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East Providence Conservation Commission

Meeting Minutes

June 16, 2020

Online Zoom meeting

6:30 PM

Members present: James Boyd (Secretary), John Burrridge, Ernie Germani (Vice Chair), Keith Gonsalves (Chair), Patrick Hanner (City Liaison) and Cheryl Vieira

Members absent: Greg Burnett and Mary Beth Dwyer

Call to Order - Chair Keith Gonsalves called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M.

Review of Minutes - The January 21, 2020 meeting minutes will be reviewed at the next Commission meeting.

Public Attendees - William Fazioli (City Planning Director) and James Moran (City Planning Department)

Public Comment - None

Planning Department Update

- W. Fazioli indicated that the City was accepting the land donation from the Kettle Point developer for a portion of the property that includes a coastal greenway and the rebuilt pier at the terminus of Kettle Point adjacent to the East Bay Bike Path. The pier and greenway will be dedicated open space for public use.
- P. Hanner reported that a parcel located at Newport Avenue and New Road known as the “Butler” property has a proposal for high density mixed use with approximately 150 residential units.
- P. Hanner also reported that a 55-acre parcel known as the Leonardo Farm with frontage on Wampanoag Trail and Hospital Road has a proposal for 380 residential units.
- P. Hanner noted that a 130-acre residential mixed use development proposal for the Metacom Country Club has been proposed. The Planning Department has made a recommendation to the Planning Board to rezone the property and amend the City Comprehensive Plan to facilitate the development proposal. Approximately 30 acres of the property is reportedly being proposed as open space. The project would be reviewed under the authority of the Waterfront Commission if the City Council approves the Comprehensive Plan amendment to put the property within the City’s waterfront district.

DRAFT

- P. Hanner stated that a City-wide tree inventory grant proposal was submitted recently to DEM.

Correspondence - None

New Business

- NBC grant: E. Germani reported that the Narragansett Bay Commission Earth Day grant needs to be used with an invoice submitted to NBC by November 15. The great funds are planned for completing the final boardwalk section on the loop trail at Hunt's Mill below the gazebo.

Old Business

- Trail maintenance cleanups: The Commission will conduct trail maintenance on the Willet Pond trail on July 21. Commission member s will meet in the Willet Pond parking lot at 5:30pm.
- Members were curious as to whether the City had taken any action against the Indian Road property owner who had cleared trees and brush on city property adjacent to Willet Pond. P. Hanner was going to look into the matter.
- J. Boyd mentioned the proposal for establishing a new parking area and trail system on city owned property in Seekonk at the corner of West Street and Newman Avenue. The Commission will discuss the matter at a future meeting.
- K. Gonsalves indicated that the Boyden Heights Conservation Area needed some trail attention. Commissioners will likely schedule a trail maintenance day later in the year.

Commission Member Items

- E. Germani indicated that the Blackstone Valley Commission has cancelled hikes due to the COVID pandemic. He also indicated that the RI Land Trust Council will move forward with Land trust Days events this year, but with group limitations as warranted. The coastal coves hike will be on August 8 and the Turner Reservoir hike will be on September 27.
- Chairman K. Gonsalves thanked Mayor DaSilva for providing access to Hunt's Mill to the Ten Mile River Watershed Council volunteers so that river herring could be counted during the spring spawning run at the Hunt's Mill fish ladder. He also reported that the Hunt's Mill fish passage improvement project has been paused during the coronavirus pandemic. In addition, the Rose Larissa Park coastal infrastructure "living shoreline" improvement project has been completed. This project was a partnership between the City, The Nature Conservancy and the RI Coastal Resources Management Council.
See: <http://www.crmc.ri.gov/habitatrestoration/roselarisapark.html>.

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Adjournment - The Commission adjourned the meeting at 7: 30 PM.

The Conservation Commission will be meeting at Willet Pond at 5:30 pm on Tuesday, July 21, 2020 for trail maintenance in lieu of a regularly scheduled Commission meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

James Boyd, Secretary