



Rhode Island Rivers Council

One Capitol Hill
Providence, RI 02908
www.ririvers.org



Meeting Minutes
May 8, 2013
RI Department of Administration
Conference Room B
One Capitol Hill, Providence, RI

ATTENDANCE:

A. Members Present

Guy Lefebvre, Chair
Rachel Calabro
James Cole
Walter Galloway
Paul Gonsalves
Judy Hadley
Charles Horbert
Jane Sherman
Elise Torello
Veronica Berounsky*

*Dr. Berounsky was appointed by Governor Chafee
and confirmed by the RI Senate on June 4th for Ms. Sherman's position

B. Guests in Attendance

Ames Colt, RI Bays, Rivers & Watersheds Coordination Team
Richard Grant, Narrow River Preservation Association
Ann Morrill, Kickemuit River Council

1. Call to Order

Mr. Lefebvre called the meeting to order at 4:03 pm, and noted a quorum was present.

2. New Members Welcome & Orientation

Current council members welcomed six new members who have been appointed by Governor Chafee and recently confirmed by the RI Senate: Ms. Calabro, Mr. Cole, Mr. Galloway, Ms. Hadley, Mr. Horbert and Ms. Torello. The council also welcomed Dr. Berounsky who has been appointed by Governor Chafee for Ms. Sherman's seat and is awaiting to be scheduled for RI Senate confirmation. The chair noted that Dr. Robert Billington has also been appointed and confirmed. The chair also noted that Ms. Lisa McGreavy, RIDEM representative to the council, is away with her college age daughters in Ireland and England. Meeting participants each introduced themselves. The chair noted that Mr. Cole is author of *Paddling Connecticut and Rhode Island: Southern New England's Best Paddling Routes* (Guilford, CT: Falcon Press, 2009).

On behalf of the council, the chair thanked new members for going through the appointment process and being part of a renewal of the council.

The chair provided meeting participants with the council's fold in three brochure describing the council and listing the state designated local watershed councils. He said that Ms. McGreavy designed the brochure about three years ago and has the master file for possible modifications and reprints. The chair also provided meeting participants with an organizational flow chart of the council.

3. Council Historical Overview

The chair provided meeting participants with a two page outline of the approximately twenty-three year history of the council. At one point, the council had provided state designation of ten local watershed councils and at present the council recognizes state designation for nine local watershed councils. Designation provides state and local legal standing to represent water bodies in their watershed and eligibility for annual grants from the state through the council.

4. Exhibit and Events

The chair provided meeting participants with a photo collage of the council's display exhibit that features a state watershed map and the state designated local watershed councils. Ms. Sherman noted that Ms. McGreavy led the effort to acquire and design the exhibit about three years ago. The council banner hung in front of a display table was created about ten years ago. The exhibit is stored at RIDEM. The chair also noted that Ms. McGreavy designed and the council printed watershed educational placemats for children to provide attendees at events in addition to having the council brochure available.

Roger Williams Park Zoo Party for the Planet Earth Day Fair, Friday, April 19, 2013.

The chair reported he and Ms. McGreavy staffed the council exhibit. Mr. Lefebvre said that the packets of seeds for flowers and vegetables that Ms. McGreavy ordered for free from the RI Master Gardeners were very popular give away items at the exhibit. Mr. Lefebvre also said he and Ms. McGreavy found the zoo staff to be very accommodating and gracious. Thank you notes were exchanged between the council and zoo staff after the event.

State Historic Preservation Conference, Saturday, April 27, 2013, West Warwick, 28th Annual. The chair reported he attended the conference which focused on the Pawtuxet River Valley. He said he attended an afternoon bus tour that went to the Greene section of western Coventry and northwestern West Greenwich to the Hopkins Hill Roaring Brook Historic District. He said he met Dawn Lockwood and Faith Underwood who are leaders of the Roaring Brook Watershed Association. Related families there operate a one hundred sixty year old ninety acre cranberry bog.

Environmental Awareness Day at Narragansett Town Beach, Saturday, July 13th, 10am to 1pm. 10th Annual. Mr. Galloway mentioned USEPA Atlantic Ecology Division's past involvement in this event. Mr. Grant mentioned the Narrow River Preservation Association's past involvement in this event. Mr. Lefebvre mentioned the council's past

involvement in this event. It was noted Steve Wright, formerly of RIDEM and now with the Town of Narragansett, is managing the event. Council members agreed that the council should participate again this year in this event.

*Paddle Across RI (Ten Rivers), June 8 to June 15th, 2013,
National Rivers Month Celebration, Blackstone River, Slater Mill, Pawtucket,
Monday, June 10, 10am*

Mr. Horbert and Mr. Cole described their upcoming paddle across the state event which will kick off from the Village of Harrisville, RI on Saturday June 8th. The journey is expected to take eight days and will finish in the Town of Westerly approximately 105 miles later on Saturday, June 15th, 2013. Many events will be scheduled along the way. An event celebrating National Rivers Month at the Slater Mill Historical Site will be held on Monday, June 10, 2013, 10am. Mr. Billington, Mr. Cole, Ms. Hadley, and Mr. Horbert are expected to participate.

