

East Providence Conservation Commission

Meeting Minutes

March 26, 2024

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, Jeremy Spurr and Kelsey Queenan

Members absent: None

Public Attendees: None

A. Call to Order: Chair Keith Gonsalves called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

B. Review and Adoption of Meeting Minutes: The February 20, 2024 meeting minutes were approved unanimously on a motion by P. Hanner and seconded by J. Carney.

C. Public Comment: None

D. Planning Department Update:

1. P. Hanner reported that the City has submitted a letter of intent to RIDEM to apply for funding to develop a Lake Management Plan for Turner Reservoir and Central Pond. The City is awaiting a positive response from RIDEM before submitting a formal application. For more details on Water Chestnut, see:
<https://dem.ri.gov/sites/g/files/xkgbur861/files/programs/benviron/water/quality/surfwater/aisfs/tranat-fs.pdf>.

E. Tree Commission Report: Meg Robinson was unable to attend the meeting, but reported via email that there are no new updates until the Tree Commission meets on April 17.

F. Correspondence: None

G. New Business

1. Election of Officers (Chairman, Vice Chairman and Secretary). After discussion of members interest in officer positions, nominations were put forth as follows: **J. Boyd to serve as Secretary** on a motion by E. Germani and seconded by P. Hanner; **E. Germani to serve as Vice Chair** on a motion by K. Queenan and seconded by J. Spurr; and **W. Barnes to serve as Chair** on a motion by K. Gonsalves and second by J. Carney. A motion was made to accept the nominations as presented by K. Gonsalves and seconded by K. Queenan. Commission members voted unanimously to accept the nominations. A motion was then made by J. Carney and seconded by K. Gonsalves to approve the accepted officer nominations for the 2024 calendar year. The Commission voted unanimously to approve the new officers.

2. Water Chestnut abatement for Central Pond and Turner Reservoir. P. Hanner informed the Commission that remaining grant funding (originally \$37,000) from RIDEM combined with a match funding contribution from the City will allow for continued treatment of invasive water chestnut within Central Pond and Turner Reservoir through the Spring and Fall of 2025. It is reported that additional areas of water chestnut have been observed in Turner Reservoir, and it is expected that eventually the invasive plant will be observed downstream in Omega Pond.

H. Old Business

1. Newman Avenue crossing trailhead. The Commission discussed the need for a survey of City-owned parcels along the RI-MA state line in the vicinity of Tullson Avenue and Harriet Court in Seekonk to mark boundary lines and demarcate City-owned property from Seekonk residential lots. The November 18, 2023 site inspection revealed extensive encroachment onto City-owned property, and future public use of East Providence land, especially a walking trail, will need to be protected. Discussion included the potential for City Law department to send cease and desist letters to Seekonk property owners who are presently encroaching on City property with structures and landscaping activities.
2. Trail head Kiosks. Commissioners discussed the need for laminating and installing trail maps at each of the four recently installed trail head kiosks for Boyden Heights, Hunts Mill, Turner Reservoir, and Willet Pond. P. Hanner will check as to whether there are any remaining funds from the kiosk project that could pay for map lamination and to encase and protect the trail maps on the kiosks.

I. Other Business:

1. Earth Day Activity. The Commission agreed to conduct a coastal cleanup at the Boyden Heights Conservation Area on **Saturday, April 20 at 09:00**. Participants will meet at the Boyden Heights parking area and will clean the shoreline along the cove directly across from the trail junction with the East Bay bike path.
2. National Trails Day. Commissioners discussed potential projects to celebrate National Trails Day on Saturday, June 1st. Detailed discussion will occur at a future meeting.

J Commission Member Items:

- J. Carney noted a new railing on the bridge along the trail at the northern end of Willet Pond
- W. Barnes informed members of a new analysis that showed on average that 0.9 inches of rainfall results in 1 foot of rise in the Ten Mile River water gauge located at Pawtucket Avenue where it crosses the river.
- J. Spurr reported that the dumpsters located at the commercial plaza next to Willet Pond have finally been relocated farther back so as to not obscure water views of of

the pond from Willet Avenue. In addition, it appears that several businesses have eliminated multiple dumpsters by using a shared larger dumpster.

- E. Germani reported that he will not be present for the April 16 Commission meeting.
- J. Boyd reported on the John Kostrzewa presentation at the Weaver Library held on Monday, March 18. John presented a slide show and talk discussing interesting trails in Rhode Island and included Commissioner Ernie Germani describing hiking trails in East Providence. John's new book "Walking Rhode Island: 40 Hikes for Nature and History Lovers with Pictures, GPS Coordinates, and Trail Maps" is available here: <https://www.amazon.com/Walking-Rhode-Island-Pictures-Coordinates/dp/1960505467>.

K. Adjournment: The Commission adjourned the meeting at 7:39 p.m.

The next Conservation Commission meeting will be held on **Tuesday, April 16, 2024**.

Respectfully submitted,
James Boyd, Secretary