

Northern Rhode Island Conservation District

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MEETING MINUTES

June 4, 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, Ramona LeBlanc. NRCS: Kate Giorgi.

Absent were:

Associate Directors: Ed Baker and Jean Lynch.

I. Minutes

The May 7, 2008 meeting minutes were reviewed. A motion to accept

the minutes was made: Dick/Norm, unanimous.

II. Treasurer's Report

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

The CD that is maturing will be cashed in.

III. Old Business

a. Scituate Reservoir Watershed Education Program.

Scituate High School appears ready to accept many agriculture courses for applied science credit requirement.

Business bulletins developed by Kate have been mailed.

Billboard will be up on June 15. Winning posters currently on display at Gloucester Town Hall.

Clayville was the only school in the watershed that did not participate in this year's program and the teacher that is usually involved contacted the office to say she had been out on medical leave and looks forward to participating next year.

The design of the Stormwater Best Management Project is complete and NRCS is working on the RFP. (design circulated). A draft of the sign design was also circulated. IT was decided that two signs should be places—one on Rte 6 and one on Rte 116.

b. Wetlands Outreach Project

Burrillville and Smithfield have both signed contract.

The Board made a few recommendations for changes to the brochure on wetland species, but it was agreed that overall the pamphlet looks good. The Wetlands in My Backyard brochure developed by Kate has been corrected to reflect changes suggested by DEM and has gone back for final approval. Any additional changes will also be reflected in the native/invasive brochure. Kate Giorgi's and Mike Merrill's help was acknowledged with appreciation.

c. Legislative Outreach

Ray Church was contacted by Gina first by phone and then with a follow-up letter. It was explicitly explained that without intervention by the Chair of the Finance Committee, the State budget would reflect a 50% cut in funding to the Conservation Districts.

IV. Reports

a. Chair – Paul reported that May had been a busy month with many Arbor Day activities.

b. NRCS – Kate distributed the conservationist reports. The Farm Bill has passed but is still being interpreted to establish policies the state offices will need to follow. A small amount of money (\$35,000) is available through AMA for projects that are production rather than environmentally oriented and there is a 6/13 application deadline.

c. Envirothon – The winner—Coventry high School—is in process of raising \$5500 to go to the national competition in Arizona.

d. RC&D – They have received a grant to hire an urban forester. Also,

there is a good chance that funding may be available to develop a website to promote forest products

e. RDC – Various grants have been applied for, but there is nothing definite at this point.

f. RIFCO – The annual Summer Twilight Program is scheduled for 8/7 (rain date 8/8) at the RIFCO woodlot. A bonfire/cookout will be held at the new Adirondack shelter.

g. District Manager –Despite having no signed contract with NRCS, the districts have completed ranking of CIG proposals. In order to maintain the integrity of the program, not all the money available was obligated. Gina expects to have a contract to sign by the time of the next SCC meeting on 6/11, at which time NRCS can be billed for \$7500, to be split between the three districts. There will not be as much work from the program for the districts this year, due to funding.

In response to an inquiry from Harriet Powell about combining the office space for the three districts, Gina indicated that legislatively the housing issue is not a problem as long as each district maintains its own Board. However, Harriet was told that the NRICD board is not interested in pursuing a joint housing situation at this time.

The rain garden workshop at the flood mitigation conference was not the right venue. Gina felt that most of the participants were from the insurance industry and were not interested in the rain garden.

With the probable demise of SNEFC, Inc. pending, Paul Boisvert has indicated that he would like to continue working on the woodscaping workshops as a private contractor. The board voiced concern that

the management of the program needs to stay within SRWEP, that the work was originally given to SNEFC, Inc. to support that organization and that it may be possible to do the work in-house if staffing is available.

A rain garden workshop will be held at Foster Library on 7/17, funded by SRWEP.

V. New Business

a. FFOS Recommendations –The board agreed to submit the names of Norm

Hammond and Ron Fasano to SCC for consideration as candidates for the Governor’s appointments to the FFOS subcommittee.

b. Ag Inventory Project – Start has been delayed until 7/1 because of funding. At that time the inventory of chicken farms-which will be funded by DEM with money that will become available after the expiration of the state spending freeze on 7/1—can begin.

c. Northern Lakes—Sand Dam has an application approved with NRCS under the old WHIP funding. Work expected to begin on 6/11. CTA funding available to the district from the State/NRCS for organization, planning, perhaps a ranking system like CIG to determine which lakes to fund. Money would likely be funneled through district to lake associations. A small amount would be allocated for administrative function that the district would provide.

d. Rain Garden—the construction of a demonstration rain garden will begin at Famous Pizza/Bentley’s Tavern in Scituate as soon as an

agreement with the landowner is signed. It will be completed before the end of the fiscal year and will be maintained by the district until 11/1/08. A tour of the garden, the BMP and the rain barrel site will be planned for the fall.

e. Annual Dinner—The board decided that the maximum ticket price for the dinner will be \$25.00. Ramona will continue to try to plan a dinner that features local foods but advised that, at that dollar amount, it would most likely be impossible to have a caterer handle the dinner. If possible, the banquet facility chosen will be asked to use local foods whenever possible.

f. Summer meeting—The July 2 meeting will not be held. If a July meeting is required due to State funding issues either a meeting with short notice will be convened or any matters requiring a vote will be handled via email.

VI. Other

Marc Tremblay submitted a letter of resignation as a director. He would like to remain as an associate director. His letter was accepted by the board with regret.

Motion to adjourn approximately 8:45. Norm/Marc, unanimous.