

## EC4 Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

**June 16, 2015**  
(RIDEM, Room 300)

### In attendance:

Sheila Dormody (Chairwoman)  
Frederick Presley (Vice-Chair)  
Brigid Ryan (Secretary)  
Tina Shepard  
Andy Andrade  
David Caldwell Jr.  
Amy Rainone  
Dr. Gregory Wellenius  
Paige Bronk  
Al Dahlberg  
Christopher McNally  
Barbara Cardiff  
Steve Larrick

Sheila Dormody (Chair) opened the meeting at approximately 9:10AM. She offered opening remarks and asked Steve Larrick (Central Falls) to introduce himself to the Board.

Chairwoman Dormody briefly reviewed the proposed agenda, followed by a vote to approve the May meeting minutes. Al Dahlberg offered a few minor amendments. The minutes were unanimously approved as amended.

Elizabeth Stone (RIDEM) presented a copy of a memo (dated June 16, 2015) from DEM Director Janet Coit to the Board concerning "priorities." The memo highlighted a few key topics: 1) *communications* (what information do we need to provide to and get from the public? for what purpose? how to deliver? how to interact?); 2) *communities* (what do city and town decision-makers most need in the way of information, technical assistance, funding, policies, and guidance?). The memo also asked if the Advisory Board wants to tackle a specific project or some outreach whereby the EC4 could help seek/secure funding. Director Coit also encouraged all members of the Advisory Board to attend the next full council meeting on June 26<sup>th</sup> to meet the EC4 members and hear the presentations.

The members engaged in discussion about the memo. Fred Presley (Vice-Chair) stated that he would like the advisory board to help engage the business community even if the full EC4 desires to make that it a priority for itself. Brigid Ryan asked about the Resilient Economies Collaborative (Action Plan Item 3.1.1). The Board discussed the possibility of understanding progress on all items in the Action Plan related to communication, communities and businesses.

Amy Rainone indicated she would like to hear more about the new FEMA guidelines/flood plain issues that potentially could impact many RI property owners. Jim Boyd (CRMC) and Pam Rubinoff (URI CRC Sea Grant)

offered some background on 1) the FEMA guidelines; 2) the “municipal memo” offering planning guidance to coastal cities and towns; and 3) outreach and communication opportunities URI’s CRC/Sea Grant can offer.

Fred Presley (Vice-Chair), Town Manager for West Warwick, was invited to provide a presentation to the Advisory Board - “Municipal Perspective on Severe Weather Events”. Vice-Chair Presley’s tenure as Town Manager in West Warwick began 1 week after the March 2010 floods which devastated large areas of West Warwick. His presentation highlighted the impacts to the business community, the town’s wastewater plant/system, the impact of the Scituate Reservoir on the flow in the Pawtuxet River and how climate change has become RI’s “new normal” (e.g. more frequent storms of higher intensity and longer duration).

The members of the Board engaged in a discussion about: the need to build municipal capacity to address these growing challenges; CRC’s efforts to date on community outreach/engagement; flood insurance mapping; how the state can be supportive of motivated communities and in motivating others; emergency preparedness (e.g. quantifying the benefits of certain preparedness projects and highlighting success stories, like in New York post Sandy); and, impacts to property values post-storm events. The members of the Board then engaged in a discussion of potential future presentations, a future meeting schedule, and Brigid Ryan’s report out at the June 26<sup>th</sup> full EC4 meeting.

Chairwoman Dormody opened up the floor for public comment:

Ken Payne commented about the need to address/ensure “natural systems” (e.g. forests and Narragansett Bay) are not forgotten in this conversation, the interconnectedness of organizations across RI (e.g. Providence Water), and the needs of particular populations, like the aging and immigrant communities, which are heavily impacted by climate change.

Jan Reitsma commented that he was encouraged by the meeting today and asked the Board to keep in mind the “costs” of not being prepared (at both the state level, down to the local level). He discussed the need to keep RIEMA engaged in the Board’s discussions about municipal preparedness (possibly pursuing funding opportunities).

Robert Malin commented that the cost of mitigation is dwarfed by the costs – to RI – of not being prepared for what’s to come, and encouraged the Board to tap into the network of non-profits to help with communication & outreach. Comments were offered on EPA’s Rule 111.d.

Peter Galvin commented that the Board may want to allow time for a briefing on climate science and discussed the appointments to the EC4 Science and Technical Advisory Board (STAB).

Ken Filarski briefly reiterated the need to engage the business community/leaders in the work of the full EC4 and its two advisory boards.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 10:45AM.

*(Notes prepared by Elizabeth Stone, RIDEM)*