

WEEKAPAUG FIRE DISTRICT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

March 22, 2014

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 AM by moderator Doug Randall. Those in attendance were Doug Randall, Frank Kinney, Jim Maynard and Emily Mugge, officers of the Weekapaug Fire District; Members –at-Large attending were Carol Carmody, Amy Carvell, Gale Hunt, Dan Richards and Peter Seidenberg. Also attending were former Board Member Lang Heminway, WFD attorney Deming Sherman and resident Dick Smith. Charlie Vandemoer, manager of all 5 Wildlife refuges in Rhode Island, attended the first part of the meeting. Those absent were Tom Dwyer, Howard Hyde, Sue Lester and Susie Mackay.

Presentation of the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USF&WS): In the last WFD executive committee meeting there was discussion about signing an MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) between the WFD and the USF&WS. The MOU pertains to protecting plover and other nesting shorebirds on WFD property. The agreement gives the USF&WS access to our property for the management of the nesting shore birds by roping off areas, prohibiting fireworks, managing traffic around these areas, etc. The agreement is terminable on 48 hours notice.

The Endangered Species Act requires both the National Wildlife Refuge and private landowners (WFD) to protect endangered species. Signing an MOU with the USF&WS transfers responsibility for protecting endangered species from WFD to USF&WS. Separate

and distinct from the MOU is an application for a Permit for Foothold Traps which the USF&W sent with the MOU.

The Committee decided to invite an expert from the National Wildlife Refuge to educate the Committee on the use of the traps, the effect of the traps and the necessity of using them. Charlie withdrew the request for predator control at this time. The WFD agreed to sign the MOU with the USF&WS without the Permit for foothold traps.

The Minutes of the November 2013 meeting were approved as revised.

Weekapaug Foundation Construction Update: Frank discussed an update to the original plans to improve safety and appearance of the Innlet presented in the last WFD meeting. The original plan has been revised to remove some of the parking spaces by the Innlet. Instead, more parking spaces will be added to the WFD office entrance parking area.

Approvals to commence construction have been submitted to the town, generating comments and questions from the town engineers. The Foundation and its representatives are responding to all town requests.

Treasurer's Report/Tax Assessor's Report: Jim Maynard reported that the operating budget is running at a breakeven rate. Jim will work with the commissioners to build the budget for FY 2015.

Commissioner's Reports

QBCC: Scott Wakeman reported via email (attached). Scott requested a larger donation (\$1,800) from the WFD than originally budgeted (\$1,500). WFD agreed to increase the donation by the

additional \$300.

Marina Update: Slip rental fees have not been increased since 2007. In an email, Ed Fuller, Chair of the Marina Committee, reported that the Marina will increase fees to \$450 for Residents, \$600 for Nonresidents and \$700 for new Nonresidents.

Weekapaug Green Report: Weekapaug Green will move the Farmers Market to the back of the Innlet off Knowles this year as a trial to determine the best placement of the Market.

Old Business

Beach Renovation Preservation Committee: Rick Constantine emailed the WFD to ask for funding to put up a winter fence on the Inn Beach next September 2014. The fence will be an experiment to determine if the fence helps increase the beach's dune depth. At the end of the winter, the Committee will measure the impact of the fence.

WFD Brochure and Customs: A committee was established in the August 2013 WFD meeting to respond to concerns about noise, trash, dogs, trimming bushes, speeding and other "good neighbor" issues. The committee members put together a document which will be sent out in the Moderator's Spring Letter. The WFD felt that both the customs document and the brochure are valuable information for our residents and guests and that WFD should distribute both documents as widely as possible.

New Business

Update on Grant Proposals for Ningret, Winnapaug and Quonnie Ponds: Dick Smith reported that there are two grant applications for dredging and salt marsh restoration projects under consideration.

The grant application for Ninigret Pond will restore 30 acres of salt marsh within the Ninigret Pond salt marsh barrier complex. It will also provide a plan for dredging Quonnie and Winnapaug Ponds. This grant is from the US Department of the Interior and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. The funds were made available for states affected by Hurricane Sandy. The grant application is sponsored by Charlestown and Westerly, and a response is expected in April.

The second application is for dredging Winnapaug Pond. The grant is with the US Department of Agriculture, National Resources Conservation Services, Emergency Watershed Protection Program-Recovery which is also related to Hurricane Sandy storm damage. This grant is sponsored by Westerly. There is no due date for the response to this grant.

Town of Westerly Request: The director of Planning in Westerly proposed placing park benches at the state lot on the corner of Weekapaug Road and Atlantic Avenue. The lot was a staging spot during reconstruction of the Weekapaug Misquamicut Bridge. The benches would offer a welcoming place to sit and impede guests from parking in a no-parking area. After discussion, it was moved, seconded and approved that the WFD supported this initiative.

Date of the Next Meeting: The next meeting will be on Saturday, May 24, at 8:00 AM in the Weekapaug Fire District Office.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted

Emily M. Mugge

Secretary