

Northern Rhode Island Conservation District

**17 Smith Avenue - Greenville, RI 02828 - Phone (401) 949-1480 - Fax
(401) 949-4436**

MEETING MINUTES

April 11, 2012

Chair Paul Dolan called the meeting to order at 7:03.

Present: Directors: Paul Dolan, Dick Went, Eugene Pepper, Louis Vinagro III, Jean Lynch; Associate Directors: Marc Tremblay, Norm Hammond; District Manager: Gina DeMarco; NRICD: Becca Buckler; NRCS: Nina Bhattacharyya; State Conservation Committee: Ramona LeBlanc, Jill Osgood; Visitor: Mark Laroche, Esq.

I. Minutes: Minutes and notes of previous meeting were accepted as on file. Dick/Gene; unanimous.

II. Financial Reports: A motion was made that the Board is in receipt of the Financial Reports. Gene/Dick; unanimous.

III. Old Business

A. SRWEP:

- Gina reported that SRWEP has entered a new business partnership**

with Providence Grass Company. They produce grass seed that yields low-maintenance grass that requires few cuttings and little fertilizer. They will demo their product on NRICD's lawn.

- The Get Wet! Program is complete. Approximately 200 people attended the end –of-program presentation with the kids. The Photo Contest is on-going; they have not received many entries. Gina is actively working on getting the high school students involved.
- The Poster Contest entries will be collected on April 13th. The participants are 3rd to 8th graders; winning entries will be made into a calendar.
- Becca Buckler has been fully trained and is now doing classroom presentations.
- The Water Festival is scheduled for May 8th.

B. NRCS Agreements:

- Ag Inventory: Surveys will begin as soon as NRCS provides the packet materials. Kate has completed the mapping.
- Outreach: A workshop at Confreda Farm is scheduled for May 19th at 10:00 am.
- Engineering: EWP Pocasset is working on MOU's with Cranston.
- Geese: Jessie is doing egg-oiling field training at Roger William's Park.

C. Building: Gina is still searching for a contractor to fix the front walkway.

D. Seedling Sale: Orders are due for seedlings. Sale will take place this Saturday from 9:00 am – 2:00 pm. Orders are lower than previous years.

IV. New Business:

A. Town Administrator Meetings: Jean Lynch volunteered her time to meet with town planners and engineers to educate them about services available through the districts. She would like to offer a handout to present to the municipalities. A motion was made to allow Jean to develop a plan & materials packet and to meet with town officials. Dick/Gene; unanimous.

B. NE/NY Watershed Initiative: Gina was asked to be the representative for RI on a board that is promoting the cleaning of waterways from Maine to New York. The Board gave Gina authorization to attend their training on May 9th & 10th.

C. RIRLA Request: A motion was made to sponsor the 3rd Annual RIRLA Farm Dinner at the \$100 sponsorship level. Gene/Dick; unanimous.

D. Grant/Program Research Funding: Becca asked for authorization to pursue the Providence After School Alliance (PASA) grant. The grant funds after school programs that partner with community providers to Providence middle school students. A motion was made

to allow Becca to pursue the grant. Dick/Gene; unanimous.

V. Reports:

A. Chair: A motion was made to make a second payment of \$200 for NACD dues. The dues are paid quarterly. Dick/Gene; unanimous.

B. SCC:

- Eric Offenbergh made a presentation on behalf of all the districts at the RI State House Financing Hearing held on April 11th.**
- Ramona and Jean went on a statewide tour with Leonard Jordan from NRCS. They met with local landowners in all three districts. Specific issues were identified as needing to be addressed. The meeting was intended to showcase the need for field offices and the relationship between the districts and NRCS. Leonard Jordan will follow-up in the coming months.**

C. NRCS: Nina reported that the second round of EQIP applications have been ranked. June 1st is the deadline for the third round. Approximately 12 applications have been processed for the Northern District.

D. RC&D: A meeting was not held this month. Interviews for the Executive Director position are being scheduled.

E. RDC: No activity to report.

F. RIFCO:

- **The Annual Meeting is scheduled for Sept. 22nd at Broad Oak Farm.**
- **The Spring Program is scheduled for May 5th at their demonstration woodlot.**
- **Three farms were included in the RI Tree Farm third-party audit conducted on March 21 & 22.**
- **Mark is currently working on a newsletter and is looking for information and/or ideas.**

G. RIACD:

- **Becca will take over grant management for BFR due to Kristen's maternity leave.**
- **The BFR web-tool development is being populated with basic beginning farmer questions.**
- **Jean Lynch is the new alternate of the RIACD board.**
- **Senator Whitehouse is working on getting a Farm Bill out before the end of the summer. The Clean House Conference is scheduled for May 1st.**
- **The NACD Legislative Conference is scheduled for July 14th -17th in Washington, DC.**
- **The NE NACD Conference is scheduled for Aug. 19th – 21st in Corning, NY.**
- **Dick has been asked to fill the position of Second Vice-President of NACD. He plans to submit a letter of intent.**

H. RIRLA: Members can no longer sell frozen meat to restaurants. RIRLA is exploring sale of fresh meat through RI Beef.

I. Envirothon:

- **The breakfast fundraiser netted \$1,700 in profits.**
- **The Envirothon Competition is scheduled for May 18th at Goddard Park.**
- **The National Envirothon is scheduled for the last week in July in PA.**

J. District Manager:

- **Gina is looking for Outreach ideas. Tailgate fundraisers held in CT seem to be popular and she suggested that the district may use a similar format to raise funds and awareness for specific programs, such as, the Walk-in-the-Woods program at Snake Park.**
- **Gina suggested setting up a reserve account for the district. The subject will be further explored during an Executive Session.**

K. Other: Mark Laroche, a local attorney, presented his idea to the Board to produce a Legal Guide to Farming in Rhode Island Reference Manual. He asked for the Board's support as advisors and in the promotion, funding, research, and contributions of case studies and anecdotes.

Motion to adjourn at 9:02. Gene/Dick; unanimous.