5. Minutes Approval

Ms. Sherman moved and Mr. Gonsalves seconded that the minutes of the November 14, 2012, meeting of the council as distributed be approved. The motion passed unanimously.

6. Legislative Grant / Finances

The chair provided meeting participants a financial summary of the past three and half fiscal years. A balance of \$5,415.94 is currently held by the council's fiscal agent, the Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council. The summary also indicates that entire the \$15,150 FY13 legislative grant was distributed directly to the designated local watershed councils based on the FY13 grant round and vote in November, 2012.

The chair noted that year to year cuts by the General Assembly resulted in the annual legislative grant being reduced from a high of \$52,000 about a decade ago to \$15,150 at the present time. The chair also provided meeting participants a letter, dated 3/9/2012, to Rep. Eileen Naughton requesting additional funds, and a letter from Mr. Art Ganz, president of the Salt Ponds Coalition, dated 3/14/2012, to Rep. Naughton recommending funding for the Rivers Council should be at the \$75,000 level. The chair said having a meeting with Rep. Naughton and Rep. Handy to request more funds would be beneficial. Mr. Colt noted that the General Assembly is aiming to adjourn early this year, perhaps as early as June 1st, thereby not leaving much time this session.

7. Re-designation of Local Watershed Councils Process & Scheduling

The chair provided meeting participants a one page re-designation criteria and noted that Blackstone River Watershed Council / Friends of the Blackstone, and the Narrow River Preservation Association are due for re-designation this year for a five year term from 2013 to 2018. The chair recommended a due date for application information to be September 6, 2013, with a public hearing followed by a vote in November, 2013. At Ms. Sherman's request, a list of current board members with contact information, was added to the mandatory items to be submitted. The chair recommended that Ms. Kathleen Crawley of the Water Resources Board be consulted as to the most efficient and economic means to public notice the re-designation hearing and vote.

Regarding future designations, meeting participants noted that watersheds involving the Saugatucket River, the Hunt River, the Ten Mile River, the Quinebaug River (Roaring Brook), and Aquidneck Island were possible areas for council outreach.

8. Water Quality Element for State Guide Plan

Mr. Gonsalves explained that exploration to create a new water quality element for the state guide plan is being discussed. He noted that an update that addresses stormwater is particularly needed by RIDEM in conjunction with federal agencies, particularly the USEPA. Mr. Colt also provided some background on possibilities to update and integrate several elements of the state guide plan, including the *RI Rivers Policy and Classification Plan*, as last amended in 2004. The chair provided meeting participants with the title page and abstract page of the *RI Rivers Policy and Classification Plan, State Guide Plan Element 162, Report Number 92, January 1998, Amended May 2004*. Mr. Lefebvre opined that the council should “go with the flow” in conjunction with other state agencies to bring about an updated and integrated new plan. Ms. Sherman opined that the council should be proactive and “paddle upstream” to bring about an improved plan that addresses qualitative policies for the state’s rivers and watersheds. Meeting participants agreed that paddling upstream was preferable to going with the flow. Mr. Lefebvre said he concurred. He also noted one of the major revisions from the 1998 *Rivers Policy and Classification Plan* to the 2004 amended plan was the addition of US Hydrologic Unit Code 10 and 12 level maps.

9. RI Bays, Rivers & Watersheds Coordination Team

The chair provided meeting participants with the RIBRWCT agenda of April 10, 2013, and a summary of the *RIBRWCT Systems-Level Plan, 2009-2013* that contains eight policy domains and eighteen principal goals. Mr. Colt noted that the *Systems-Level Plan* is not intended to be part of the state guide plan. He also provided meeting participants further background about the RIBRWCT and its activities.

10. Nominating Committee Formation

The chair pointed out that the council chooses its own leadership. The council’s operating procedures state that the council should have a chair and a vice chair, and also states having a secretary and a treasurer as optional at the discretion of the council. Ms. Calabro, Mr. Galloway, Ms. Hadley and Mr. Lefebvre agreed to serve on the nominating committee. The chair said that members of the nominating committee should be eligible to serve per the council’s judgment. The chair indicated that he does not wish to continue to serve in an officer position, and looks forward to working with the council in transition to new leadership. Council members agreed to send the chair their preferred postal address, email address and phone number for internal council communications, and the chair said he would make a Word document directory to share among members. Ms. Sherman said Mr. Lefebvre should be commended for maintaining the council while awaiting new appointees and enduring budget cuts. Meeting participants acknowledged Ms. Sherman’s accolades.

11. Policy Framework Outline

Meeting participants agreed that a new policy framework outline should be crafted. A variety of possibilities were quickly mentioned, however, no formal list was made at this time.

12. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned by unanimous consent at 5:45 pm.