

**Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed
Wild and Scenic Rivers Stewardship Council**

**Minutes
Meeting held on June 22, 2022**

In Attendance: Charlestown: Neil Wardley, Bob Maietta; Exeter: Nan Quinlan; Hopkinton, Chip Heil, David Augustyn; Richmond: Antonia Bryson, Pete August; North Kingstown, Ahren Cohen; North Stonington: Elaine Caldarone, Madeleine Jeffery; Sterling: Roger Gibson; Stonington: Fred Wagner; West Greenwich: Chris Grube; Save the Bay: Dave Prescott; WPWA: Andrew McNulty; CT DEEP: Eric Thomas; National Park Service: Lauren Bonatakis and guest Jackie Dias; Kassi Donnelly, Coordinator.

The Chair called the meeting to order at 5:02 pm.

Secretary's Report:

A. Bryson presented the draft minutes of the April 27, 2022 meeting. P. August moved to approve the minutes as presented, and A. Cohen seconded. There being no discussion, the motion passed and the minutes were approved.

Financial Report:

P. August presented the monthly financial report. A. Cohen moved to accept the report as presented, and Fred seconded. There being no discussion, the motion passed and the financial report was approved.

By-laws Committee—Communications Policy Revision:

The By-laws Committee produced a revised, simplified version of the Council Communications Policy and it was provided with the agenda of the meeting. F. Wagner moved to adopt the policy as presented, and M. Jeffery seconded. There being no discussion, the motion passed and the revised Communications Policy was approved.

Projects Committee Grant Proposal Recommendation:

K. Donnelly presented the Project Committee's recommendation regarding the application of the South Kingstown Land Trust for a \$4000 grant for mapping in preparation for its application to RI DEM for a freshwater wetlands permit. The Trust needs to provide a new access point to its Yawgoo Pond Preserve. The new access point would cross a wetland and necessitate the construction of a boardwalk.

The Projects Committee has recommended against providing the funding, finding that the project is in a very early stage, its likelihood of success is dependent on the granting of the permit, which is uncertain, and very little of the estimated \$250,000 in funding required has been raised to date.

The Town Representative, D. Migneault, has requested that the Council provide the funding. He pointed out that the Land Trust has been very successful at fundraising, that a Council grant would help jumpstart their campaign for funds for this project, and that they are experienced in working with RI DEM so that the prospects for receiving the wetlands permit are good.

Discussion ensued. There were concerns about the intrusion into the wetland, the potential disruption of fauna, and the introduction of human traffic onto the site. It was pointed out that these concerns would be addressed during the permitting process, giving a better perspective on the project, and that there was a possibility the permit would not be issued. E. Thomas wanted a better understanding of why the proposed access point is the only option for continuing public use. It was noted that the Council grant was not essential for the project to move forward, as the Land Trust is likely able to muster \$4000 of a significantly larger project elsewhere, but that the grant would demonstrate Council support of the project objectives, and that these contrasting concerns required thought as to the objectives of the grant program. Given all these issues, N. Quinlan moved to return the application to the Projects Committee for further review, and D. Prescott seconded the motion. Eleven members voted in favor of the motion, and no members opposed it or abstained. The application is to be returned to the Committee for further review.

Committee and Project Updates:

- 7 Rivers Festival—K. Donnelly reviewed with members which events they would be attending. She informed them that swag would be available for pickup on Friday, and that the new W&S brochure is ready and will be available to distribute at events, as well as decals and hats. She will be sending an email to WPWA membership about the events taking place at WPWA. She is planning a debriefing dinner and talk for members on Friday, July 8. She asked for volunteers to take down yard signs, and for tabling at the Westerly's River Days event.
- A. Bryson informed the members that the Advisory Committee has agreed to draft a letter supporting an effort to cease the stocking of trout on the Wood River above Barberville Dam in order to support the health of the wild brook trout population. The Committee expects the letter to be ready for Council review shortly. B. Maietta has been advocating for this effort and has supplied backup material, which will be distributed to Council members as well. She also provided an update on the LID initiative which the Council has funded. The Committee is in discussions with L. Joubert of RI NEMO about extending the hours and funding of the student intern who has been working with the watershed towns to complete municipal assessment forms.
- P. August reports on I&E, supporting 7 Rivers, new computer purchased.
- Projects committee will be reviewing small grants program and process.

Town/Community Updates:

- D. Augustyn reported on Hopkinton's efforts to establish a farmers' market.
- B. Maietta reported on a possible purchase by Charlestown of a parcel of land with access to the Pawcatuck River. The Town Council has yet to approve funding for an appraisal of the property, although funding has been secured by the Charlestown Land Trust for the actual purchase.

Next Meeting or Workshop: The next meeting will be a workshop on July 27, 2022.

Adjournment

There being no other business, N. Quinlan moved to adjourn the meeting and F. Wagner seconded. The motion passed, and the meeting was adjourned at 6:28 pm.