

East Providence Conservation Commission

Meeting Minutes

April 20, 2021

Online Zoom meeting

6:30 PM

Members present: James Boyd (Secretary), Mary Beth Dwyer, Ernie Germani, Keith Gonsalves (Chair), Patrick Hanner (City Liaison) and Cheryl Vieira

Members absent: Greg Burnett

A. Call to Order: Vice Chair Ernie Germani called the meeting to order at 6:34 P.M. (Chairman K. Gonsalves joined the meeting moments later)

B. Review and Action of Meeting Minutes: The March 16, 2021 meeting minutes were approved by the Commission following a motion to approve by P. Hanner and seconded by C. Vieira.

Public Attendees: Wayne Barnes and John Carney

C. Public Comment:

1. **Wayne Barnes**, East Providence resident. Mr. Barnes is a former member of the East Providence Conservation Commission and is seeking reappointment to the Commission. He noted that he had recently walked at Turner Reservoir and Bridgham farm trails and commented that it is a real treasure for the City. Commissioner J. Boyd agreed that it is a wonderful asset for the City and residents with exceptional landscape and public open space.

D. Planning Department Update:

1. P. Hanner informed the Commission that a ribbon cutting ceremony for the Kettle Point pier and City public land has been tentatively scheduled for May 22. He will update the Commission on date/time for the event.
2. P. Hanner indicated that the Planning Board at its April 29 meeting had approved the Wampanoag Meadows 384 unit residential development project.
3. P. Hanner noted that the Leonardo Farms project off Forbes Street was undergoing Preliminary Plan review. The project consists of 8 buildings of 4 stories each.
4. The Planning Department is working on the draft City Comprehensive Plan update and will forward plan elements to Conservation Commission members for review.

E. Correspondence:

1. Email correspondence was received from a resident concerning the nature of the "blackboards" on the Turner Reservoir cul-de-sac trail and boardwalk adjacent to the fish ladder at the dam. P. Hanner indicated that the the boards are screens that

were required as part of the state construction permit to minimize disturbance to wildlife using the wetland area adjacent to the boardwalk.

2. E. Germani advised the Commission that a \$400 grant was received from the Narragansett Bay Commission that will be used for the ongoing Hunt's Mill boardwalk at the gazebo trail.

F. New Business:

1. Earth Day 2021 Projects - the Commission discussed and planned a shoreline cleanup and trail maintenance event at Boyden Heights for Saturday, April 24 for 09:00. (Note: Commission members along with city residents Wayne Barnes, Sarah Smalley and her husband completed a shoreline cleanup next to the East Bay bike path and spread wood chips along the trail connecting to the bike path.)

G. Old Business

1. Newman Crossing trailhead: Chair Gonsalves stated that he had made contact with the Seekonk Conservation agent and was awaiting a response. The Commission continues interest in establishing a potential new trailhead with a small parking area (6-8 spaces) located on a City owned parcel (known as Newman Crossing) at the intersection of Route 152 and West Street in Seekonk, MA.

H. Commission Member Items

- Chair K. Gonsalves noted that the Ten Mile River Watershed Council was interested in reviving the 10 year old plan for the pump house at Hunt's Mill to add solar panels, install a composting toilet, a bus turn around and implement a forest management plan for the city property. The Ten Mile river herring count continues, but has been a slow year to date. He also indicated that there was interest in developing story book walks at Hunt's Mill to engage school children in environmental education.
- J. Boyd noted the recent passing of Paul Bettencourt who was instrumental in re-establishing the herring run in the Ten Mile river. Paul and volunteers worked for three decades netting herring at the base of the Omega Pond dam and transferring them into the pond above the dam. J. Boyd also noted Council appointments are still pending, and that it appeared a new Commission member, Kelsey M. Queenan, was appointed on April 6 to replace retired member John Burridge.
- C. Vieira noted that the Commission should visit our city trails on a rotating basis to conduct inspections and maintenance.
- M.B. Dwyer noted that she had observed a Bald Eagle at Haines Park recently.

I. Adjournment - The Commission adjourned the meeting at 7:31 P.M.

The Conservation Commission will hold a regularly scheduled meeting online on Tuesday, May 18, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. Notice for online Zoom meeting to follow.

Respectfully submitted,
James Boyd, Secretary