

**TOWN OF WEST GREENWICH
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING**

JANUARY 7, 2016

A regular meeting of the West Greenwich Conservation Commission was held on January 7, 2016. Present were: Daniel Novak, Linda Eastman, Clifton Sundelin, Robert Zuleger, Christopher Grube and Sandra Bockes. Absent: Claudia Chappelle.

Novak called the meeting to order at 7:12 P.M.

There were no requests for advisory reviews.

MINUTES: Zuleger moved to accept the Minutes as written. Eastman seconded. Voted: Eastman, Sundelin, Zuleger and Bockes - Aye; Novak and Grube - Abstain.

There was discussion on the difficulty in being able to get new members. Bockes stated that at the Celebrate West Greenwich Day we had a few people indicate they might be interested, but when they were invited to attend a meeting they did not show up. Both Eastman and Zuleger indicated that they feel we are not currently as useful to the town as we used to be when we were sometimes getting several reviews at one meeting. Novak stated that in Smithfield the Conservation Commission has a member on the Technical Review Committee. Eastman suggested that maybe that would be a better option for both the town and applicants, rather than their having to go to a separate meeting. That would also put us into the process before an applicant had already spent a great deal of money on plans and could therefore incorporate our concerns into the plans rather than maybe having to make changes later on. The consensus was that we would like to be doing more for the town than we have been and that then maybe people would be more inclined to want to join the Commission.

TREASURER'S REPORT: The balance is \$1,679.57. There were no expenses this month.

RIACC: Novak reported that they will be sponsoring nine of the 27 workshops at the March Summit. It will be on March 19. Novak moved to use \$100.00 for an ad in the booklet to show our support. Bockes seconded. After some discussion the Vote was six to zero (6-0) in favor.

EARTH DAY: Zuleger stated that he had attended the last Land Trust meeting. They would like to combine the cleanups into a single day in order to make it less confusing for the residents. We could still concentrate on the different parts of town, but coordinate on the dumpsters, t-shirts, signs, etc. We would like to keep the lunches at the two locations to make it easier for the workers in the two areas to get to. In looking at the calendar, it seems that probably April 23 would be the best date, but we will need to check with the Land Trust.

Eastman moved to adjourn at 8:29 P.M. Grube seconded. Voted: unanimously (6-0) - Aye.

Sandra S. Bockes, Secretary WGCC

Sandra S. Bockes

**TOWN OF WEST GREENWICH
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING**

FEBRUARY 4, 2016

A regular meeting of the West Greenwich Conservation commission was held on February 4, 2016. Present were: Linda Eastman, Clifton Sundelin, Robert Zuleger, Christopher Grube and Sandra Bockes. Absent: Daniel Novak and Claudia Chappelle. Also present were three members of RINEMBA: Peter Gengler, Alan Winsor and Laurent Froissard.

Eastman called the meeting to order at 7:05 P.M.

Bockes suggested that since the Applicants were not present for the review, and the RINEMBA people were, that we change the order of the agenda to talk about Big River first as perhaps the applicants were just late.

First our guests brought up the fact that mention had been made on the Monday night 6:00 news, on Channel 12, of the possibility of the State using part of Big River for a landfill after the Johnston one gets filled to capacity. This has been a concern of ours for quite a while. Doing that would negate the ability of the area to provide water for the state, which was the reason it was taken in the first place. We agreed that we will need to be vigilant about this, or any other proposals not related to water or open space.

Next the subject of signage for Big River trails was brought up. The RINEMBA is trying to work with RIDEM to get approval to place small signs at the intersections of some of the major trails in the area so that users could better orient themselves, and also so that search and rescue efforts would be assisted. There are currently about fifty (50) miles of trails through the area, and the plan would be for small signs at a few major places, not all over the place. They are looking for a statement of support from the commission. Zuleger moved to state that: We support in principal the marking of trails in the Big River Management Area for the orientation of users and their increased safety, as put forth by the people from RINEMBA. Grube seconded. Voted: unanimously (5-0) - Aye.

