



The Rhode Island Rivers Council

c/o RI Water Resource Board
235 Promenade Street, Suite 394
Providence, RI 02908

Minutes of the Rhode Island Rivers Council Meeting August 11, 2010

Kettle Pond Visitor Center
50 Bend Road
Charlestown, RI 02813

ATTENDANCE:

A. Members Present

Guy Lefebvre (Chair)
Ted Callender (Vice Chair)
Claudia Staniszewski (Secretary/Treasurer)
Emily Cousineau
Paul Gonsalves
Lisa McGreavy
Jane Sherman
Charlie Vandemoer

B. Members Absent

Mike Walker

C. Guests in Attendance

Walt Galloway - EPA
Denise Poyer - Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association

1. Call to Order:

Mr. Lefebvre called the meeting to order at 4:08 p.m. He introduced Denise Poyer of the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association (WPWA) and the members of the Council introduced themselves. Denise Poyer reported on the FY 2009 RC grant for teacher education. WPWA is interested in offering this graduate level course again in spring 2011. Ms. Poyer reported that both teachers and those not in education are interested. It is free and teachers can use the graduate level credits toward their recertification. She also stated that if there were other watershed councils willing to collaborate with WPWA on this project, it would be welcomed.

2. Discussion and vote on minutes for the May 12 and June 9 meetings.

The minutes were distributed to the board prior to the meeting. There was no discussion and with a motion by Ms. Sherman, seconded by Mr. Vandemoer, the minutes of the May 12 and June 9 meetings were approved.

3. Watershed Council Grant Guidelines for FY11

Ms. Sherman recommended changes to the FY 2011 RFP to include making it very clear that the RC would not accept grants that were submitted later than the due date, that applicants strictly follow the format provided in the RFP, and to request a full list of board members instead of just the Board Chair's name, either on the cover sheet or, after some discussion, as an attachment.

Mr. Callender questioned the early due date of October 1 noting that the Salt Ponds Coalition and other organizations are not completed with water testing until mid-October, making it difficult to design a project without the previous year's data. After a brief discussion, Ms. Sherman noted that due to the time needed for the State to process applications, it is best to submit the RC's request for disbursement of grant funds as soon as possible. There was general agreement that the FY2011 proposal due date remain as October 1.

Ms. Cousineau suggested that the State's fiscal year be stated in the RFP as July 1- June 30 and made a correction to the WRB address, noting the suite number as 394. Mr. Lefebvre reported that the Council's allocation for FY 2011 was \$22,444 and suggested that \$21,000 be reserved for watershed grants, should the projects warrant it. Ms. Sherman noted that funds needed to be reserved for the upcoming notice for watershed council designations, which costs \$600-\$1,000, and the hiring of a consultant for website revisions. Ms. Cousineau said that the website consultant for the WRB costs \$57 per hour. Given that the Council's account balance was \$4,969.37, all agreed to reserve \$1,444 as discretionary funds and allocate \$21,000 for grants.

With no further discussion, Ms. Sherman moved approval of the grant guidelines as amended through the discussion, and with an inclusion of \$21,000 to be given out as grants, seconded by Ms. Cousineau, and the motion passed unanimously.

4. Recommendations regarding TF Green Airport Improvements Draft EIS

Mr. Lefebvre reported that the Airport Corporation is seeking to alter approximately 7.5 acres of land and move Buckeye Brook. He sent an email to the Buckeye Brook Coalition (BBC) for their input. He noted that BBC is mentioned in the EIS as the designated watershed council. Mr. Lefebvre said that the preferred alternative, Alternative B4, minimized wetland loss as other scenarios took more land, and that the Airport Corporation is required to have as least a 2:1 mitigation plan. The plan could go as high as 45 acres protected depending upon formulas defined by the US Army Corps of Engineers for mitigation plans. Mr. Lefebvre suggested that Alternative B4 did hone in on looking at many trade offs while having a build option, and recommended that the Council not oppose Alternative B4 in public comments due September 15th. Questions were asked about the health of the brook and how it will handle the alterations. Mr. Lefebvre responded that it will be cleaner due to less impervious surface and a larger buffer zone, just downstream from the safety zone. Several Council members stated they thought that the glycol release and capture should continue to be addressed. Mr. Lefebvre was given the latitude to comment on behalf of the Council; with a request to ask the Airport Corporation to maximize recovery of glycol as the brook is small, with a low capacity. Mr. Lefebvre said that if BBC had major concerns, he would do his best to bring these to the attention of the Airport Corporation.

