

East Providence Conservation Commission

Meeting Minutes

October 17, 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, Meg Robinson (Tree Commission liaison)

Members absent: Kelsey Queenan and Jeremy Spurr

Public Attendees: None

A. Call to Order: Chair Keith Gonsalves called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m.

B. Review and Adoption of Meeting Minutes: The September 19, 2023 meeting minutes were approved on a motion by E. Germani and seconded by P. Hanner.

C. Public Comment: None

D. Planning Department Update:

1. P. Hanner briefly described the proposed East Providence Cultural Center presentation meeting held on the evening of October 16 at City Hall. Design plans are expected to be revised for public review at a later date.
2. No major pending projects under review; previously approved projects are now under construction.

E. Correspondence: None

F. New Business

1. Discussion of Army Corps Rumford Rifle Range planting plan; update and next steps. The Commission discussed the Corps letter dated October 11, 2023 in response to the City Tree Commission letter dated July 26, 2023 concerning the replanting of the former Rumford Rifle Range. The Commission continues to express its concern to the Corps and its consultant regarding the likely unwanted incursion of motor bikes and ATVs that will damage replanted areas.
2. Trail head Kiosks. P. Hanner stated that the trailhead kiosks for the Willett Pond, Turner Reservoir Loop, Boyden Heights Conservation Area and Hunt's Mills Trails have been delivered. The Department of Public Works is seeking Commission input on kiosk locations at each trailhead area, and Commission members expressed willingness to meet onsite and provide input on appropriate locations soon.

G. Old Business

1. Options for repair of Boyden Heights Conservation Area wetland boardwalk. The Public Works Department/Parks Division has assessed the boardwalk condition and has developed a remedy to resolve the structural issue.
2. Runnins River stormwater management plan update. P. Hanner indicated that the City is awaiting a final draft report on the proposed best management practices (BMPs) to be installed to ameliorate stormwater runoff discharge into the Runnins River. Permit applications will be filed at a later date for both sites and construction funding will be sought via new grant applications.
3. Newman Avenue crossing trailhead. The Commission agreed to meet onsite for review of potential parking area and trail location along Central Pond on Saturday, November 18 at 09:00.

H. Other Business: None

I. Commission Member Items:

- E. Germani noted that the September 24 Turner Reservoir loop hike as part of the RI Land Trust Days events was a success.
- J. Boyd noted that the Turner Reservoir boardwalk trailhead continues to be severely eroded due to stormwater runoff from the parking area, which was still under construction as part of the Ten Mile River bridge replacement project at Pleasant Street. He also noted the dramatic change in conditions following herbicide treatment for the invasive aquatic water chestnut plant as shown in the RIDEM prepared "Community Based Habitat Restoration: Invasive Water Chestnut Management" before and after photos.
- M. Robinson (Tree Commission liaison) indicated that the Tree Commission will be meeting on October 19 and one agenda item will be further review of the USDA Urban & Community Forest Program (<https://www.fs.usda.gov/managing-land/urban-forests/ucf>) grant award of \$750K over 5 years to plant 1200 trees within the City. She also noted that a public meeting was held on October 2 at the Weaver Library for a presentation on the urban forest study for the East Providence tree canopy.
- W Barnes noted that a recent inspection of the Boyden Heights Conservation Area boardwalk revealed a hole in the top rail at the far end that will need repair.

J. Adjournment: The Commission adjourned the meeting at 7:24 p.m.

The next Conservation Commission meeting will be held on **Tuesday, November 21** at 6:30 p.m City Hall - Room 308.

Respectfully submitted,

James Boyd, Secretary