

**Southern Rhode Island Conservation District  
Board of Directors Meeting**

**Minutes of April 21, 2008**

**Present:** Board Members: Clarkson A. Collins, Chair; Rudi Hempe, Vice-Chair; Harriet Powell, Secretary; Steve DelPozzo, Treasurer. Staff: Susan Letendre, Kris Stuart, and Patty Tanalski. NRCS: John Richard.

**Meeting was called to order by Chair, Clarkson Collins at 5:37pm. Meeting was held at 60 Quaker Lane, Warwick, RI.**

Agenda items added included Ag Day info, update of site-plan review prices, discussion of District line-of-credit, video of "The Making of a Meal," and interim financial report

**Minutes from March 10, 2008** Steve moved to approve the minutes; Rudi seconded and motion carried unanimously.

**Treasurer's Report:** No formal treasurer's report was submitted

**Financial Report:** (Please see *Profit and Loss Budget vs. Actual, Non-billable work April-May*, and *Budget Highlights* documents accompanying these minutes.). It should be noted herein that District Manager Alicia Lehrer has left the Southern Rhode Island Conservation District for another position, and the District is in a period of transition. Consequently, these minutes may reflect that change by absent or truncated reports. Financial report discussion began with a clarification. Patty Tanalski will have authority to use the *debit card* for the District, but will not sign checks for the organization. Clark Collins will be the primary *credit card* holder, and must therefore be the guarantor of account fund. There will be a secondary credit card issued in Patty's name; she will be authorized to use this card, but Clark will remain primary credit card holder. Harriet moved that Patty is not authorized to sign checks, but is authorized to use debit and secondary credit card. Steve seconded and the motion carried.

Steve said that he had met with Alicia on the day before she transitioned to her new job to do a financial update (see handwritten document entitled, *Budget Highlights*). Budget Highlights document shows that estimated income totals \$116,815; project expenses total \$134,615, resulting in a budget deficit of \$17,800. Steve commented that the income totals are dependent on unknowns and may not transpire, or possibly not in this fiscal year.

Clark and Harriet signed a line-of-credit application with Washington Trust. Previous signatory was Alicia. A resolution was passed by the Board to allow this action. Patty will submit original to Washington Trust and keep a copy.

## **Reports:**

**Conservationist Report:** (Please see Mike Kenyon's report entitled *Update and confidential RI NRCS Conservationist Report accompanying these minutes*) John mentioned a WHIP application for a more efficient method of maple syrup production and the proposed fish passage at the Audubon Davisville Wildlife Refuge.

**RI Association of Conservation Districts:** The association held its second informal meeting at Quaker Lane. Norm Hammond agreed to be the Association Treasurer. No projects were discussed as the group gets the administration tasks up-to-date. The Association did receive a check from the RI Foundation for a program to raise the visibility of the Districts. Harriet asked the State Conservation Committee to administer the grant which it agreed to do. The organization elected officers electronically on April 4<sup>th</sup>. The next meeting of the Association is May 5<sup>th</sup> at Quaker Lane

**RIRC&D:** A second member of SRICD is still needed for the Board of RC&D. The Coverts project weekend was a success with 10 landowners attending and agreeing to carry the 'Coverts' message back to their communities.

**RIRDC** Jerry Bertrand is now part-time at RD. There are sufficient funds to carry the organization until end of December 2008. The livestock project is still viable, but no executive director has been found as yet. The organization continues to work on the Alan Madison House preservation.

**RI Ag Council:** no meeting until May 15. Patty asked who might attend next meeting on May 15. She had not heard from Marjorie. Harriet said that if Marjorie could not go, she would attend

**State Committee report:** All districts reported that they had implemented contacting RI Representatives to ask for District support. Mike Sullivan, head of DEM said that he thought that District appropriation would be cut 50% from the previous year. A number of strategies were discussed to make up the shortfall including applications for Federal Grants, looking for new income streams, possibly from current partners, etc. Districts were urged to continue looking for support from Representatives and to write them personal letters.

**State Technical Team:** No comments recorded.

**Other:** The video, 'The Making of a Meal' was presented to the public on April 2<sup>nd</sup>. Susan reported that the best parts of the footage, including interviews with farmers and seafood producers, were not included in the final video, and had actually been deleted from original footage. Consensus was, 'back to the drawing board for a better and more compelling look at growing local food.'

**Staff Responsibilities** Staff distributed a list of non-billable hours (see above) spent for 5 weeks in April and May, indicating that non-billable hours are too high for financial stability. Big problem is finding more billable hours. The staff needs guidance on how to use time to avoid having to use the line-of-credit and still do the tasks that need doing, such as putting on the Seedling sale, which probably will not command the necessary financial return. A discussion followed on ways to increase the District's income, including methods to increase seedling sale income and find other income-generating projects. Suggestions included doing more outreach and outfall mapping for Storm Water programs (caveat that DEM not enforcing RIPDES which means the Southern District suffers); increase direct technical assistance; reach out to Land Trusts to help with stewardship duties (John Richard commented that NRCS might help with workshops), more concentration on aquaculture and farming, and food sustainability and assisting with artisan food production promoting growth of artisan foodstuffs. Encouraging new cooperatives and new foodstuffs produced in RI such as cheese was given as an example. Clark suggested that the Board select two or three of the suggestions and flesh out a bit more. He is going to speak to Peter August about new program financed by a grant from the Sharpes, and run the Land Trust assistance idea by him as a possibility for the District. Everyone was encouraged to brainstorm about strategies to increase the District's financial picture and send to Board or bring ideas to next meeting.

**Events:** Seedling Sale, May 10, rain or shine. We will pack up orders at 9:00 am at East Farm. Rudi mentioned that Beverly O'Keefe will be selling rain barrels at the Seedling Sale and the District will get \$20.00 for every one sold. Volunteers are needed. for both days. Rudi said that on day of event, the powers-that-be are cracking down on parking, so all should be there by 8:00am. If parking down below building or in other spots rather than the scheduled parking areas, plan on staying for duration of event (until close at 2:00pm).

June 7 & 8, RI Sustainable Living Festival and Clean Energy Expo.  
October/November, Annual Dinner

**The meeting was adjourned at 7:45.** Next meeting will be on May 19 at 60 Quaker Lane.

Respectfully submitted, Harriet Powell, Sec, SRICD