5. World Rivers Day

Mr. Lefebvre reported that World Rivers Day, run out of British Columbia and in its 6th year, was able to get a United Nations designation. It is the last Sunday in September. Discussion followed about actions the Council could take, such as an event or an Op Ed piece that showcases the work of the watershed councils and the growing value that people are putting on our fresh water resources. It was suggested that the Council write an Op Ed piece now and plan to do something for the RI Rivers Day event in June. Discussion followed about the types of materials that the Council could develop or acquire. Ms. Sherman suggested the Council form an ad hoc committee to put together material that can be taken to events. Ms. McGreavy and Mr. Gonsalves agreed to look into materials available in their respective departments.

6. River Network Partnership

Discussion followed about the benefits of a River Network Partnership, a major national river advocacy organization partially underwritten by the EPA, and the useful materials that can be acquired through them. It was suggested that the Council renew its membership (\$120 before August 21, \$150 afterwards). Ms. McGreavy motioned to rejoin the RNP with a second by Mr. Lefebvre, and the motion passed unanimously.

7. Website Design Assistance

It was noted that the Council needs a contract with a consultant to make needed refinements to the RC website to include adding the Annual Report and getting a .gov url. Mr. Lefebvre suggested using the WRB consultant. Ms. Cousineau agreed to inquire noting that state procedure may be to get three bids, but \$57 per hour, which is what the consultant charges, is competitive. It was noted that the Council has a fiscal agent, which will make the hiring of a consultant easier than going through the State. Ms. Sherman suggested the website address be riverscouncil.gov, keeping the .org URL, but having a .gov one as well.

After a brief discussion, Ms Sherman suggested all Council members go to the website, and contact Mr. Lefebvre with any suggestions for changes. Mr. Gonsalves inquired if Mr. Lefebvre had contacted RI.gov, as it is a resource for State agencies. He had not and Mr. Gonsalves offered to get contact information for Mr. Lefebvre. Ms. Sherman motioned to authorize up to \$570 from the RC's discretionary account to hire a consultant to make revisions to the website and ensure that it is successful. Mr. Callender seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

8. Designation Criteria, Autumn Review and Designation Schedule for 2011

Designation criteria will be reviewed in autumn for watershed councils. The Rivers Council needs to review criteria and set up a schedule for 2011 redesignations to include the Kickemuit River Council, Friends of the Moshassuck, Pawtuxet River Authority and the Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council.

Mr. Lefebvre reported that he received a letter from Friends of the Hunt River stating that they were going to send another letter in response to the Council's letter that informed them that their request for designation was denied due to an incomplete application.

Mr. Lefebvre received another letter from the Hunt River Watershed Association saying that they were possibly interested in having a mediator/facilitator to help them work through differences with Friends of the Hunt River. It was agreed that the Council should look at ground water vs. surface water and decide if the Council will make designations based on surface water delineations.

9. Appointments – Recommendations for Next Governor

Mr. Lefebvre received a copy of the letter that was sent to Walt Galloway from the Governor's office saying that since the Senate has adjourned, the Council needed to wait for the next Governor. Mr. Lefebvre suggested that it would be wise to assemble a full slate of nominees so that the Council has enough people to put forward to have a full roster. Mr. Lefebvre thanked Mr. Galloway for submitting his materials and said that he will try to schedule a meeting with the transition team to discuss appointments further.

10. Lower Shannock Falls Dam Removal – Pawcatuck River, Richmond, July 29, 2010

Mr. Lefebvre noted the good article Peter Lord of the *Providence Journal* wrote about the removal accomplished of the Lower Shannock Falls dam. Ms. Poyer reported that the project is going well. There are photographs on Wood Pawcatuck Watershed Association's website. The remaining work is due to be completed in August, ahead of time. The Council congratulated WPWA on the success of this project.

Ms. Poyer also reported that there are two more parts to the project. One is the fish ladder around Upper Shannock dam. The other is either a dam removal or fish ramp at Kenyon dam near Kenyon industries, noting that a breach would require a holding pond for the fire department for capacity for Kenyon Industries.

11. Officer Reports

Chair's Report – Mr. Lefebvre sent a letter to the RI Economic Development Corporation recommending that the names of the Chipuxet and Usquepaug Rivers be placed on the next edition of the state map as well as examine the entire map for river naming improvements as Ms. Sherman had recommended. Mr. Lefebvre said the letter was also copied to RIDOT and Christopher Fox, Executive Director of the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association. Mr. Lefebvre reported that Mr. Mike Walker of EDC sent him an email saying that he had forwarded the letter to the appropriate party.

Treasurer's Report – Ms. Staniszewski reported that the Council has \$4,969.37 in its discretionary account. \$224.40 was transferred in July to cover the 10% administrative fee WRWC receives. The annual report cost \$80.

Council members thanked RI National Wildlife Refuge Manager Charlie Vandermoer for hosting the meeting, and also thanked leaders of the Salt Pond Coalition for offering to provide a tour of Ninigret Pond subsequent to the meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 5:27 p.m.