

East Providence Conservation Commission

Meeting Minutes

May 21, 2024

City Hall - Room 308

6:30 P.M.

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

Members absent: Keith Gonsalves and Jeremy Spurr

Public Attendees: Meg Robinson (Tree Commission liaison to the Conservation Commission)

A. Call to Order: Chair Wayne Barnes called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

B. Review and Adoption of Meeting Minutes: The April 16, 2024 meeting minutes were approved unanimously with corrections on a motion by P. Hanner and seconded by E. Germani.

C. Public Comment: See Tree Commission report below in E.

D. Planning Department Update:

1. P. Hanner noted that the Metacomet 9-hole golf course, the first phase of the overall Metacomet project, was recently approved. He also noted that the Planning Department is reviewing a number of small subdivisions.

E. Tree Commission Report: Meg Robinson reported that the Tree Commission met on April 17 to review and discuss the East Providence Strategic Tree Canopy report (March 2024). See: <https://gicinc.org/books/east-providence-strategic-tree-canopy-plan/>. The Tree Commission will meet next on July 17 to discuss draft high priority recommendations from the report and potential policies that could be adopted to update City ordinances pertaining to new developments and possible retrofitting of existing developments with green infrastructure to better manage stormwater and improve tree shading capacity within the City. She noted that approximately 1200 new trees would need to be planted each year within the City over the next 10 years to achieve the 2% report goal increase of tree canopy coverage City-wide.

F. Correspondence: None

G. New Business

1. Status of law department letters to Seekonk property owners along Central Pond encroaching on City property. P. Hanner stated that the City Law Department has been developing the encroachment letters and will soon be issuing them to specific property owners.
2. News/update on ACOE Ten Mile River Restoration Project fish weirs. P. Hanner noted that the State Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission (HPHC) has

issued an objection letter to the Corps concerning the proposed concrete weirs to enhance fish passage at Hunt's Mill. The HPHC has indicated that the project needs visual mitigation to be consistent with the historic character of the site.

3. Trail Kiosk signage. P. Hanner reported that there is approximately \$600 remaining in the DEM Trails grant that can be used for map enclosures for the four trail kiosks.
4. June 1 2024 trails day project at Hunt's Mill. Commission members discussed meeting at Hunt's Mill on **Saturday, June 1st at 09:00** to conduct trail clearing and maintenance.
5. Boyden Heights Conservation Area boardwalk. W. Barnes indicated that he had spoken with the City Parks department and that the boardwalk repair was next on their task list.

H. Old Business

1. Newman Avenue crossing trailhead. No new updates; awaiting issuance of the City Law department encroachment letters and any follow up necessary to ensure unimpeded public access along City property abutting Central Pond in Seekonk.
2. Trail head Kiosks. See G.3, above.

I. Other Business:

1. J. Boyd advised Commissioners that the former East Providence Land Conservation Trust has officially changed and registered its new name as the "Bridgham Farm Land Trust." See: <https://bridghamfarm.org/donate/>.
2. E. Germani reported on the Saturday, May 17 Hunt's Mill walk with noted arborist Matthew Largess, who was impressed by several old trees on the site. Mr. Largess suggested that Hunt's Mill would be a good candidate site for a future "Bioblitz" conducted by the RI Natural History Survey. See: <https://rinhs.org/events/ri-bioblitz/>.

J. Commission Member Items:

- J. Boyd reported that a number of Pink Lady's Slipper Orchids (*Cypripedium acaule*) are blooming along the trails on the east side of Turner Reservoir.
- M. Robinson reported that she observed a Scarlet Tanager recently at Hunt's Mill.
- K. Queenan reported that the parking lot at the Turner Reservoir trailhead (intersection of Pleasant St. and Ledge Rd.) has finally been repaired.
- W. Barnes reported that he is assembling historic photographs of the former amusement park located at the Boyden Heights Conservation Area.

K. Adjournment: The Commission adjourned the meeting at 7:45 p.m.

The next Conservation Commission meeting will be held on **Tuesday, June 18, 2024**.

Respectfully submitted,

James Boyd, Secretary