

Pawtuxet River Authority and Watershed Council

8 Hope Furnace Road, Hope, RI 02831

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Monthly Board Meeting

PRA Office, Hope – June 6, 2011

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

Board Members Absent: Arthur Langlais

Guests: John and Kathy Nottell (Scituate); Fred Joslin, Jim Malloy and Drake Patten (Cranston); Jimmy Johnson (Scituate)

Call to Order

Mr. Nero called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m. A quorum was present.

Development Proposals in the Watershed

Scituate: Guests John and Kathy Nottell made a presentation to the board regarding the proposed 30-unit “Old Kent Estates” residential subdivision along the River a short distance upstream from Hope on the site of the former Camp Sunrise. The concerns of the Nottells and their neighbors include keeping Scituate rural, impacts of wells and septic systems, and increased traffic.

The town planning board decreed that the developers should use public water and extend the water line to the site; the developer believes that is unreasonable and has appealed that decision to the state Housing Appeals Board. That board will probably not issue a decision until the fall, but their record indicates that they approve more projects than they deny.

Mr. Nero said that the site is “an absolute jewel” with an excellent opportunity for a canoe launch and potential PRA headquarters; the existing buildings are in move-in condition. An ad hoc committee (Messrs. Nero, Adrain, Donovan, Manning and Finnegan) was set up to meet within a week and discuss potential options for saving the parcel as open space.

Cranston: Fred Joslin, Jim Malloy and Drake Patten addressed the board with their concerns of a large mixed-use development proposed near Furnace Hill Brook on a 21-acre parcel that was a sand and gravel business. Although no proposals have been submitted to the city, the development could include 192 rental units and retail stores along Phenix Avenue. The three speakers expressed concerns about the threats to the brook and inconsistency of the proposal with the neighborhood. The board agreed to allow their citizens group to link their website with the PRA website.

(The guest speakers left the meeting.)

The regular meeting began at 7:50 with approval of the agenda on a motion by Mr. Goodinson, seconded by Mr. Manning.

Approval of April and May, 2011 Meeting Minutes

On a motion by Mr. Goodinson, seconded by Mr. Donovan, the revised April meeting minutes were approved. Ms. Holahan and Mr. Goodinson each requested a minor revision to the May minutes. They were approved with the changes on a motion by Mr. Trott seconded by Mr. Goodinson.

Finance Committee Report

FY 2011 Interim Financial Report and FY 2012 Operating Budget Proposal: Ms. Holahan distributed copies of a document showing year-to-date general operating expenses with annualized totals; special projects were not included in this summary. She also distributed an operating budget proposal for the coming year. After discussion and some changes to the proposal, the board unanimously approved the budget of \$35,364.00 for FY 2012 on a motion by Mr. Manning, seconded by Ms. Leslie. It was acknowledged that this is a working document and that it may be changed with board approval as the year progresses.

Bank Account Signatories: Mr. Nero will meet with representatives of our bank and get the necessary form to add another board member or members to be signatories for checks.

New Accountant: Ms. Holahan reported that three of the five candidates had submitted proposals. She reviewed the experience, clients and fee structures of the two most qualified candidates, Judy Hetherman and Katherine Estes, and also went over reporting and auditing requirements. On a motion by Mr. Manning, seconded by Mr. Trott, the board agreed to take a vote to select the new accountant. After discussion, the board voted to hire Ms. Estes; the vote was 9 to 4.

Executive Session: On a motion by Ms. Leslie, seconded by Mr. Manning, the board voted to go into executive session at 9:40 p.m. (Mr. Johnson left the meeting.)

Annual Meeting Date and Agenda

The annual meeting will be held on Monday, July 11, as the first Monday is the Fourth of July holiday. The election of officers will be held. It was agreed that anyone interested in serving as an officer should contact Mr. Goodinson or Mr. Lancellotta by e-mail.

Project Reports

Pawtuxet Dam: Ms. Holahan reported that the project had gone out to bid and the team is hoping for three or four bids, to be opened on June 10; the project should be awarded within a week or so after that date. Pre-construction should start by mid-July with construction being completed by the end of October. The Coastal Resources

Management Council (CRMC) has approved the application and the Army Corps of Engineers permit will follow the CRMC approval. The Rhode Island Foundation has awarded the PRA a grant to help with cash flow for the project. There will be a final public information session at Rhodes on the Pawtuxet on June 21 at 7 p.m.

Paddle Event, June 25: Ms. Holahan asked for volunteers to help with registration, shuttle driving and other jobs. The target start time is 9 a.m. A clean-up at the launch site will be held the weekend before the event and at least one team will paddle down the river to remove obstacles.

NRCS EWP Tree Removal Project: Mr. Nero said we had received three bids to manage the project and a selection would be made very soon. The consultant will prepare bid documents for eight sites.

NRCS Clean-up on June 4: The clean-up at Johnson's Pond in Coventry included volunteers, some professional help and a team of Department of Corrections workers. Much of the debris was docks that came from Johnson's Pond. Two and a half 20-yard dumpsters were filled.

Tire Clean-up on the Lower Pawtuxet: Ms. Holahan reported that there could be a platform at Rhodes on the Pawtuxet installed by the dam contractor. Clean the Bay would then be able to use that to launch their special boat into the river to remove tires. There are at least 50 tires near Belmont Park.

Harris Dam: The Department of Environmental Management (DEM) inspected the dam and found problems which they want us to correct.

Our attorney met with DEM representatives and we have until August to decide a plan of action. Our attorney proposed to lower the water level behind the dam to mitigate the risk. DEM wants the safety valve on the low level outlet of the dam to be functional. We do not know what condition that valve is in. Another option may be to divert the water through the gates to the sluiceway leading to the mill; there is an outlet back into the river from the sluiceway so the water would not have to go through the mill. The cost of repairs to the safety valve is unknown but would probably be very costly. We will submit a Supplemental Environmental Project application to DEM for repairs to the dam. Mr. Nero has also discussed the dam with NRCS.

Other Business

R.I. Rivers Council Recertification Application: Watershed councils have to be recertified every six years and the process is rather lengthy. We have gotten an extension on completing the application.

Environmental Education at Riverpoint Park: On June 17, Mr. Nero and Ms. Leslie will speak at a program for Deering Middle School students on science and history of the River.

Veterans Square: Mr. Adrain suggested we put up a sign at the site to let people know what work is being done there by the PRA. He

offered to help mow the lawn, but Mr. Maddalena is trying to get a corrections department crew there as the grass is very overgrown and a regular lawn mower would not be adequate. Mr. Adrain also noted that he saw some lumber at the site; it is for the floor repairs.

Adjournment

On a motion by Ms. Leslie, seconded by Mr. Donovan, the meeting was adjourned at 10:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ginny Leslie