EARTH DAY: The Cleanup will be on April 23, and this year we will be doing it in conjunction with the Land Trust. This should clear up any confusion residents might have from there being two different days. Mr. Gengler stated that the RINEMBA would be donating \$400.00 toward the Cleanup. There was discussion on some of the details with everyone having people to contact prior to the next meeting.

MINUTES: Zuleger moved to accept the Minutes as written. Sundelin seconded. Voted: unanimously (5-0) - Aye.

CORRESPONDENCE: None.

NEWS & OBSERVATIONS: Everyone is pleased that this has been a better Winter so far this year than last year.

TREASURER'S REPORT: The balance is \$1,679.57, which is the same as last month.

2016/2017 BUDGET: Sundelin moved to request the same amounts as last year. Grube seconded. Voted: unanimously (5-0) - Aye.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: Nothing new.

CHANGES TO MEETING SCHEDULE: Due to a conflict with the Chairman's teaching schedule, we discussed moving two of our dates to the Wednesday before our meeting dates in March and May. Bockes said she would call the Clerk to see if the Council Chambers would be available for March 2 and May 4, and moved

that if they are that we move our meetings to those two days. Zuleger seconded. Voted: unanimously (5-0) - Aye.

ADVISORY REVIEW: Applicant is Dupuis Oil Company. No one showed up from there for the review. The Zoning Board needs an opinion on the request for a Special Use Permit for petroleum bulk storage, and the Town Council needs an opinion on the request to amend the Zoning Ordinance Map from RFR-2 to Highway Business.

There were a number of questions that we would have liked to be able to ask the Applicant, but others that we could determine ourselves. First was if this amendment would be in conformance with the Comprehensive Plan. Since the abutting property to the South, and the property across the road, is already zoned Highway Business it seems reasonable to extend the same zoning to this property, Plat 14, Lot 13, 746 Victory Highway. We decided that it would conform to the Comprehensive Plan.

In addition, we wanted to know if the usage being proposed for this site/location within the town was appropriate for the area. It is a short distance of Route 95 so the trucks would be able to go to various parts of the state very easily without going through residential areas until getting to their delivery areas. That part of Victory Highway is mostly businesses. It was felt that the siting was appropriate.

We next considered how this project would affect both the natural environment of the site and also the human abutters. It was obvious that a lot of trees would have to be cut for the installation, but it was strongly stated that we would like to see at least the 100 foot setback area be kept treed, in order to act as a buffer between the new business usage and the abutters, especially the ones immediately to the Northwest. Trees, after all, help make the oxygen we need to breathe.

Sundelin raised the question as to what type of water lines might be in the 20 foot easement because, depending on their type, an oil leak that got into the ground could be drawn back into the public wells shown on the plan drawn for the Applicant. We all had concerns regarding the wells and about what safeguards would be taken to prevent and contain any leaks because a small amount of oil can contaminate a lot of water.

It was mentioned that it would be best if the company would use lights that would direct light downward to prevent light pollution as much as possible. Bockes stated that the Planning Board does a good job of dealing with those issues with companies proposing projects.

After further discussion and review of the questions that we wanted to ask the Applicant, Bockes moved to send the list of questions, Exhibit A, attached hereto and made a part hereof, plus the results of our discussion above, and to recommend approvals of the two requests conditioned upon the Zoning Board and the Town Council receiving satisfactory answers to the list of questions. Zuleger seconded. Voted: unanimously (5-0) - Aye.

Zuleger moved to adjourn at 9:10 P.M. Bockes seconded. Voted: unanimously (5-0) - Aye.

Sandra S. Bockes, Secretary WGCC

Sandra S. Bockes

EXHIBIT A

The following are the questions the Commission had intended to ask the Dupuis Oil Company representative:

1. What safeguards will be used to prevent and contain leaks, prevent and mitigate fires, buffer the neighbors from undue noise, light, and air (i.e. from the release of VOC's) pollution, and to ensure security from vandalism, or worse?
2. Do you know if there are any threatened or endangered species, plant or animal, on the lot? If no, how do you intend to find out? If yes, what are they, and how will you ensure their protection?
3. Are there any cemeteries or historically important structures and/or other artifacts on the lot?
4. How will the protection of the aquifer and nearby wells be ensured? Mr. Sundelin expressed concern regarding the type of waterline running in the "20' WIDE WATERLINE EASEMENT" as shown on the plan because depending on whether that is pressurized, or vacuum, an uncontained oil leak, if there was a crack in the line, could be drawn into the system. he said.
5. Will any landscaping that is to be done use native plants in order to save on the need to water them once they are established?
6. Will only the amount of clearing of the lot be done in order to install the proposed facility and for safety, and will the rest of the lot be left in its currently vegetated state?

