



The Rhode Island Rivers Council

c/o RI Water Resources Board
235 Promenade Street, Suite 394
Providence, RI 02908
www.ririvers.org



Minutes of September 11, 2013 Meeting
RI Department of Administration
William Powers Building
One Capitol Hill
Conference Room B
Providence, RI 02908

ATTENDANCE:

A. **Members Present**

Veronica Berounsky
Rachel Calabro
Walter Galloway
Paul Gonsalves
Judith Hadley
Guy Lefebvre
Lisa McGreavy
Elise Torello

B. **Guests in Attendance**

Ann Morrill – Kickemuit River Council

1. **Call to Order**

Mr. Lefebvre called the meeting of the Rhode Island Rivers Council (RIRC) to order at 4:08 pm.

2. **Review and approval of August 14, 2013 meeting minutes**

Mr. Galloway moved to approve the minutes as presented. Ms. Hadley seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

3. **Local Watershed Councils Designation Process**

Mr. Lefebvre distributed copies of the Application Criteria for Re-designation of Local Watershed Associations and noted that the Blackstone River Watershed Council/Friends of the Blackstone and the Narrow River Preservation Association submitted re-designation packages before the September 6, 2013 deadline. The next steps will include the formation of a subcommittee to review the re-designation requests and report to the full council with a recommendation. The public hearing for the re-designations will be held at 4pm on November 13 directly followed by a regular meeting which will include the subcommittee's recommendation followed by a vote of the council.

4. Local Watershed Councils Grant Program

Mr. Lefebvre informed members on the process whereby funds are made available to the council and how grants have been issued in the past. This year's Request for Proposals was sent out to watershed councils in early September and proposals are due on or before October 15, 2013. Ms. Torello asked whether watershed councils could submit grant requests for the same work that the RIRC awarded in previous years. Mr. Lefebvre responded in the affirmative noting that the RIRC in the past has let local watershed councils determine their own best needs rather than direct the proposals in a particular direction. Mr. Galloway added that proposals would be considered as long as they meet the eligibility criteria; however, expenses related to only operational costs are usually not funded. The purpose of the RIRC grant program is to strengthen watershed councils and their presence in the state and previous projects funded by RIRC grants have been very successful. Over the years the RIRC budget has been decreased significantly and the council has opted to direct all of its legislative grant to watershed councils to provide them with as much assistance as possible; however the amounts have been relatively small the last few years and the council ought to obtain additional revenue to keep the program viable.

Similar to the re-designation process described above, next steps include the formation of a subcommittee to review the FY14 grant requests, prepare a summary chart of project descriptions with requested and recommended grant amounts, and report back to the full council with a recommendation at the November 13 meeting following the public hearing for re-designations which will be held at the same meeting. Mr. Lefebvre added that the RFP's contain a statement whereby RIRC maintains the right to adjust grant awards if necessary to make the subtotals of the individual grants equal the pool of total funds available.

5. Story-Structure-Strategy Approach (M. Ganz, Harvard Kennedy School)

In his last official action as Chair of the RIRC before today's election of new officers, Mr. Lefebvre issued the following statement:

Memorandum

To: RI Rivers Council
From: Guy Lefebvre, Chair
Date: September 11, 2013
Re: Story, Structure, Strategy Model

One of the primary charges of the RI Rivers Council is to assist the strengthening of local watershed councils in the state. I urge the RI Rivers Council to learn about, teach about and utilize some of the methods to strengthen nonprofit organizations advocated by Dr. Marshall Ganz of the Hauser Institute for Civil Society within the Center for Public Leadership at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

Dr. Ganz left Harvard before graduating in the 1960s and became a respected leader in the civil rights movement. He returned to Harvard in the 1990s to earn bachelors, masters, and doctoral degrees. He is credited with being one of the architects of the community organizing element of the successful Obama for President 2008 campaign. His latest book is: Why David Sometimes Wins: Leadership, Organization, and Strategy in the California Farmworker Movement. Oxford University Press, 2009. He was interviewed and featured this summer on Bill Moyers Journal on PBS.

Dr. Ganz puts forth that the three elements of story, structure and strategy are important for agencies and organizations to move forward. He teaches several courses. One course focuses on five key practices: how to turn values into motivated action; how to build relationships; how to structure leadership as a collaborative team; how to strategize; and how to translate commitments into action.

