



2283 Hartford Ave, Johnston, RI 02919
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MEETING MINUTES
September 22, 2011
9:25 AM

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chair Eric Offenberg called the meeting to order at 8:50.

Eastern RI
Conservation District

Present: Eric Offenberg, Chair; Emerson Wildes, ERICD; Gina DeMarco, NRICD; Harriet Powell, Clarkson Collins, SRICD; Ramona LeBlanc, SCC; Rupert Friday, RI Land Trust Council; Susan Korte, What Grows On In RI; Kristen Castrataro, URI; Nancy Hess, SPP.

Northern RI
Conservation District

Southern RI
Conservation District

I. Minutes: A motion was made to accept the minutes of the July 20, 2011 meeting: Harriet/Emerson; unanimous.

Director
RI Department of
Environmental Management

II. Financial Report: A summary of transactions with ending balance for July and August was distributed.

Governor's Appointee

ADVISORS

III. Old Business:

Coastal Resources
Management Council

RI Association of
Conservation Districts

A. FFOS:

RI Resource Conservation &
Development Area, Inc.

- Farm Plan Review: Tabled until next meeting.
- Non-compliance: A few landowners have not responded to attempts to schedule site visits for conservation plans. The consensus of SCC is to maintain the non-regulatory, non-enforcement role of the Districts and to see if letters can be sent from DEM advising those landowners that they must have a plan developed to remain in compliance with DEM regulations.
- Existing Enrollees: Tabled until next meeting.

RI Statewide Planning
Program

RI Department of
Transportation

RI Water Resources Board

URI Cooperative Extension

USDA Farm Services Agency

USDA Natural Resources
Conservation Services

B. NRCS Agreements:

- Of the existing agreements, the Ag Inventory and the Geese Abatement agreements will expire on 9/30/11.
- The Ag Tech agreement will be amended to extend end date to 12/30/11 and remaining funds will be used for additional training of ag techs for work they will be performing under new agreement.

- SRICD is planning to develop their own strategic plan within the next several months with help of their new District Manager, Eric Scherer. Eric has indicated he would be willing to help other Districts as well.

IV. New Business:

A. RI Land Trust Council:

- Rupert Friday summarized some of the findings of a report developed by RILTC about initiatives to save Rhode Island's working farms.
- A meeting will be held at the SCC office at 10:30 on October 3 to discuss the role the Districts might play in advising Land Trusts about the best use of land being leased to agricultural producers.

B. 2011-2012 Budget:

- A motion was made to revise budget to reflect redistribution of overhead expenses as suggested by NRICD Chair, Paul Dolan. For now, NRICD will contribute 50% of funds required to meet SCC's overhead expenses and ERICD and SRICD will each contribute 25%: Harriet/Emerson; unanimous.

C. New Agreement with NRCS:

- A motion was made to authorize signature of Geese Abatement, Ag Inventory and Ag Tech/Outreach agreements by Eric Offenbergh, and Engineering Agreement by Harriet Powell (Eric serving as technical contact on that agreement): Harriet/Emerson; unanimous.

D. Appointments to SCC/FFOS: Tabled until next meeting.

V. Reports:

- ##### A. SRICD: Eric Scherer officially starts as District Manager on Oct 4. The Board will work with Eric to develop a strategic plan.

B. NRICD:

- Gina attended an Emerging Leader event sponsored by the RI Foundation and made several contacts with young professionals with environmental interests. They have been invited to next NRICD Board meeting.
- Gina also addressed 32 teachers on the topic of watersheds at a training conducted by SMILE (Science and Math Initiative for Learning Enhancement).
- SRWEP theme will be agriculture and gardens.
- NRICD is investigating what role it can play in urban gardening in PVD county.
- Gina and representatives from PWSB met with DEM Director, Janet Coit, to discuss SRWEP. Director Coit will inquire if Water Resource Board would like Gina to make presentation to them. She also expressed interest in a farm tour.

C. ERICD:

- Annual Dinner will be held on 11/9.
- ERICD will hire person to conduct equipment bank feasibility study for RIACD.
- District will offer outreach assistance to City of Newport for distribution of rain barrels required by lawsuit settlement of illegal waste water discharge case.

D. URI:

- Kristen is working on finding a replacement for herself while she's on maternity leave. She is also working closely with RIACD on Beginning Farmer/Rancher grant. The 1 year grant is in the amount of \$14800.00 and has 3 components: equipment bank feasibility study, a farm business planning module, and an online decision making tool.

E. RI Division of Planning:

- Nancy is working on water supply management plan for RI.

- Renewable energy citing guidelines will be completed by end of October. State policy on energy is being updated.

F. NRCS:

- Written, year-end summary report distributed.
- RI office successful in obligating funds. Approximately \$800,000 was funded for agreement with partners.
- Pooh's goal is to strengthen technical skills of NRCS staff and partners.

Meeting adjourned at 10:45.