

East Providence Conservation Commission

Meeting Minutes

March 21, 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, and Jeremy Spurr

Members absent: Kelsey Queenan

Public Attendees: Keith Brynes, new City Director of Planning and Economic Development

A. Call to Order - Vice Chair Ernie Germani called the meeting to order at 6:32 P.M., as Chair Keith Gonsalves was a few minutes late.

B. Review and Adoption of Meeting Minutes - The February 21, 2023 meeting minutes were approved on a motion by P. Hanner and seconded by W. Barnes.

C. Public Comment - None

D. Planning Department Update

1. P. Hanner noted that RIDEM was still reviewing of the City's trail grant award for proposed trail kiosks at City open space areas. He also indicated that the Kent Height recreation park upgrades will commence this summer, including new landscaping with many new trees. In addition, an eradication project is being planned by RIDEM in cooperation with the City and other communities to remove the invasive water chestnut (*Trapa natans*) from Central Pond. In recent years the invasive has spread widely in the northern end of the pond and there is concern for the plant spreading downstream to Turner Reservoir.

E. Correspondence - None

F. New Business

1. Spring Projects. The Commission discussed potential spring projects and decided to extend the boardwalk at the bridge located on the Hunt's Mill loop trail (north of the gazebo), and scheduled the project for Saturday, April 15 at 08:00.
2. Earth Day (April 22) activities. The Commission will conduct a cleanup of Boyden Heights Conservation Area on Saturday, April 22 at 09:00, and inspect the boardwalk on the coastal inlet.
3. Comprehensive list of City Hiking trails. The Commission discussed information sources for a comprehensive list of hiking trails within the City. It was agreed that the best available information is found online at: <https://exploreri.org/gtraillist.php>.
4. Preserving the legacy of the Weaver Library Beech tree. Commissioner J. Spurr suggested that the genetic legacy of the old Beech tree can be preserved with

cuttings and grafting to develop clones of the Weaver Library Beech tree, which could be planted around the City. Following discussion it was suggested to forward the idea to the City Tree Commission for further action.

G. Old Business

1. 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. Commissioners agreed that a site visit was necessary to assess the feasibility of an extension. Commissioners met at the site at 4:30 pm on Monday, March 27.
2. Status of Army National Guard remediation of former Rumford Rifle Range (Ten Mile River Greenway). Site remediation work continues by contractor Weston Solutions. See: https://eastprovidenceri.gov/sites/default/files/field/files-docs/calendar/rumford_ra_phase_1_fact_sheet_final.pdf. P. Hanner indicated that an email update from the contractor will be forthcoming.
3. Runnins River stormwater management plan update. P. Hanner noted that engineering designs for stormwater infrastructure is under development. In addition, the City is seeking construction fund grants to install the stormwater controls.
4. Newman Avenue crossing trailhead. J. Boyd updated Commission members on investigative work completed to date assembling property maps and other review materials. He will be invited to meet with the Seekonk Land Trust in April/May to present the conceptual plan and seek community support for the project.

H. Other Business - None

I. Commission Member Items:

- W. Barnes noted that the raised boardwalk over the coastal inlet at Boyden Heights appears to be subsiding more than our last site visit, and that continued deterioration raises safety issues. He also noted that it appears someone has cleared an area of vegetation adjacent to the boardwalk. The Commission will conduct a site visit and inspection on April 22 during Earth Day cleanup in the area. In other news, it appears that about 14 property owners in the State Street neighborhood, which is prone to flooding from the Runnins River, have expressed interest in an NRCS buyout program. The properties would be reverted to open space to improve the floodplain functions and reduce flood damage losses in the area.
- K. Gonsalves advised the Commission that he and other Ten Mile River Watershed Council members removed large plastic trash bags filled with garbage from along the banks of the Ten Mile River at Hunt's Mill. It appears, unfortunately, that someone intentionally dumped the bags.

J. Adjournment - The Commission adjourned the meeting at 7:40 P.M.

Notes:

1. The Commission will meet at Hunt's Mill on **Saturday, April 15 at 08:00** for the footbridge extension project.
2. The Commission will conduct an Earth Day cleanup of Boyden Heights Conservation Area on **Saturday, April 22 at 09:00**

The next Conservation Commission meeting will be held on **Tuesday, April 18, 2023** at 6:30 p.m City Hall - Room 308.

Respectfully submitted,

James Boyd, Secretary