



Town of Richmond, Rhode Island
Richmond Conservation Commission
Richmond Town Hall, Wyoming, RI 02898



April 13, 2022 Meeting Minutes
Meeting at Town Hall Council Chambers

Call to Order: 7:02 pm

Roll Call:

Present: Lesley Bietz, David King, Dinalyn Spears, Pauline Streinz, Jim Turek, Samantha Wilcox

Absent: Dave Johnson

Guests: Shaun Lacey, Town Planner; Bill McCusker, Saugatucket River Watershed Council; and David Flanders, Town of South Kingstown Conservation Commission Chairperson

Motion: Jim Turek motioned, Seconded by Samantha Wilcox, to modify the agenda to allow the guests to speak first, followed by the official RCC agenda. **Motion passed.**

Approval of Minutes

Motion: Jim Turek motioned to approve of the March 9, 2022, RCC Minutes with minor revisions. Seconded by Dave King. **Motion passed.**

Communications

1. Cheri Stern, Beaver River Valley Coalition and Cynthia Drummond, Chariho Times, inquired about the Earth Day Event to advertise the event.
2. On April 7, Mary Doo sent a communication stating regarding a person seeking volunteering for the Earth Day event. Her email states she will require a letter from RCC certifying her volunteer hours.
3. Maria Pommenville, Girl Scouts, sent a communication on April 11, that the Girl Scouts will participate in the Earth Day Event. Jim Turek is awaiting a response back from Maria Pommenville for verification.

Treasurer's Report

No change from March 2022 minutes reporting.

Old Business

01 Final Planning for April 23-24 Town Earth Day Clean-up – continued from March 9, 2022

- Seed packets will be available (Lesley)
- Clear bags for the nips collection and related signage (Lesley)
- Draft up nip language for the public informational exchange on Facebook (Lesley and Jim)
- Sandwich Board advertising Earth Day - April 23, 24 - Kit pickup at Town Hall (Lesley and Jim)

- Coordinate with Town Hall, Karen Pinch and Scott Barber about installing the banner (Jim)
- Prepare and bring Sign-up sheets (Jim)
- Secure map for sign-up (Jim)
- Pop-up tent at Town Hall, put out kits, brochures and other information (Jim and Dave King)
- Coordinate with Scott Barber to document weight/volume of items collected (Lesley)
- Rotary Team will be joining the Earth Day Event

02 Beaver River Park application to the Wood Pawcatuck Wild and Scenic River Stewardship Council for Invasive Plant Management Plan – continued from March 9, 2022

Jim Turek gave an update on the Beaver River Park grant application. Karen Pinch advised that the RCC should reach out to at least three potential bidders for preparing the Invasive Management Plan. Horsley Witten were to conduct the work at the Park. On April 29, 2022, the plan will be addressed for approval of \$4K for the Town. Next Tuesday, April 19, 2022, Jim Turek will attend the next Town Council meeting to present the request and obtain approval for applying for the funds. The Town DPW agreed to go out to the site and keep the trails open. Additional funds will be sought for Phase I clearing from the Stewardship Council. Jim Turek met with Dana Millar to seek his assistance. Mr. Millar visited the Beaver River site and discussed all the items needed for the site. Per Town requirements, three quotes must be obtained.

03 Richmond Heritage Trail: Bluebird box installation and other work tasks – continued from March 9, 2022

David Johnson completed the six bluebird boxes, and made suggestions for installation. Jim Turek and David King will coordinate a date for installation. Jim Turek stated a number of trees are down on the Heritage Trail.

04 Draft Hazard Mitigation Plan – Town released plan for review and input – continued from March 9, 2022

The Draft Hazard Mitigation Plan is currently in the public comment period through May 2, 2022. All comments will be submitted to the consultant, and a draft will be sent to FEMA followed by Town Council approval.

05 Public Outreach Planning: Update and decision on May foraging hike on edible plants with Keith Crawley – continued from March 9, 2022

Pauline Streinz gave an update on the upcoming Foraging Hike. Mr. Keith Crawley offered two open dates for the hike; May 15 or May 22. The RCC concurred with holding the foraging hike on May 22, 2022.

Motion: Pauline Streinz motioned, seconded by Samantha Wilcox to provide a stipend of \$150 to Keith Crawley. **Motion passed** unanimously. The location of the hike to be determined, due to parking issues are some of the parks. Pauline recommended holding the hike at the RIDEM Carolina trout hatchery. RCC would need to obtain permission. Pauline will communicate with Keith Crawley on the hike location, and provide update at May RCC meeting. We will need to advertise soon after.

Jim Turek provided an update on the Turtle signs. Signs cost \$37.44 each from Signs.com. Ten signs would cost \$374.40. **Motion:** Jim Turek motioned, seconded by Lesley Bietz, to allow expenditures for up to \$400 on the purchase of the ten (10) printed signs for the purposes of wildlife crossing signage. **Motion passed** unanimously.

06 RCC Website informational updates – continued from March 9, 2022

Samantha Wilcox will post the Earth Day Flyer to the RCC Web/Blog sites. David King will submit his photo for the Conservation Commission Bio. Jim Turek will submit information on nips “Nip it in the bud”.

