

Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Wild and Scenic Rivers Stewardship Council

Minutes

Meeting Held on November 17, 2021

In Attendance: Charlestown: Bob Maietta; Exeter: Nan Quinlan; Hopkinton: Chip Heil; Richmond: Antonia Bryson, Pete August; North Stonington: Madeline Jeffery; Stonington: Sara Baker, Fred Wagner; West Greenwich: Chris Grube, Pat Lardner; Westerly: Lauren Barber; Save the Bay: Dave Prescott; CT DEEP: Eric Thomas; National Park Service: Lauren Bonatakis; Kassi Donnelly, Coordinator.

The Chair called the meeting to order at 5:01 pm.

Secretary's Report: A. Bryson presented the draft minutes of the October 27, 2021 meeting. B. Maietta moved to approve the minutes as presented, and P. August seconded. There being no discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

Financial Report:

1. Approval of Monthly Report

P. August presented the monthly financial report, with appended biweekly accounting summaries. B. Maietta moved to accept the report as presented, and P. Lardner seconded. There being no discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

2. Purchasing Policy

The purchasing policy for the Council was sent to members with the materials preparatory to this meeting. P. August advised members to review it, particularly in advance of spending funds.

Committees and Projects:

1. Projects:

a. Stonington Circus Lot: K. Donnelly reported that the Projects Committee has recommended approval of a grant of \$4000 for a conceptual design for a park proposed at a 6-acre lot in Stonington with frontage on the Pawcatuck River. P. August moved to approve the grant and N. Quinlan seconded the motion. Discussion ensued. It was pointed out that the Projects Committee scrutinized the application, and that the involvement of the town First Selectwoman and the steps already taken by the town provided reassurance that it was dedicated to the project, even though the property has not yet been acquired. The motion then passed unanimously.

b. Kayak Trail: the former 4-town kayak trail project has been revised and renamed. It is now the Water Trails project, and will cover the whole watershed. K. Donnelly will be in charge, and E. Torello will develop a web-based story map. The map will be a planning tool for paddlers interested in the paddling opportunities in the watershed. The budget of the 4-town trail project will be moved to this new endeavor. There was discussion about reallocating some of those funds once the project's expenditures are better known, and about whether a phone app would prove more useful. K. Donnelly responded that a phone app was being considered. F. Wagner moved to approve the redesign of the project and reallocation of funds, and S. Baker seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously. E. Thomas provided a link to a paddle guide created for northeastern CT. <https://thelastgreenvalley.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/PaddleGuide2016xweb.pdf>

- c. Projects Workshop: an update on the workshop was provided with the preparatory materials. A timeline has been established requiring projects to be completed prior to 6/30/22. The River Day project will require hiring of an event planner. L. Bonatakis noted that a Massachusetts Wild and Scenic Council has held a river day event with great success. Members present endorsed the ideas.
2. Executive:
 - a. Presentation to towns. There have been no new presentations since the last Council meeting. Richmond is scheduled for 12/7 and Stonington for 12/8. Members made suggestions as to how to provide information to the Charlestown Town Council instead of a personal appearance, which presents difficulties.
 - b. Dragonfly Express: there was discussion on whether to continue to produce the Dragonfly Express in its current format and on its current schedule, as it involves much effort and time. It was noted that constant contact can be, and is, used to inform the membership of news and pending events and is less labor intensive. A newsletter or other publication with distribution to outside readership might necessitate professional help. N. Quinlan felt that a quarterly report or newsletter should be feasible. L. Bonatakis noted that nonprofits often produce an annual report to highlight their work. Such a report can be worked on over a year, and can contain photos and other attractive graphic design elements, and provides a handy summary of all activities. It can be sent to town officials, constituents, and other interested members of the community. P. Lardner and the Information and Education Committee are developing an informational brochure for distribution at tabling events such as farmers' markets. After discussion, the plan appeared to be that internal news would be published in constant contact, external communication of activities in progress would be either through an annual report or a quarterly newsletter, and an informational brochure would be available to introduce the Council to the public.
 3. Information and Education: the Committee installed 8 signs on ponds in the watershed. North Stonington is next for installation of road crossing signs. Charlestown has been completed, as have all other town road crossing signs. The Committee is now working on signs for streams and tributaries. They are assessing the inventory of caps and T-shirts, and working on a professionally done brochure. B. Maietta suggested erecting signs at the watershed borders to educate the public on the concept of a watershed. This will be considered.
 4. Questions/Comments: the By-laws committee will meet on January 20, 2022 at 3 pm.

Town/Community Updates:

A. Bryson reported that she and K. Donnelly met with L. Joubert of RI NEMO regarding a workplan for assisting towns with completion of an assessment document which DEM has provided. The assessment will assist towns in determining how better to promote low impact development. A. Bryson and K. Donnelly will be working with L. Joubert, the town of Richmond, and an intern from URI on completing the assessment as the first effort on this project.

A. Bryson informed the members that the RIPDES permit for Kenyon Industries, a textile manufacturing operation in Charlestown, was about to be renewed by RI DEM, and that public comments could be submitted by Friday, November 19. Kenyon Industries is located on the Pawcatuck River and has multiple outfalls which are the subject of the permit. The draft permit requires Kenyon to submit to a 3-year compliance schedule with monitoring and sample collection in anticipation of meeting permit limits at its conclusion. The Advisory Committee has drafted a letter which will notify DEM of Council interest in the permit and in establishment of the strictest feasible limits. P. August moved to authorize the Advisory Committee to finalize a letter on the matter by Thursday, November 18, to be shared with all Council members for editorial comment on that date, for submittal to RI DEM on Friday. B. Maietta seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. B. Maietta then

requested information on all RIPDES permits in the watershed, which was supplied by E. Thomas:

<https://www.epa.gov/npdes-permits/connecticut-npdes-permits> and

<https://www.epa.gov/npdes-permits/rhode-island-npdes-permits>

Action Items

K. Donnelly informed members there is a training on invasive plant management given by URI in January, and the Council will sponsor members to attend. Interested members should contact her.

Next Meeting: There will not be a meeting in December. The next meeting will be January 26, 2022.

Adjournment

B. Maietta moved to adjourn the meeting, and C. Heil seconded. The motion passed, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:02 pm.