

Northern Rhode Island Conservation District

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MEETING MINUTES

March 4, 2009

7:00 PM

Paul called the meeting to order at 7:00.

In attendance were:

Directors: Paul Dolan, Dick Went, Louis L. Vinagro, III, Eugene Pepper; Associate Director: Marc Tremblay

NRICD Staff: Gina DeMarco, Ramona LeBlanc. NRCS: Mike Kenyon.

Absent were: Director: Norm Hammond; Associate Directors: Jean Lynch, Ed Baker.

I. Minutes

A motion was made to accept the minutes from the February 12, 2009 meeting: Dick/Louie, unanimous.

II. Financial Reports

A motion was made to acknowledge receipt the January financial

statements: Dick/Louie, unanimous.

III. Old Business

A) SRWEP

SNEFCI, in partnership with RIFCO, coordinated a woody biomass workshop at Ponaganset High School as part of the woodscaping program.

A tour of Joslin Farm is planned for April 25th at 9:30. A planning meeting will be held at NRICD on 3/17.

A water quality workshop will be held at Ponaganset High School on 3/24.

All classroom presentations are scheduled.

Ponaganset Middle School has expressed an interest in planting a rain garden.

B) Wetlands

The final task in this agreement will be a walk and talk to be held on May 16 at Deerfield Park in Smithfield and a site in Burrillville to be determined. Gene will check maps at DEM for sites in Burrillville with invasives issues.

C) Ag Inventory

Survey of Tiverton and Little Compton will begin in March; the contract with DEM has been extended to 6/30. Additional funding has been applied for through APHIS to continue work throughout state. It

is hoped that additional funding may be available through NRCS.

D) Lake Invasives

The next meeting of the steering committee is 3/10 at NRICD. DEM has funds to spend on lake management. Pending the formation of the group they may be able to fund a plan for Smith-Sayles and Keech Pond.

E) Seedling Sale

Ads have been placed in the Bargain Buyer and Foster Home Journal and brochures have been mailed.

The mailing list was reduced from approximately 3500 to approximately 1300 and 1800 were printed.

This cuts the cost by over 60%.

F) Budget

Norm is reviewing proposed budget. In an executive session, the board voted to approve proposed salary increases.

VI. Reports

A) Chair

Paul, Gina and Dick met with the new NRCS State Conservationist, Pooh Vongkhamdy and expect that the district's relationship with NRCS to be strengthened.

B) State Conservation Committee

A special meeting was held on 2/18 to develop an operational plan for the districts. A grant proposal will be submitted to the RI Foundation to fund the development of a plan to streamline and centralize the functions and administration of the three districts.

While the law requires that each district maintain its own board, merging the day to day operations would allow statewide uniformity of programs and tasks.

Three major areas of expertise are to be highlighted: FFOS, education and outreach and technical assistance to landowners. An immediate potential for work for the districts was identified; currently NRCS is only able to complete conservation plans for those landowners who are eligible for NRCS programs. All landowners enrolled in FFOS need a conservation plan. Also, there is the need for a recertification process similar to the one that exists in the forestry portion of FFOS in the farm designated area.

C) NRCS

EQIP and WHIP application deadlines have been extended to 3/19. Currently over 200 applications have been received and are being processed. Ranking has not begun. The local NRCS office must obligate enough funds to support salaries for the staff.

D) RC&D

The annual recruitment meeting is being planned for September with hopes of generating funding. A new 5 year plan is being developed

and hearings are being held throughout the state. A flyer was distributed and will be posted at NRICD office.

E) RDC

Nothing to report.

F) RIFCO

Spring program is scheduled for 5/9 with a 5/16 rain date. The annual dinner meeting is scheduled for 11/21.

G) RIACD

The next meeting is scheduled for 3/12 at NRICD office.

Possible changes in the Association's function will need to be reviewed. A draft of the Van Buren grant proposal is due at the end of the week of 3/2 or beginning of week of 3/9 and will be circulated for review. The Association may be the fiscal agent for funds from this grant and the question of how to channel funds to other organizations needs to be discussed.

H) RIRLA

The annual meeting is scheduled for 3/18. A website is under development. Plans are being made for a series of pasture walks during the summer to educate other farmers about fencing, etc.

I) District Manager

Gina asked the board if she should attend a few meetings of the RI

Waterworks Association to network and share the district's projects with PWSB. The board indicated she should pick one that has an appropriate agenda and evaluate then if it is going to be worthwhile to pursue. Also, she will try to make contact with the new executive director of the Water Resource Board through Eric Offenberg.

J) Envirothon

A motion was made to contribute \$500 to the Envirothon if a donation was solicited: Gene/Dick, unanimous.

VI. New Business

A) Annual Dinner

The board would like to investigate how much it would cost to rent facilities at Addieville again this year.

B) Forestry in the 2008 Farm Bill

Several potential sources of work for the district were identified at the NELM in Portsmouth on 2/26-27. NRCS has funding for the districts to hire consultants to write management plans for EQIP applicants; an outreach plan is needed to find woodlot owners and educate them about forest management and the data base established from this outreach will need to be updated every 3-5 years.

A motion to adjourn was made at 8:55: Norm/Dick, unanimous.