07 Town Recycling: General update on informational materials for public – continued from March 9, 2022

RCC discussed recycling efforts surrounding the nip bottles. Per, Shaun Lacey, The Town does not have an ordinance for plastics, nor does the Town have a municipal court to address potential violations. The Town is considering a municipal court in order to issue violations that could include littering.

New Plans and Submittals

None

Other Business

01 Town Planner’s report on the amended 2021 Comprehensive Community Plan, and Implementation Plan contained therein (Appendix H)

Shaun Lacey, Town Planner, gave a presentation to the RCC on the Comprehensive Community Plan, Appendix H and Implementation Plan. Copies of Appendix H were distributed to the RCC. Appendix H provides a list of responsibilities, tasks, and action items for the Town to utilize as a roadmap for where the Town of Richmond foresees its future to be over the next decade. Appendix H highlights specific action items delegated to the RCC (highlighted in yellow by Shaun for the hardcopies provided to the RCC). Jim Turek stated a goal of the RCC is for the Heritage Trail to connect the trail to the N/S trail to keep hikers off the high-traffic flows roads. An area on the trail connection would require an easement and a wetland boardwalk crossing. How would the RCC conduct this task? Mr. Lacey stated RCC will need to collaborate with Town staff, Planning Board, Land Trust, Town Council, RIDEM, and potential landowners. Discussion ensued on how to traverse the project and construct the wetland crossing boardwalk. Conceptual plan would be needed.

Shaun Lacey indicated the Town will utilize ARPA infrastructure funding to hire a grant administrator. RCC also discussed protection of historical farms and groundwater issues. Next steps were discussed - develop strategies to assist with advancing our plans and come up with tasks.

02 Presentation by Town of South Kingstown and Saugatucket River Watershed Council on State Legislation relating to Nip Bottles

RCC received a presentation from the Town of South Kingstown’s Conservation Commission Chairperson and Saugatucket River Watershed Council on nip bottles as significant litter. The Town of South Kingstown amended its 2018 Single Use Plastic Reduction Ordinance to include nip bottles. The process started when the Conservation Commission sent a letter to the South Kingstown Town Council explaining the reasons for the amendment and presenting the research conducted, nip bottles collected, and interviewing the local business (30 businesses were surveyed and 70% were in favor of the plastic bag reduction). The questions posed to the businesses: “can you do without the plastic bags. “How will it affect your business”. Of note, Stop-n- Shop Narragansett has plans to discontinue plastic bag use this summer. Nips issues and concerns:

*Inconspicuous when thrown out

*Transfer station personnel have the nips thrown in the recycle bin.

- *RICCA will not take because they have to be a minimum size of 2x2x2 inches.
- *Nips reach storm drains and pass into the Saugatucket River to Point Judith Pond, over the aquaculture oyster beds, recreational fishing, and Block Island Sound.
- *Nips break down into microplastic, which never fully breakdown.
- *The microplastic accumulates in fish tissue.
- *Fish are eaten by waterfowl and humans.

Nips are the most abundant item in the Saugatucket River; more than bottles and cans. Save the Bay also has data on nip bottles. Nip bottles are listed in the category of bottles.

Recommendations to RCC:

- *Conduct your own research/survey.
(1,200 nips were collected from the streets of Richmond and the Wyoming Package store in January/February; 300 were collected near Richmond Wine and Spirits on March 24; 600 were collected along Stilson Road. Twenty-one thousand nip bottles have been collected in three months in multiple municipalities. A video on the Boston 25 News discusses the problem with Nips by the Mayor of the City of Quincy. Recommend the RCC to watch the video. Massachusetts is currently working on banning nips.
- *Take photos.
- *Secure as much hard data as you can.
- *Research environmental factors about effects of plastics and microplastics and effects on wildlife and humans.
- *Research economic facts.
- *Host artist contests with the local school system/public.
- *Make a presentation to the Town Council regarding the plastic bags and nips and coordinate with the EDC.

Primary Point made to the South Kingstown Town Council: Ripple effects—impacts the fisherman, retail, restaurants, people will not eat the fish that is contaminated. The Town wants further study on the impact of the nip bottles. The information was passed on to the South Kingstown Economic Development Commission to work collectively with the Regional Conservation Commissions and Towns. The State will also participate. RI currently has draft legislation on State-Wide ban on plastic bags. Bill McCusker, Friends of the Saugatuck Watershed, stated that the nips cost <2 cents/ml. Mr. McCusker further stated that in January 2022, the House Committee drafted Bill 7064 to put a ban on nips. The Bill has not moved to the Senate. Since January 2022, no movement on the Bill. The Bill is stalled at the House level. A bottle bill was initially created in 1980. Every year a new bill is reintroduced without movement. Nips are a way to get around the open bottle law.

Next Meeting: The next RCC meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, **May 11, 2022 at 7 p.m.**

Adjourn: James Turek motioned, seconded by Dave King, to adjourn meeting at 9:38 pm.

Motion passed.

Submitted by:



Approved:



Attest: