

Pawtuxet River Authority and Watershed Council

8 Hope Furnace Road, Hope, RI 02831

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Monthly Board Meeting

PRA Office, Hope - February 7, 2011

Board Members Present: Bob Nero, Ross Adrain, Jack Donovan, Scott Goodinson, Rita Holahan, Jack Lancellotta, Ginny Leslie, Paul Lockett, Mike Maddalena, Brian Manning, Carl Mattson, Ed Soltys, Gary Trott

Call to Order

Chairman Bob Nero called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m. A quorum was present. The agenda was approved with additions on a motion by Ms. Leslie which was seconded by Mr. Goodinson.

Approval of January, 2011 Meeting Minutes

The minutes were unanimously approved on a motion by Mr. Goodinson, seconded by Mr. Donovan.

With respect to vacancies on the board for the town of Scituate, Ms. Leslie agreed to send a letter of resignation to Arthur Langlais for him to sign and return for submission to the town.

Meeting Time

Because we have so much to cover at meetings, Mr. Nero explained

that he had moved the starting time to 6 p.m. rather than 7 p.m. Mr. Lockett said it was difficult for him and some other members to get to the office by 6. On a motion by Mr. Trott, seconded by Ed Soltys, the board voted unanimously to start the meetings at 6:30. Ms. Holahan suggested that updates on projects could be e-mailed to members before the meeting to help cut down on the length of meetings. Mr. Nero agreed to send out e-mails prior to the meetings.

PROJECT UPDATES

Pawtuxet Dam Removal

Mr. Nero reported that the petition to the court for declaratory judgment would require us to notify many parties, which could prove very costly. We are moving ahead with the legislative strategy. The bills will go to Municipal Affairs committees in both the House and Senate, not Environmental committees. Mr. Nero gave testimony to a House legislative subcommittee on an amendment to delete a section of the 1915 law relating to the requirement that the Providence Water Supply Board maintain the dam. All on the subcommittee were in favor of the change, but no vote has been taken yet. The Senate legislative subcommittee has not met yet on the issue.

FEMA and NRCS Clean-ups

FEMA: Ms. Holahan reported that she received confirmation from the federal project representative that the funds (\$31,000) have been approved and released to Rhode Island. We will receive information on getting the money to the PRA. We have already completed the

match with volunteer labor and donated services.

NRCS: Mr. Nero has met with the NRCS representative and they are still working on the scopes of work for several projects, mostly involving tree work. The estimated total is \$247,772. Most of the work will be contracted out; there may be some volunteer labor/town services for match. Mr. Goodinson said that the West Warwick Sewer Authority had paid a contractor to remove a large tree that was resting on a sewer pipe and suggested this could be used as a match.

The major sites are at Maisie Quinn School (West Warwick) and the Pontiac dam (Warwick). The owner of the Pontiac dam wants a waiver of liability. Mr. Nero reported that in response to his inquiry, NRCS will provide no liability indemnification coverage; the contractors will have to be bonded.

Property Donations

The Norwood property transaction is moving forward: the subdivision of the property into two parcels has to be finalized and the survey completed. The Conley donation in West Warwick (near the wastewater treatment facility) is being reconsidered by the owners.

Randall Pond Conservation Area

Mr. Nero reported that we are close to reaching an agreement with the owner who is offering the property. We will improve the property as

follows: (1) provide public access to the pond; (2) provide a rest area and parking area on the street; (3) build an elevated wooden walkway to a platform on the pond; (4) install a security fence between the donated parcel and the parcel the owner is keeping and (5) provide landscaping improvements. Mr. Nero will suggest that we meet with the city to improve a stormwater drainage pipe that goes through the property, for which the city has an easement. The donation will be recognized with a stone on the property acknowledging the family's gift.

Howard Conservation Area

Ms. Holahan said that this year, we should start phase 1 of the loop trail system that starts at the canoe access. Some preliminary clearing has been done. We have started work on the wetlands permit. One footbridge will be required. Ms. Holahan has secured labor for the project: people being trained in construction.

Finance

New accountant search: Four candidates for the new accountant have been interviewed and we are hoping to meet with one more. Mr. Nero indicated that our current accountant is working on the annual report and the taxes. Ms. Holahan will send out a proposal to the candidates to get prices for our needs. We will aim to vote on the selection of a new accountant at the April meeting.

Annual Report: Mr. Nero reported that the annual report for July 2009 - June 2010 should be completed in the coming week. He will send it

electronically to the board and mail it to the five cities and towns.

990 AR: The 990AR tax form is being completed and will meet the IRS deadline.

Hydropower projects

Mr. Nero reported that these are currently dormant since Essex is having difficulty finding investors.

Neutaconkanut Hill Conservancy Update

Mr. Nero has talked with Attorney D'Ovidio regarding the property. We want to assist them but we do not want to own the land.

Earth Day Clean-ups

This spring, we will have NRCS and FEMA related clean-ups throughout the watershed.

Serve Rhode Island is planning a major clean-up at Roger Williams Park and other locations on Saturday and Sunday April 16 and 17. They are looking to recruit 500 volunteers and have morning and afternoon shifts. Their volunteers could be available for PRA sites, including West Warwick Industrial Park, Norwood Conservation Area and Father Tirocchi Field. Ms. Holahan will work with Serve RI to coordinate our efforts with theirs.

Correspondence

The secretary read two thank you notes: one from Maureen Casey, a

resident of the Perkins Avenue area, thanking us for help with the clean-ups there and the other from Fritz Benz's family for the flowers and tree. Fritz's granddaughter Kate has expressed an interest in being on the PRA. She now lives in Cranston but is considering a move to Scituate.

New Business

New England Saltwater Show

Messrs. Goodinson, Soltys and Trott agreed to be at a booth at the show at the RI Convention Center on March 11-13. We will have a display about the fish passage project.

Land & Water Conservation Summit

This event will be held on March 26 at URI. The PRA will pay the registration fee for any board members who attend.

Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Goodinson, seconded by Mr. Mattson, the meeting was adjourned at 8:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ginny Leslie, Secretary