

Meeting Minutes**Thursday, September 11th 2014
(Commerce RI, Narragansett Room)**

In attendance: Janet Coit, DEM, Council Chair
Michelle Burnett (for Jamia McDonald), EMA
Kevin Flynn, DOA/Planning
Jim Boyd (for Grover Fugate), CRMC
Julia Gold (for Michael Fine), DOH
Allison Rogers (for Steven Hartford), DOA
Michael Lewis, DOT
Marcel Valois, Commerce RI
Sue AnderBois (for Marion Gold), OER

Director Coit opened the meeting at approximately 2:35 PM. On behalf of the Council, she thanked Commerce RI for hosting this month's meeting.

The first order of business was the minutes for the July 16, 2014 meeting. A motion to accept the minutes was made and unanimously approved.

Director Coit noted that there is not always enough time at the end of meetings for public comment, and wanted to provide an opportunity at the beginning this time, indicating there might be additional opportunity at the conclusion of the meeting if time allowed.

Robert Malin (Sierra Club RI) commented that climate change is being ignored as an issue during the current election season. He indicated that additional outreach was needed.

Director Coit commented on the bill signing event in North Kingstown on August 1st. She also introduced Elizabeth Stone of her staff at RIDEM and explained her role in the department's climate change activities. She then reviewed some key upcoming events including the People's Climate March in New York City, the 9/22 Resilient RI Forum at the RI Foundation and the mitigation strategy meeting at Brown University on 9/26.

Status Updates/Report Outs:

- Jim Boyd (CRMC) provided an update on the storm guidance developed by an interagency group including CRMC, RIEMA, RIDEM, DOH, and Statewide Planning, a high priority from the EC3 action plan. He offered his thanks to David Vallee (of NOAA/NWS) and Malcolm Spaulding (URI) for their valuable assistance. Copies of relevant materials, including a paper on the history of climate change in Rhode Island, were provided to Council members and made available to others in attendance. Jim updated the Council members on the flood projection research/modeling that was utilized and the inundation maps (for coastal and inland flooding, from sea level rise and/or storm surge, riverine flooding, rainfall, etc.) that will be available in the near future to municipalities.
- Director Lewis (RIDOT) briefed the council on the work of the interagency working group he has been convening, which includes DEM, OER and Statewide Planning, and which focuses on ways to

reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the transportation sector, another priority from the action plan. He emphasized the desire to focus on strategies that get Rhode Island the best return for its investments, as well as the need to correctly “account” for emission reductions. He also commented on how RI can learn from other states on best strategies for reducing VMTs and the need to be mindful that the benefits of reducing emissions are not just environmental in nature, but that there are numerous public health and economic benefits, as well.

- Sue AnderBois (OER) and Hannah Morini (Commerce RI) provided updates on: 1) distributed generation funding availability; 2) OER and Commerce RI’s partnering with National Grid/Little Compton/Tiverton on reducing peakload via rooftop solar; 3) “leading by example” and OER’s goal of reducing state energy use by 20% by 2016; and 4) funding to be made available by RIEMA to do outreach to RI’s business community.

Kevin Flynn (Associate Director for Planning) discussed the Economic Development Plan being released today (9/11/14) and its emphasis on climate resiliency. He indicated that eventually there would be an opportunity for formal public comment on the plan, which considers 13 major priorities, one of which is to implement the EC3 report. He commented on Commerce RI’s assistance with development of the plan and the linkages between economic opportunities and climate change. Director Valois (Commerce RI) commented on the challenges of trying to get consensus on a document of this magnitude.

Director Coit asked Jan Reitsma (Governor’s Office) to provide an update on Communications, including the work of the interagency working group on that subject. He first asked whether the Google Groups created in response to the request for a listserv was in fact a useful tool for the council members to utilize. A conversation followed about the need to abide by RI’s Open Meeting Law requirements; “leading by example” with the dissemination of information to all state employees; and the creation of a “Climate Change 101” for employees. Julia Gold (DOH) talked about the work she’s undertaken at Health and an upcoming grant proposal to NOAA about emergency planning activities. Council members discussed the benefits of coordinated outreach to employees and how agencies can advertise their accomplishments. Jan talked further about larger communications issues and suggested maybe hosting a forum after an upcoming council meeting to tease out ways to improve/coordinate communication activities.

Elizabeth Stone (RIDEM) discussed with the council ways to collect names/volunteers for the EC4 Advisory Board.

Director Coit opened up the floor for additional public comment.

Meg Kerr (RI Clean Water Action) spoke about the upcoming September 22nd Forum at the RI Foundation.

Peter Galvin thanked the council for its hard work.

Pam Rubinoff (Coastal Institute) discussed using the “prize” model to get people motivated and to lead by example.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 4:00 PM.