentences in the discussion of the Coordinating Team report, and Mr. Colt requested minor wording changes. Ms. Staniszewski moved that the minutes be adopted as amended, seconded by Mr. Callender. The minutes were adopted as amended.

3. Nominating Committee Report and Election of Officers

Mr. Callender presented the report submitted by the nominating committee – Mr. Vandemoer, Mr. Callender and Ms. Sherman. Mr. Callender submitted the following slate of officers for the RIRC.
Chair – Mr. Lefebvre
Vice Chair – Mr. Callender
Secretary-Treasurer – Ms. Staniszewski

Mr. Lefebvre asked if there were any other nominations. There being none, Mr. Callender moved that the RIRC elect the proposed slate of officers. The motion was seconded by Ms. Sherman and unanimously approved.

Mr. Lefebvre distributed a table which provided the average long term flow in millions of gallons per day of thirteen rivers in RI and MA. The data was collected from USGS stream-gaging stations whose locations and length of time on the rivers are variable. The data is important for evaluating nitrogen and phosphorous content impact on the rivers and Narragansett Bay, and ultimately it would be beneficial to post this information on the council's website. Mr. Callender volunteered to further validate the information presented.

4. Annual Report 2009

Ms. Staniszewski reported that the 2008 report is at the printers, and will be distributed to the appropriate officials. She will work with Mr. Gonsalves to make the report available on the RC website to maximize availability of the report. Ms. Sherman agreed to help with the 2009 report, along with Ms. Staniszewski, and Mr. Vandemoer had previously indicated a willingness to help with the report. We will need to contact the watershed councils to get updates on their activities in 2009.

5. Coordinating Team Implementation Plan and RIRC Watershed Policies

Following the last RIRC meeting, Mr. Lefebvre and Ms. Sherman met with Mr. Jared Rhodes, Chief of the Statewide Planning Program, to discuss the program's concerns regarding the effective and timely inclusion of freshwater issues into the Integrated Plan (IP), the development of a new State Guide Plan element to address watershed and aquatic resource planning for the Narragansett Bay Watershed. Mr. Colt reported that the IP process was proceeding at a slow pace. He said the IP will follow the format of the *RI Bays, Rivers and Watersheds Systems Level Plan, 2009 – 2013* (SLP), and the determination has been made to begin with the section on watersheds. Mr. Richard Ribb, Director of the Narragansett Bay Estuary Program, is researching MA policies for the Blackstone and Taunton Rivers for incorporation into the IP. The initial outline for the IP has been sent to the members of the advisory committee. EPA is requiring that the plan include references to TMDL's, stormwater regulations and non-point pollution issues. Ms. Margherita Pryor is the primary EPA contact for this process. Mr. Colt said he is drafting an implementation update to the SLP, incorporating detailed information from coordination team agencies about their workplans and policies being implemented that focus on goals targeted in the SLP.

6. Rocky Point and other possible Waterfront/Riverfront Projects

Mr. Lefebvre distributed a Get the Point brochure produced by the new Rocky Point Foundation whose goal is to secure the remaining inland acreage at Rocky Point for public use. Previously, the City of Warwick took title to forty-one waterfront acres at the site. Eighty-three acres remain under the control of the SBA. The estimated cost of acquisition is \$15 million. Mr. Lefebvre said that RPF President John Howell recently discussed a possible general obligation bond being placed on the November ballot to support this initiative with General Assembly leaders. Mr. Lefebvre said it might be beneficial to align this funding initiative with other major green initiatives in RI to improve the potential success of a bond issue. Possibilities mentioned include the Shooters property at India Point Park in Providence, Snake Den State Park improvements in Johnston and perhaps an East Bay initiative. Ms. McGreavy agreed that it would be good to explore this potential with Mr. Joseph Dias, Chief of the RIDEM Division of Planning and Development.

7. Co-Chair Reports

Ms. Sherman distributed a copy of an email from the Northern RI Conservation District (NRICD) requesting support for an EPA CARE grant to them to develop a community partnership to identify and understand the risks to the Abbott Run Watershed, which is a subwatershed of the Blackstone Watershed. NRICD previously conducted a successful similar program for the Scituate Reservoir area. They have a letter of support from the Pawtucket Water Supply Board for the Abbott Run project. The RIRC agreed to support this initiative and Mr. Lefebvre will extend this support in a letter to the NRICD. (C.A.R.E. stands for Community Action for a Renewed Environment. According to the EPA website, this program “provides funding to build broad-based partnerships to reduce environmental risks at the local level.”)

The Roger Williams Park Zoo in Providence is planning a Party for the Planet event, with a day dedicated to educating visitors on preservation and protection of Ocean State waters and an Earth Day celebration. The RIRC was invited to participate. This invitation raises the importance for the RIRC to develop a standard display for events of this kind, and Ms. Sherman will circulate a request to see if there are members who are able and willing to devote time to this project. It is not likely that a display will be completed prior to the events at Roger Williams Park.

Mr. Lefebvre noted that we have a number of vacancies on the Council which need to be filled by the Governor. Mr. Walter Galloway has agreed to submit his name for nomination and the RIRC will support his application.

The designation committee, chaired by Ted Callendar, has not met since the November meeting. Mr. Callender and Mr. Lefebvre will discuss the best way to proceed with the outstanding issues being considered by this committee.

Mr. Lefebvre thanked Ms. Sherman for her years served as Co-Chair of the RIRC. He said her knowledge and judgment have been very beneficial to the administration and policy development of the Rivers Council. Council members and guests applauded her service.

A motion was made, seconded and approved unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 5:15 pm.