

East Providence Conservation Commission

Meeting Minutes

June 18, 2024

City Hall - Room 308

6:30 P.M.

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

Members absent: Jeremy Spurr

Public Attendees: Candace Seel

A. Call to Order: Chair Wayne Barnes called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

B. Review and Adoption of Meeting Minutes: The May 21, 2024 meeting minutes were approved unanimously on a motion by and seconded by.

C. Public Comment: Candace Seel advised the Commission that the Metacomet 9-hole public golf course is now open. She expressed concern that officials are authorizing construction of the Metacomet project to the capacity of the Veteran's Memorial parkway and dismissing the protection and integrity of the scenic Parkway.

D. Planning Department Update:

1. P. Hanner reported that further progress is being made on the Sabin Point stormwater management project. Construction documents are being prepared to apply for state permits for stormwater infrastructure to reduce stormwater related pollution and improve water quality at the beach. He also noted that construction continues at the Narragansett Plaza project on Newport Avenue.
2. The USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service provided a \$10 million grant to the City to purchase high risk flood-prone residential properties along State Street and revert the properties into natural habitat floodplains to reduce future stormwater flooding damages in East Providence.
3. The City now has historical interpretive signage ready for installation as part of the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor, including the Bridgham Farm Conservation Area sign.

E. Tree Commission Report: Meg Robinson (Tree Commission liaison to the Conservation Commission) was unable to attend the meeting.

F. Correspondence:

1. The Weaver Public Library announces a "Celebration of nature through music and poetry" event scheduled for August 3, 2024.

G. New Business

1. Goose crossing sign at Veteran's Memorial Parkway at Watchemocket Cove. Deferred until next meeting, as J. Spurr who requested the matter was unable to attend the meeting.

H. Old 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 issued the encroachment letters to specific property owners.
2. 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.
3. News/update on ACOE Ten Mile River Restoration Project fish weirs. P. Hanner noted that the ACOE project is on hold until the proposed concrete fish weirs can be redesigned to address the State Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission (HPHC) objection so the weirs can be visually consistent with the historic character of the Hunt's Mill site.
4. Trail head Kiosks. P. Hanner reported that progress is being made on the map enclosures for the four installed trail kiosks.
5. Boyden Heights Conservation Area boardwalk. The City Parks department will be making necessary repairs to the boardwalk.

I. Other Business: None

J. Commission Member Items:

- K. Queenan reported that a new spur trail has been added to access the ancient White Oak tree (*Quercus alba*), estimated to be 350 or more years old, along the Ten Mile River on the Hunt's Mill trails.
- J. Carney has been observing the Osprey nest on Wampanoag Trail awaiting fledglings.
- J. Boyd reported that the large 40-foot tall American Chestnut tree (*Castanea dentata*) on the Seekonk side of the Turner Reservoir is flowering and expects chestnuts later in the summer, as it did last year.
- K. Gonsalves reported that the RIDEM recently replaced the baffles within the Hunt's Mill fish ladder. He also noted that the City has installed new windows and front door on the historic hunt's Mill pump house.

K. Adjournment: The Commission adjourned the meeting at 7:25 p.m.

The next Conservation Commission meeting will be held at the Boyden Heights Conservation Area for trail maintenance on **Tuesday, July 16, 2024 at 6:00 pm**. This will not be a business meeting and no agenda items or actions will be considered or taken.

Respectfully submitted,
James Boyd, Secretary