**TOWN OF WEST GREENWICH
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING**

MARCH 2, 2016

A regular meeting of the West Greenwich Conservation Commission was held on March 2, 2016. Present were: Daniel Novak, Clifton Sundelin, Robert Zuleger and Sandra Bockes. Absent: Linda Eastman, Christopher Grube and Claudia Chappelle. Also present were: Peter Gengler and Alan Winsor from RINEMBA and Richard Barrette, Sarah Linden-Barrette and Eric Weybrant from Ocean State Jeepsters.

Novak called the meeting to order at 7:05 P.M.

There were no requests for advisory reviews. We briefly went over our review from last month.

MINUTES: Zuleger moved to accept the Minutes as written. Sundelin seconded. Voted: Sundelin, Zuleger and Bockes - Aye; Novak - Abstain.

NEWS & OBSERVATIONS: Bockes brought up an article about rattlesnakes that had been in the Providence Journal. There was discussion and differences of opinion on the subject of reintroducing them into Massachusetts.

TREASURER'S REPORT: The balance is at \$1,584.57.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: Nothing new to report.

BIG RIVER: There was discussion on a bill that has been put forward that would allow Coventry to use a piece of the Big River Area to compost tree waste. The consensus was that no use other than water production and open space recreation should be allowed on the property.

Zuleger said that there are more TV's showing up in the area and that the container for electronic waste is gone from the transfer station because the funding is gone from that program. Alan Winsor stated that there needs to not be a fee to get rid of that stuff in order to not have people dumping it along the roads.

SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL: There was discussion on what may happen when the Johnston Landfill gets full. Another landfill is not a great idea, and it's expensive. Trucking it away is probably the least expensive thing, but ultimately it has to be dealt with by someone. Alan Winsor said that incineration of waste is very efficient in Europe. It is very expensive, but would bring jobs. Bockes said that, of course, no one wants something like that in their backyard, but if there was a large enough property that was already a brown-field that could be used, a facility that would incinerate trash and produce electricity, and maybe the ash could be used in paving, might help with a number of problems at once.

WATERSHED WATCH PROGRAM: It was agreed that our May 4 meeting would be good to have Linda Green come and do a presentation. Bockes will contact her to set it up.

EARTH DAY: There is a lot of stuff still all over. The major sites got worked out. There are a lot of pines and branches down from storms, so maybe that can be cleared the week before in order to make better access to the sites for the actual cleanup, on April 23. Ken Burke at the Water Resources Board will be providing the dumpsters. Putting them all at the Wesver Hill Road location will be best because then they are not so obvious for people to just come by and leave their junk next to them. Peter Gengler said that Cathy Sparks at DEM says that the State has been picking stuff up. Bockes will coordinate the ad for the Reminder with the Land Trust. There was further discussion on some more details.

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Everyone has things to take care of before the next meeting, and final plans will be ironed out at that time.

Bockes moved to adjourn at 8:25 P.M. Sundelin seconded. Voted: unanimously (4-0) - Aye.

Sandra S. Bockes, Secretary WGCC

Sandra S. Bockes

**TOWN OF WEST GREENWICH
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING**

APRIL 7, 2016

A regular meeting of the West Greenwich Conservation Commission was held on April 7, 2016. Present were: Linda Eastman, Clifton Sundelin, Robert Zuleger, Christopher Grube and Sandra Bockes. Absent: Daniel Novak and Claudia Chappelle. Also present were: Peter Gengler, Alan Winsor and Chris Hughes from RINEMBA and Pete Tanner and Bill Newcomb from the Rhody Rovers.

