

SOUTHERN RHODE ISLAND CONSERVATION DISTRICT (SRICD)
MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING HELD APRIL 25, 2016
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND (URI)
MASTER GARDENER FIELD HOUSE

Present: Clark Collins, Chair; Rudi Hempe, Dir.; Harvey Buford, Treasurer; Carl Sawyer, Secretary (joined meeting at 6:24 PM); Antonia Bryson, Dir.; Kate Bousquet, District Manager;

I. Clark called the meeting to order at 4:06PM. Agenda was modified as Carl did not join the meeting until 6:24PM.

II. Acceptance of March 28, 2015 meeting minutes. Motion to approve minutes with the following modifications passed (Rudi, Antonia, unanimous). Under IV. B. District Directorship update, change 'directors who are appointed need to obtain 25 nomination signatures' to 'directors who are reappointed to a new term need to obtain 25 signatures again'. Under V, B. change 'farm plan preparation' to 'business plan preparation'.

III. Reports

A. Financial Statement: Kate provided and reviewed a written statement. Motion to approve as written passed (Harvey, Rudi, unanimous). Report on file.

B. NRCS Report: No report.

C. Envirothon Report: Kate reported for Peter Stetson that the fundraiser breakfast was successful.

D. Ag Council Report: Kate reported for Peter Stetson that the next Ag Council meeting would be held at the Richmond Grange on May 19th. Carl agreed to attend the meeting and set up the SRICD display.

E. District Manager's Report: Kate presented a detailed written report which is filed with these minutes. Kate also distributed a written report prepared by staff person Naomi Andrews documenting progress on the Hopkinton Conservation Commission mapping project. The report is also on file. Motion to accept report passed (Rudi, Harvey, unanimous).

Kate said she had received a grant summary form to be completed to describe how legislative grant funds are used. Discussion: important to note diversity of services, assistance to agricultural community, and need to hire staff. Clark suggested including a copy of our Annual Report.

IV. Old Business

A. Nominations for 2016 Conservation Awards: Antonia had favorable reports of a small farm in Exeter which she will follow up on as a Farm of the year awardee. Carl nominated Heather Faubert, URI Cooperative Extension Agent, for the Educator of the Year award.

B. Other: Farm, Forest and Open Space (FFOS) Application Procedure. Antonia noted that applicants typically fill out an application, sign a cooperative agreement which is verified by the Department of Environmental Management (DEM) and filed with the town. Discussion concluded that there is no follow up or incentive to create and follow through on plan, and that there is inconsistency in town tax assessor policies. Kate noted that she and Gina DeMarco have been discussing the feasibility using Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) funds to allow District staff to write FFOS plans. Antonia and Kate agreed to meet to clarify the issue.

V. New Business

A. Rhode Island Resource Conservation and Development (RIRC&D) award. Harriet noted that RIRC&D had received an award from the national RC&D in recognition of a business plan developed for Rhody Warm, a marketing venture of RI sheep farmers. A representative from the Sheep Farmers Association will be going to the national RC&D meeting in Reno, NV in July to accept the award.

B. North Kingstown pollinator project. Harriet also noted that the town of North Kingstown Water Department would be holding an open house in the third week of July to display a pollinator habitat planting at their well site in Slocum. The project, directed by Tim Cranston and Gary Casabona (RI Natural Resources Conservation Service) converts an area that previously required mowing to vegetation that will provide flowering native plants from spring through fall.

C. Small-scale composting initiative. Antonia reported that the RI Department of Environmental Management has accepted a plan, developed by a committee she is on, to facilitate small-scale food waste composting.

D. Solar farm potential in Hopkinton. Harvey noted that there has been consideration of the feasibility of solar farming in the Town of Hopkinton as an ancillary to agricultural farming. There was discussion of how SRICD might assist, support or facilitate workshops in the District towns to promote conversation and education regarding solar farming.

Motion to adjourn at 6:00 PM. Rudi, Harvey

The next Board meeting will be held on May 23rd, 2016 at 4:00PM at the Master Gardener Field House.

Minutes submitted by Carl Sawyer, Secretary, SRICD