

East Providence Conservation Commission

Meeting Minutes

August 15, 2023

City Hall - Room 308

6:30 P.M.

Members present: Wayne Barnes, James Boyd (Secretary), John Carney, Ernie Germani (Vice Chair), Keith Gonsalves (Chair) Patrick Hanner, Kelsey Queenan and Jeremy Spurr

Members absent: None

Public Attendees: Meg Robinson (Tree Commission)

A. Call to Order - Chair Keith Gonsalves called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

B. Review and Adoption of Meeting Minutes - The June 20, 2023 meeting minutes were approved with corrections on a motion by P. Hanner and seconded by J. Carney.

C. Public Comment: See F.1 below.

D. Planning Department Update:

1. P. Hanner advised the Commission that the City has secured a RI Commerce Place-making Grant to implement the citywide interpretive signage plan for the City's 31 historic resources. See: <https://commerceri.com/ri-rebounds/placemaking-initiative/>.

E. Correspondence:

1. Memorandum from Carol Auer, Tree Commission Chair to Eric Ackerman, Weston Solutions, Inc., dated July 26, 2023 concerning the planting design for the Rumford Rifle Range site. The Commission discussed the memo and other previous concerns regarding restoration of the site. The City is awaiting a response from the consultant and the Army Corps of Engineers.

F. New Business

1. Meg Robinson is now the the City Tree Commission liaison to the Conservation Commission following our mutual agreement to collaborate on issues and projects of City interest. Meg reported that Tree Commission has engaged a consulting arborist, Doug Still (former Providence City Forester), for assistance in the appeal process for circumstances when City trees need to be removed due to disease or storm damage or should remain. Meg also indicated that the Tree Commission is continuing its school projects initiative.
2. Discussion with Jill Miller from the Runnin's River Watershed Alliance on how we can collaborate on issues of mutual interest. (Continued until the September 19 meeting).

3. Discussion of Army Corps Rumford Rifle Range planting plan; update and next steps. See E.1 above.
4. August 3, 2023 field notes on water chestnut treatment at Central Pond. The Commission discussed the consultant's field notes and observations of further spreading of the invasive plant down stream to Turner Reservoir. It was concluded that more aggressive and sustained actions will be necessary to manage this invasive aquatic plant.
5. Options for repair of Boyden Heights Conservation Area wetland boardwalk. The Commission discussed the condition of the boardwalk and potential structural issues. It was concluded that the City Public Works Department/Parks Division would need to assess the conditions and develop any needed remedy.

G. Old Business

1. Eagle Scout Program. E. Germani noted that the Squantum Woods trail rehabilitation project has been completed.
2. Weaver Library Copper Beech Tree. No further discussion; carryover matter from previous meeting.
3. Discussion of pedestrian link from the terminus of Redland Avenue at parcel 502-05-068.00, owned by the EP Water Department, to the Ten Mile River Bike Path. Further discussion with RIDOT is needed to include this as part of the planned Ten Mile River Bike Path extension to Hunt's Mill.
4. Status of Army National Guard remediation of former Rumford Rifle Range (Ten Mile River Greenway). See E.1 and F.3 above.
5. Runnins River stormwater management plan update. P. Hanner noted that the engineering designs were completed for two stormwater BMPs on Boyd Ave. and Risho St./Catamore Blvd. to treat stormwater runoff before discharge into the Runnins River. He informed the Commission that unfortunately the City (in collaboration with Save The Bay) was not successful in its grant application through the EPA SNEP Watershed Implementation Grants (SWIG) program (<https://www.epa.gov/snep/snep-watershed-implementation-grants-swig>) to fund construction of the stormwater BMPs. The City, however, will continue to seek funding opportunities to complete this important water quality improvement project.
6. J. Boyd and E. Germani met with the Seekonk Land Trust on June 26 to discuss the conceptual plan. The Land Trust was supportive of the concept and looks forward to further collaboration on the project. Commissioners discussed a site visit this fall when foliage drops and improves site visibility. Development of more detailed site plans with survey boundaries will likely be necessary to advance the project and as a supplement to any grant funding applications.

H. Other Business - None

I. Commission Member Items:

- M. Robinson (Tree Commission liaison) indicated that a bittersweet management effort is need to protect tree health in various areas of the City.
- J. Spurr noted a recent Riverside Renaissance meeting concerning Cedar Grove.
- J. Carney noted that RI Audubon Society recently released some Osprey nest monitoring results.
- J. Boyd advised the Commission of the substantial erosion of the Turner Reservoir Boardwalk trailhead on Pleasant Street, and condition of native Chestnut trees along the east side of Turner Reservoir in Seekonk.
- K. Gonsalves noted the success of the Crescent Park Beach seawall repair project and the number of people using the area.

J. Adjournment - The Commission adjourned the meeting at 8:00 p.m.

The next Conservation Commission meeting will be held on **Tuesday, September 19** at 6:30 p.m City Hall - Room 308.

Respectfully submitted,
James Boyd, Secretary