Eastman called the meeting to order at 7:08 P.M.

There were no requests for advisory reviews.

MINUTES: Sundelin moved to accept the Minutes as written. Bockes seconded. Voted: Sundelin and Bockes - Aye; Eastman and Grube - Abstain. Zuleger arrived a little later in the meeting.

CORRESPONDENCE: None.

NEWS & OBSERVATIONS: There was brief discussion on rattlesnakes. Eastman mentioned a Facebook posting by Sundelin where he had witnessed a mother rabbit attacking a large black snake that was trying to get her babies.

TREASURER'S REPORT: The balance is at \$1,534.57.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: Nothing new.

SUMMIT: Bockes reported that the keynote speaker was excellent and that one of the workshops, in particular, was especially good because it had to do with the planting of native plants and ground covers rather than exotics and grass lawns as a way to conserve water. It also cuts back on the labor to maintain ones landscape and is very good for wildlife and native pollinators.

Grube had attended the workshop on the Future of Conservation Commissions. He said that a presenter from Massachusetts spoke about how commissioners there have regulatory power. They get a monthly stipend, currently at \$40.00. They also have a lot more responsibility. Grube stated that there is a push from RIDEM, and others, to do that here. A lot of training would be required, and a lot more time on the part of commissioners. He stated that it seems that DEM wants to shift more of their duties, and expenses, onto the cities and towns and that the towns won't want that. Decisions made by commissions, if they were appealed, would still have to go back to DEM. Eastman and Bockes both made the point that it is practically impossible to get people to be on a board that requires just a couple of hours of a person's time once a month, so how would it be possible to get people who would be willing to commit to something that would require a lot more than that? The consensus was that we could serve the Town much better by having a part in the Technical Review Committee so as to be in at the beginning of a project before the applicant had already committed to a lot of engineering expense, etc.

EARTH DAY: Eastman stated that there are no grants from DEM this year, and Pete Tanner stated that the money for those comes from fines, and there weren't any this year. The WATER RESOURCES Board is down to only one person, Cathy Sparks. We discussed, and were able to work out where the major sites are to be and who will be in charge of each group. The equipment needed was also discussed and committed. Other details were discussed. Generous donations were received from RINEMBA of \$400.00, and from the Rhody Rovers of \$200.00. Bockes will make sure the Cleanup is on the Town's website.

Bockes moved to adjourn at 8:40 P.M. Grube seconded. Voted: unanimously (5-0) - Aye.

Sandra S. Bockes, Secretary WGCC

**TOWN OF WEST GREENWICH
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING**

MAY 4, 2016

A regular meeting of the West Greenwich Conservation Commission was held on May 4, 2016. Present were: Daniel Novak, Linda Eastman, Clifton Sundelin, Christopher Grube and Sandra Bockes. Absent; Robert Zuleger and Claudia Chappelle. Also present were: Jim Wahl from the Lake Mishnock Preservation Association, Krista Noe and Gabrielle Enright, who are students at URI and RIC, respectively. They participated in the Cleanup and are taking studies in environmental sciences.

Novak called the meeting to order at 7:05 P.M.

There were no requests for advisory reviews.

The first order of business was the presentation by Linda Green from the URI Watershed Watch Program. This was very informative. She explained about the program in general, and then went into specifics about Lake Mishnock. There were graphs that showed that the lake is basically in good shape except for the amount of sodium (salt) in the water, which is getting consistently higher each year. The trend on that graph is just steadily rising with no dips of any significance at all. Of course, this comes from run-off from treating the roads in the winter. Route 95 is a major contributor. The question is what can be done about the problem? Although the lake is not yet in dire straits because of this, if the trend continues it will be. We were very pleased to have Linda Green give her presentation and just would have liked to see a few more people in attendance.

MINUTES: Grube moved to accept the Minutes as written. Eastman seconded. Voted: Eastman, Sundelin, Grube and Bockes - Aye; Novak - Abstain.

OFFICERS: Novak spoke to the fact that his teaching, and various other obligations, are currently consuming a great deal more of his time than previously, and that he would like to step aside from the responsibilities of the office of Chairman of the Commission. He then moved to have an election of officers at the July meeting. Bockes seconded. Voted: unanimously (5-0) - Aye.

