
Northern Rhode Island Conservation District

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MEETING MINUTES

May 7, 2008

7:00 PM

Paul called the meeting to order at 7:00.

In attendance were:

**Directors: Paul Dolan, Marc Tremblay, Norm Hammond, Dick Went,
Eugene Pepper**

Staff: Gina DeMarco. NRCS: Mike Merrill and Garrett Timmons.

Absent were:

Associate Directors: Ed Baker and Jean Lynch.

I. Minutes

The April 2, 2008 meeting minutes were reviewed. A motion to accept the minutes was made: Norm/Dick. Unanimous.

II. Treasurer's Report

A motion was made to accept the Treasurer's Report: Paul/Dick, unanimous.

III. Old Business

a. Scituate Reservoir Watershed Education Program.

The landscaper workshop project is still going on, but has been slowed down due to the availability of the speaker we have chosen.

Over 400 children attended the Water Festival on May 6th. 12 workers were needed to run the festival. Mike Merrill, Kate Giorgi and Jan Latham volunteered from NRCS. It was a great day with beautiful weather. Kids had a blast.

The Stormwater Best Management Project will be completed by this summer, hopefully. NRCS will have the plans by the end of the month and will write the RFP.

NRICD will be installing a rain garden at Famous Pizza in Scituate and once the BMP and rain garden are in, will hold a tour of the participating businesses and projects and a talk at the No. Scituate Community House. We will raffle off the rain barrel that NE Rain

Barrel contributed.

All winners of the poster contest have been notified and awarded. The press release was published in the Foster Home Journal.

b. Wetlands Outreach Project

Burrillville has signed an agreement with the NRICD. North Smithfield declined due to requirements in the school department. Smithfield will be invited to participate in place of North Smithfield. A draft brochure created by Kate was distributed at the meeting. Liz is working on developing the poster contest.

c. Seedling Sale/Rain Barrel Sale

Ramona prepared a written report. The net to date is \$2,715.10 and \$400.00 is expected to come in from the rain barrel company. 81 rain barrels were sold. Ramona suggested several changes which the board accepted. The only concern they had was in changing the delivery date of seedlings, we may run the risk of not receiving them in time for the sale. That would be a major problem. Everyone agreed the seedling program went very well.

d. Legislative Outreach

District funds are expected to be cut by 50% this year, unless Mike Sullivan, Director of DEM receives a call from the Chair of House Finance. Paul will call Representative Mumford and Gina will call Representative Church to let them know we face the possibility of closing the district offices with a cut this devastating. Gina, Sue and Tom will be meeting to discuss how to cope with cuts of this magnitude. Norm reported that at the RIACD meeting there was talk

of a Home Land Security Grant since only 3% of the food we consume in RI is grown locally. The question of whether there are other quasi state agencies that may be in the same position and would like to share some space. If the districts decided to merge the board wondered how that would affect the State Statutes. NRICD board feels that if we used each staff person in a specialized position statewide, they would be spread too thin and also that various staff would be partial to their own district geographic area, even if unintentional.

IV. Reports

a. Chair – Paul judged the poster contest. He, Norm and Bill went to Ag Day and it went well. There was some legislative contact but not too much. The day extended from 11 AM – 6PM which was too long. It would have been fine to start at 3 PM after the proclamation of the Governor. Paul and Gina visited Bill Colburn who seems to be doing well, but will not likely be leaving the nursing home.

b. NRCS – Mike passed out a written report. They are doing a lot of projects with irrigation and manure management. They are working on the Joslin Farm and Deerfield Park projects. The fish passage project in East Providence has had some press attention. The Woonasquatucket has had fish stocked. They had to coverts meeting. The RI Livestock Association meeting had 30-40 new people sign up. This is for the local beef initiative. They will slaughter in Johnston and package in Westerly. There will be a Rhody Beef logo

and label with the farmers name on the product. Mike met with Paul Roselli to talk about some resource projects. A press release went out regarding the Pocasset Project. The Farm Bill has been extended to May 16. CSP is underway – not many in NRICD area. Not much interest in CSP so far.

c. Envirothon – The competition is this Thursday. Laura sent detailed e-mail out describing each persons responsibility and schedule.

d. RC&D – They have closed out the FLPP grant and are closing the GLCI agreement. RCD will apply to the Forest Service and will hire and Urban Forester. They are working on a Japanese Barberry weed control project. They are doing well.

e. Rural Development – no report.

f. RIFCO – The annual Spring Program is May 17 at Hope Association Property along the Pawtuxet River. This will also be co-sponsored by the Woodscaping portion of the Scituate Reservoir Watershed Education Program. Hope Association has labeled a hiking trail.

g. District Manager – The stormwater conference has had a date change to June 4th. Board mentioned it would be good to obtain a stipend, which Gina asked for. The NACD Church Leaders Guide is complete and has been submitted.

V. New Business

a. FFOS Recommendations – Dick reported that the subcommittee met last month and it was decided to keep the same recommendations as last year. Next year they will review again to go over issues such as house lot size and whether golf courses should

come under the open space program. Marc reported a resident of Burrillville submitted an applications signed by NRICD for the Farm, Forest and Open Space Program. Although they owner claimed he had a tree farm, it is really a gravel bank with a lot size of less than three acres. Steve Volpe had approved the application. It was mentioned that the NRICD is only signing on stating that the owner has applied for a conservation plan and has properly filled out the application, not that we have any authority to designate something a farm. The planning board of Burrillville went out to visit the site and it is clearly not a farm, but a gravel bank. It was discussed that DEM needs to make sure that they are signing on true farms, and make a site visit. Dick also mentioned the need for the filling of vacancies on the FFOS subcommittee. There may be a need for holding a workshop for tax assessors to be trained on FFOS. Marc Tremblay and Chris Modissette already have a presentation together that they had used several years ago. It was asked that Ramona put on the FFOS agenda: Workshop for Tax Assessors.

b. Ag Inventory Project – Gina explained that DEM and NRCS are both interested in funding this project at \$15,000 each and NRICD with and in-kind contribution of \$4,000. Gina met with Mike Merrill, Mike Kenyon, Steve Volpe and Dr. Scott Marshall to determine the expectations of the project. She passed out a draft scope of work and tasks sheet for the board to review. A motion was made to go forward with this project: Marc/Norm. Eugene abstained. Motion passed.

Motion to adjourn approximately 9:30. Norm/Dick. Unanimous.