Each of the local watershed councils as well as the Rivers Council can be strengthened by clear articulation of their stories, structures and strategies. Lisa McGreavy about two and a half years ago provided leadership for the Rivers Council to tell its story by creating a tri-fold Rivers Council brochure as well as creating a Rivers Council tri-fold table exhibit. Regarding structure, I created an organizational-relationship chart for the Rivers Council and regularly updated and distributed new versions of the Rivers Council structure as it evolved. Walter Galloway about five years ago led a session for the Rivers Council at the Wheeler School at which the Rivers Council reset its strategy which was instrumental in the Rivers Council “right sizing” its programs.

I have been pleased to serve as co-chair with Jane Sherman from the time of the Wheeler School session five years ago and as sole chair since March, 2010, the month and year of “the flood” that closed the Warwick Mall and Route 95. I am pleased the Rivers Council was able to improve river identification on the annually issued state highway and tourism map, to continue its state designation and grant program for local watershed councils, to maintain and improve its website, and to be an active member of the RI Bays, Rivers and Watersheds Coordination Team working with other state agencies. I am especially pleased that Governor Lincoln Chafee appointed and the RI Senate confirmed eight new talented members. I wish the Rivers Council, particularly its new slate of officers and new members along with the Rivers Council’s many friends, much success bringing enhancement to the biogeochemical natural cycles found in our state’s river and stream systems as the arc of 21st Century history unfolds. As they say in Oregon, go beavers! Lastly, go turtles!

6. Nominating Committee Report & Recommendation

Mr. Galloway provided a summary report and recommendations of the nominating committee on behalf of other committee members including Ms. Hadley, Ms. Calabro and Mr. Lefebvre. Mr. Galloway said the committee contacted all voting members in its effort to formulate a recommended slate of officers. It was noted that those nominated for the positions would serve for a period of one year or until their successors are appointed.

The committee’s recommendations are as follows:

Chair, Veronica Berounsky, Ph.D.
Vice Chair, Rachel Calabro
Secretary, Lisa McGreavy

7. Election of Officers

Mr. Lefebvre asked those present if anyone would like to nominate other members for the officer positions; repeating the question three times. Hearing none, Mr. Lefebvre made a motion to accept the nominating committee’s recommendation. Mr. Galloway seconded the motion. Mr. Lefebvre, Mr. Galloway, Mr. Gonsalves, Ms. Hadley, Ms. Torello, Ms. McGreavy, Ms. Calabro, and Ms. Berounsky voted in favor of the motion. There were no dissenting votes. The motion passed unanimously.

In accepting the nomination as new Vice Chair, Ms. Calabro expressed her interest in statewide policy development and summarized recent legislative actions noting where there will be opportunities for the RIRC to be involved in the future.

In accepting the nomination as new Chair, Ms. Berounsky thanked the nominating committee and outgoing Chair Mr. Lefebvre for his leadership and many accomplishments over the years. Ms. Berounsky expressed interest in continuing policies and programs carried forward by Mr. Lefebvre, looking for opportunities for watershed councils to learn from one another including holding meetings in different parts of the state, and possible new funding sources to increase the RIRC's ability to strengthen local watershed councils and their capacity to effect change.

8. Representation on State Committees

The nominating committee recommended representation on state committees as follows:

Narragansett Bay Estuary Program - Walt Galloway
State Guide Plan Advisory Committee - Rachel Calabro
Bays, Rivers & Watersheds Coordination Team - Veronica Berounsky as statutory member w/
Judy Hadley as proxy member.

The council expressed unanimous consent for these assignments.

9. Other Business

A general discussion ensued regarding possible alternative funding opportunities and ideas for guest speakers and trainers at future meetings. Mr. Lefebvre and Mr. Galloway provided an overview of how the RIRC has evolved through the years from the time when the state first began to embrace the watershed approach model and created the RIRC to develop and support local watershed groups. Mr. Lefebvre referenced the fully functioning RIRC Website for additional information (www.ririvers.org) and noted that today the RIRC is described in state law as an associated function of the RI Water Resources Board, continues to support nine watershed councils, provides public education and outreach, and advocates for sound river and watershed policies before the state legislature.

In reporting on current watershed council activities, Ms. Hadley provided information on RI Minerals Hunters Club events and the Blackstone River/Boys & Girls Club Duck Race to be held on October 20. Ms. Berounsky provided information on the Narrow River Preservation Association's annual meeting to be held on October 4 with keynote speaker URI Professor Emeritus and State Geologist Jon Boothroyd who will present a talk about 100 year storms in Rhode Island.

10. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned by unanimous consent at 5:48pm.