

# East Providence Conservation Commission

## Meeting Minutes

March 23, 2015

City Hall Room A

7:30 PM

**Members present:** John Rose (Vice Chair), Wayne Barnes, John Burrige, Marie Esten, and James Boyd (Secretary)

**Members absent:** Keith Gonsalves (Chair) and Lorraine Nik

**Public present:** Ernie Germani

**Public Comment:** None

**Call to Order** - Vice Chair J. Rose called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM.

**Review of Minutes** - The February 23, 2015 meeting minutes were reviewed and accepted on a motion to approve by M. Esten and seconded by J. Burrige.

### **Planning Department Update**

- Parks/Playground Update - Wayne reported that eight (8) contractors have been pre-qualified by the City to bid on the Silver Spring Park and Central Avenue playground construction projects. Work on both projects is expected to begin this construction season.

### **Correspondence**

- Chevron - The Chevron Corporation issued a newsletter reporting progress with on-site remediation for the former petroleum tank farm parcel located along the Providence River and Veterans Parkway immediately south of the P&W quay. The parcel is planned for a mixed-use development project known as Village on the Waterfront.

### **Old Business**

- 2015 City Comprehensive Plan Update: Goals and Action Items - Wayne reported that the Planning Department continues to work on the comprehensive plan and invited Commission members to submit suggestions on goals and action items for the Natural Resources, Open Space and Sustainability elements of the plan.
- Status of Commission appointments - John Burrige contacted City Council Member-at-Large, Tracy Capobianco, and she indicated that his reappointment would be scheduled on the City Council's April 7 docket. Ernie Germani's appointment to the Commission is also scheduled for the same meeting.
- Earth Day activities - completion of planning - Commission members will meet at **9:00am on Saturday, April 18** at the Boyden Heights Conservation area for a clean-up of the coastal shoreline on the property. Notice of the Earth Day cleanup will be posted on the Commission's web page: <http://www.eastprovidenceri.net/conservation>.

## **New Business**

- New City website - ideas for Conservation Commission page - Wayne noted that the new City web site will be launched soon and there will be opportunity for suggestions on the Commission's web page content. Commission members discussed linking the East Providence content of the Trails & Walks in RI web page (<https://trailsandwalksri.wordpress.com>), managed by Ernie Germani, to the Commission's web page.
- Public awareness of City natural areas and conservation land - Commission members discussed adding an interactive map of City-owned natural areas and conservation land to the new Commission's web page. It was suggested to provide pop-up historic photographs linked to the Boyden Heights property. In addition, Commission members discussed providing short profile articles promoting City parks and conservation areas in local newspapers.
- Hunts Mill - future of "Terrace Garden" - Commissioners discussed the Hunt's Mill terrace garden and the lack of funding to construct the Master Plan elevated terrace garden. The loop trail next to the gazebo has been maintained by the Commission, but it is a maintenance problem. It was determined that a straight trail from the roadway through the terrace area onto the mowed lawn behind the Hunt House would be a desirable and manageable trail option. Planning for this trail will take place at the next Commission meeting.

## **Commission Member Items**

- J. Boyd noted that he attended a showing of the film "Shored Up" (<http://shoredupmovie.com>) at the Barrington Library on the evening of March 18. Preceding the film Jim gave a presentation on accessing sea level rise and storm surge information online. Jim reported that legislation has been introduced in the General Assembly to amend the Freshwater Wetlands Act. The House version is H5962 (<http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/billtext15/housetext15/h5962.htm>). Jim also indicated that he would like to see the Commission revisit the wetland mowing issue in the lawn area of the Hunts Mill property.
- Keith reported by email that the coffer dam at the Omega Pond fish ladder was to be removed the week of March 23.
- Wayne reported that the RI Association of Conservation Commissions sent an email announcing a meeting on March 25 to discuss strengths, challenges and opportunities in partnership with RIDEM.

**Adjournment** - The Commission voted to adjourn the meeting at 8:55 PM on a motion by M. Esten and seconded by J. Burrige.

The next regularly scheduled Conservation Commission meeting will be held on **Tuesday, April 21st at 7:30 p.m.** in Room A (1st floor) East Providence City Hall.

Respectfully submitted, James Boyd, Secretary