East Providence Conservation Commission

Meeting Minutes

January 18, 2022

Online Zoom meeting
6:30 P.M.

Members present: Waynes Barnes, James Boyd (Secretary), John Carney, Ernie Germani (Vice Chair), Keith Gonsalves (Chair) and Patrick Hanner (City Liaison)

Members absent: Kelsey Queenan

Public Attendees: Susan Darrington

A. Call to Order: Chairman Keith Gonsalves called the meeting to order at 6:35 P.M.

B. Review and Action of Meeting Minutes: The November 16, 2021 meeting minutes were approved by the Commission following a motion to approve by E. Germani and seconded by J. Carney.

C. Public Comment: Ms. Darrington indicated that she was interested in the Commission's work and wanted to attend to see if she may have interest in applying for a Commission appointment.

D. Planning Department Update

1. City Planning staff are applying for a water quality improvement grant through the Narragansett Bay Estuary Program (NBEP) to address stormwater impacts to the Runnins River. The recent Save The Bay Runnins River water quality report supports the City's grant application to NBEP. City Planning staff are hoping to replicate the successful Sabin Point stormwater management project, which was awarded an NBEP grant. See: https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5eea260cea828333324dba1c/t/5f7b3bfe9ff4ab2ece07775c/1601911809357/presentation+Sabin+Point+stormwater.pdf.
2. City Planning staff are analyzing the recently completed City-wide tree survey with ESRI GIS software to determine tree health and locations where additional trees need to be planted to enhance shade and decrease summer heat impacts.
3. Comprehensive Plan - Draft plan sections are being reviewed by staff and will be ready for distribution to City Boards and Commissions for review and comments.

E. Correspondence: None

F. New Business

1. Election of officers (Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary) - On a motion by J. Carney and seconded by P. Hanner, the following Commission members were nominated for 2022: Keith Gonsalves (Chair); Ernie Germani (Vice Chair); and James Boyd (Secretary). Following acceptance of the nominations by all three officers, the Commission unanimously voted to approve the Commission officers as nominated and accepted.

2. Composting toilets at Hunt's Mills - K. Gonsalves indicated there is interest in exploring installation of a composting toilet at the Hunt House for use by community gardeners, trail walkers and the general public. Further investigation is needed for maintenance and operation of such a facility on City property. Examples of existing public use composting toilets were given for Haines Park in Barrington and Misquamicut Beach in Westerly.

3. Blackstone Heritage Corridor sponsored hikes at Hunt's Mills - E. Germani indicated that hikes will continue in 2022 on each 2nd Sunday at Hunt's Mill, with the Coastal Cove hike scheduled for August 28 and Turner Reservoir for September 25.

4. Repair of stair posts at Hunt's Mills - Commission members discussed replacement of the post on the trail head stair landing adjacent to the gazebo, and agreed to complete it during spring (warmer weather). While on the subject of Hunt's Mill, Commissioners J. Boyd and K. Gonsalves raised the matter of installing a marked cross walk on Pleasant Street to provide a safer crossing for pedestrians between the Hunt's Mill and Turner Reservoir trails. It was also noted by J. Carney that repair of boards is need in several areas along the Turner Reservoir boardwalk that pose a safety hazard to users.

5. Review of draft annual report - P. Hanner had drafted and distributed a draft 2021 annual report to Commission members. Commissioners thanked him and would provide any edits and suggestions via email by January 21. The final report will be approved by the Commission and sent to the Mayor and City Council.

6. Other business - E. Germani indicated that the City Highway Department was preparing to cut trails at Grassy Plain Park in Riverside.

G. Old Business

1. Newman Crossing trailhead: J. Boyd has been in contact with a Seekonk colleague on the best person to speak with to organize a meeting between the East Providence and Seekonk conservation groups to further explore collaboration and conceptual development of the trailhead on the East Providence parcel on West Street in Seekonk to connect with existing trails along Central Pond and the Gamino Pond Conservation Area (Seekonk).

H. Commission Member Items

- Chair K. Gonsalves noted that the Turner Reservoir trail from Neman Avenue (Route 152) south towards the dam and along the western side of the reservoir was in need of wood chips due to uneven terrain and wet areas. This would be an ideal spring project for the Commission. He also indicated that signs have been posted along the Hunt's Mill trails highlighting certain species of trees for public enjoyment and education.
- J. Boyd noted the recent appearance of survey markers and flagging along the southern end of the Ten Mile River Bike Path, and surmised it may be related to the Army Corps of Engineers remediation project to remove lead from ordinance rounds at the former shooting range. P. Hanner confirmed that the Corps is getting ready to mobilize on the project and that City Planning staff have been meeting with Corps staff

to work out construction access and minimizing any adverse impacts on baseball field use.

Adjournment - The Commission adjourned the meeting at 7:41 P.M.

The Conservation Commission will hold a regularly scheduled meeting on **Tuesday, February 1, 2022 at 6:30 p.m.** It is unclear at this time whether the meeting will be held in person at City Hall (Room 306) or via Zoom online meeting. Details will be posted prior to the next meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

James Boyd, Secretary