

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

**Minutes of May 19, 2008**

**Present:** Board Members: Clarkson Collins, Chair, Harriet Powell, Secretary; Steve DelPozzo, Treasurer. Staff: Susan Letendre, Kris Stuart, and Patty Tanalski. NRCS: Kate Georgi.

**Meeting was called to order by Chair, Clark Collins at 5:57pm. Meeting was held at 60 Quaker Lane, Warwick, RI.**

Agenda changes, site plan review removed from last months minutes, added: seedling sale and financial review. Motion made by Steve to approve changes and Harriet seconded.

**Minutes from April 19 2008** Steve moved to approve the minutes; Harriet seconded and motion carried unanimously.

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

**Financial Review, Steve DelPozzo:** (Please see *Time by Job Summary, April 19 through May 19* submitted by Steve 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. This financial review continues the discussion held at the previous meeting on April 19.) Steve expressed his concern about the financial situation of the organization. His major concern is the ratio of billable hours to non-billable hours which is tilted in the wrong direction. For the period April 19-May 19, Steve reported that there were 70.5 billable hours and 233.25 non-billable hours, a situation that cannot continue if the organization is to survive. Steve also reported that the District has \$15,000 in bills and \$5,000 cash on hand, although there may be money owed that has not yet been paid, and depending on the appropriation from the General Assembly to DEM, the District will get approximately 1/3 of the total. Steve suggested that the District not tap the line-of-credit as there is no guarantee it can be repaid at this time. It was agreed that the Board should pursue any way open to improve the financial situation including finding another office, having staff work from home, etc. Susan, who is working 10 hours per week, said that turn around probably would not come quickly, although she is working on 2 prospective projects for the District. The land trust proposal suggested by Clark is still being discussed. It was agreed that Stormwater projects were not bringing home the bacon that it could if DEM had been enforcing. But DEM is suffering from budget cuts and may not have the man power to enforce; consequently, less stormwater business for the District. All suggestions that were made will be looked at as possible sources of revenue: the Town of Narragansett; hiring students and giving credit, not pay; the stewardship project suggested by Clark; more workshops; NRCS and possible money from Farm Bill; developing a cut sheet for URI in line of stormwater background; outreach to towns in Southern Rhode Island, and others. This topic will continue to be discussed and

additional meetings may be called. Clark will request a meeting with Roylene and Southern's Board.

### **Reports:**

**Conservationist Report:** (Please see 3 reports accompanying these minutes; a update from Mike Kenyon on programs and NRCS staffing and meetings, a confidential *RI NRCS Conservationist Report* and a *FY 2008 Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA) Program in RI*) Kate Georgi was present from NRCS. The Board and staff discussed the documents, the status of the Farm Bill and what the implications of passage would be in RI.

**RI Association of Conservation Districts:** The Association is going to ask the State Committee to sign on to the RI Foundation letter and to pass the grant money along to them to hire Chip Young to raise visibility of Districts

**RIRC&D:** Rhody Warm raised significant money on the 2007 blankets. The organization is considering having RIRC&D continue to implement its business plan. .

**RIRDC:** Jerry going on part time. Within the month he will know if \$75,000 grant from RI Foundation to continue RDC comes through.

**RI Ag Council:** Harriet attended the Ag Council. Several farmers' organizations are folding because of lack of interest in the organizations, not in the products. For example, the Christmas Tree Growers are ending because of lack of interest. An FFA member gave an interesting talk on getting kids away from the computer into the outdoors.

**State Committee report:** Next State Committee meeting is June 11

**State Technical Team:** Mike Kenyon reported that approximately 4.2 million was allocated through EQIP and WHIP, and deadline for AMA submissions is June 15<sup>th</sup>

### **Events:**

Seedling Sale. 84 orders were filled. Beverly O'Keefe is giving a portion of sale of each rain barrel to the District – \$1,500 total. Northern's sale is much larger and profitable than Southern's. They do not do the labor that Southern does. If plants come in flats of 6, they only sell that way so cut down on preliminary work. They give 2 days for pickup, one weekday and one weekend day. If the plants are not picked up they are donated, and purchaser does not receive money back. Group felt that Southern's operation could benefit from Northern's methods.

RI Sustainable Living Festival and Clean Energy Expo, June 7 & 8

Annual Dinner, October/November

Spring Hill Fair in West Springfield, MA, with 6,000 kids, members of FFA and 4-H

The next meeting was scheduled for June 16. Harvey cannot make the first Monday, so after the July hiatus; the meetings can be rescheduled for the 2nd or 3rd Monday depending on convenience of Board Members and staff and availability of Quaker Lane meeting room.

**The meeting was adjourned at 7:48pm.**

Respectfully submitted, Harriet Powell, Secretary, SRICD.

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**Special Meeting, June 5<sup>th</sup> at High Street Office.**

Harriet prepared a draft for Tom Sandham to sign to notify his board of his and the Southern's Board's intention to employ Tom as an interim Director. Text of draft is below. Steve DelPozzo moved we approve submitting the draft to the Board of the Eastern District, and Harriet seconded. The Board held several informal meetings prior to the June 5<sup>th</sup> meeting, including a meeting with Roylene Rides at the Door at NRCS.

“To the Board of Directors of the Eastern RI Conservation District

This is to inform the Board of Directors of the Eastern Rhode Island Conservation District that its Director, Thomas Sandham, has asked that we (the Board of the Southern Rhode Island Conservation District) notify you that we have requested that Mr. Sandham take over the Directorship of SRICD on a part-time and temporary basis. We expect to need his services a period of 6 months plus or minus, during which time we will look for a permanent replacement for our former Director. Alternatively, we would like to request that the Eastern District Board agrees to discussions with the Southern District Board regarding a possible formal or informal merger of the two Districts.

“Signed,”