

**SOUTHERN RHODE ISLAND CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING HELD MAY 22, 2017  
AT THE URI MASTER GARDENER FIELD HOUSE**

Present: Antonia Bryson, Chair; Harvey Buford, Treasurer; Carl Sawyer, Secretary; Clark Collins, Director; Rudi Hempe, Director; Peter Stetson, Associate Director; Melissa Hayden, NRCS District Conservationist; Kate Bousquet, District Manager.

**I. Antonia called the meeting to order at 4:04 PM.**

**II. Minutes of Previous Meeting**

Minutes of the April 24, 2017 meeting were approved with amendments. Revised minutes are on file (Rudi, Harvey, unanimous).

**III. Reports**

- A. Financial Statement:** Kate went over a written Treasurer's Report/Financial Statement. There were no issues. Kate noted that she had met with the accountant, Alan Hornstein, and that he said the books looked good.
- B. NRCS Report:** Melissa went over a written report of NRCS activities in the District.
- C. RI Envirothon:** Peter reported that twelve high school teams and one middle school team participated in this year's Envirothon held at URI's East Farm. Coventry Team 1 earned first place and will be going to the national competition in Maryland in July.
- D. RI Ag Council:** Carl did not attend due to illness. Peter reported that the Farm Bureau representative made a motion for the Ag Council to support legislation allowing farms which have already sold development rights to be allowed to install up to an acre of solar panels. The motion was voted down as the majority felt that solar panel installation would violate an existing contract. The Ag Council is looking for volunteers to man the display at the Washington County Fair.
- E. District Manager's Report:** Kate went over her written report. She also noted that she is still in the process of finalizing a job description for an assistant office manager.

**IV. Old Business**

- A. Conservationist Award Nominations for 2017 / Summer Meeting Schedule:** There was discussion of potential awardees. It was decided to hold off on selection and possible site visits until the June meeting.
- B. Further Discussion: SRICD presentation(s) for continuing to build partnerships:** Antonia noted the need for development of a presentation as well as a questionnaire. Peter suggested Google Forms as a possibility for the survey. Kate noted that we need to revise our list of services and capabilities. Peter suggested that the Story Map might be useful in presenting what we can do. Kate, Peter, Antonia and Carl will meet June 5<sup>th</sup> to go over the Story Map. There was discussion of how the District might serve municipalities by providing expert guidance/testimony in areas such as conservation planning and soil erosion and sediment control issues.

**V. New Business**

- A. SRICD Staffing Transitions:** Kate met with District Managers from the Northern and Eastern Districts to discuss potential areas of cooperation. One possibility is for Kate to provide technical training for new hires in

all three districts. There was discussion of Kate's current workload which includes 10 hrs/week on District Manager payroll and 26 hrs/week on NRCS contract agreements. Kate will further investigate what sort of time commitment would be required in this effort.

**B. SRICD Potential Pollinator Habitat Seed as Annual Fundraiser:** Rudi suggested that the District might offer pollinator habitat seed for sale as a fundraiser, similar to the seedling sale fundraiser of years past. The Master Gardeners are planning to hold an educational open house at East Farm in August, 2018. This might be a venue for District outreach/exposure and pollinator seed sale. There was discussion of cost and availability of seed. The idea was well-received and will be investigated further before moving forward.

**C. Other:** Kate noted that the Lieutenant Governor is planning to tour selected farms in every town in the State. Kate will get a list of farm visit dates and locations in the Southern District and email it in the event that board members might be able to attend.

**Meeting adjourned at 5:56PM**

**The next meeting will be held on June 26, 2017, at 4 PM at the URI East Farm Master Gardener Field House.**

Minutes submitted by Carl Sawyer, Secretary, SRICD