JUNE MEETING: Bockes stated that since she will be unable to attend the June meeting as currently scheduled, she would like to recommend that it be moved from the second to the ninth and so moved. Novak seconded. Voted: unanimously (5-0) - Aye.

EARTH DAY CLEANUP: Peter Gengler could not attend this meeting, so his video will have to be at another one. However, he sent word that there were a total of 180 people who participated in the Cleanup and that we collected 23.5 tons of trash and tires, which filled six large dumpsters.

CORRESPONDENCE: There was a letter regarding a power plant being proposed for the Town of Burrillville, from the Burrillville Land Trust, that asked that the Commission go on record as being opposed to it and to send a letter to the Energy Facility Siting Board so stating. Also included with the Land Trust letter was a copy of one from the Senator and Representative for the area, to the Siting Board, stating many reasons why they are in opposition to the power plant being put in this location. Grube stated that their concerns are valid and that this plant could certainly go on a brownfield somewhere rather than destroying forestland, as they suggest in their letter. There was more discussion regarding the letters received and the draft of a possible one to send in response. Novak moved to send the draft letter and

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to make this our expression of our position on this matter. Grube seconded
Voted: Novak, Sundelin, Grube and Bockes - Aye; Eastman - Abstain.

There was some discussion and brainstorming on needed materials for ongoing
projects and suggestions for same.

Bockes moved to adjourn at 9:15 P.M. Sundelin seconded. Voted: unanimously
(4-0) - Aye. Eastman had needed to leave a little earlier.

Sandra S. Bockes, Secretary WGCC

Sandra S. Bockes

**TOWN OF WEST GREENWICH
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING**

JUNE 9, 2016

A regular meeting of the West Greenwich Conservation Commission was held on June 9, 2016. Present were: Daniel Novak, Linda Eastman, Clifton Sundelin, Robert Zuleger, Christopher Grube and Sandra Bockes. Absent: Claudia Chappelle. Also present were: Mary Talbot from RIDEM, Krista Noe and Gabrielle Enright.

Novak called the meeting to order at 7:09 P.M.

There were no requests for advisory reviews.

MINUTES: Grube moved to accept the Minutes as written. Eastman seconded. Voted: Novak, Eastman, Sundelin, Grube and Bockes - Aye; Zuleger - Abstain.

UPCOMING EVENTS: There will be a rally in Burrillville, on June 11, from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm, to protest the proposed power plant. Grow Smart RI will hold a seminar on June 21, at the RI Convention Center. The cost is \$150.00 per person.

CORRESPONDENCE: Zuleger has spoken to the owner at "Tavern on the Hill" and has gotten a proposal from him for the meal after next year's cleanup.

TREASURER'S REPORT: The balance is \$130.07.

NEWS & OBSERVATIONS: A solar farm has been proposed for the gravel bank that is behind "Dan's Place". It is 230 acres with a major aquifer in there. It is apparently in the preliminary stage, but it would seem that the town would prefer businesses that would create jobs on that property.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS: Novak stated that although he wants to continue on the Commission, he wants to step aside from the responsibilities of the Chairman, and that he thinks that we need to move into a more active stage. Since the new fiscal year starts in July, and since a slate of officers was available, Novak moved to elect Christopher Grube as Chairman, Linda Eastman as Vice-Chairman, Sandra Bockes as Secretary and Clifton Sundelin as Treasurer. Zuleger seconded. Voted: unanimously (6-0) - Aye.

INTERNS: Krista Noe and Gabrielle Enright, who participated in the cleanup, and who are both taking environmental studies in college, are interested in being involved with the Commission. Novak moved that they be accepted as interns. Zuleger seconded. Voted: unanimously (6-0) - Aye.

BIG RIVER: A management plan is being worked on for the area, and Mary Talbot has been tasked with coming up with the wildlife management part because she is in the Fish and Wildlife section of DEM. She wanted to know how we feel Big River fits into the town and whether we feel like stewards of the property. She mentioned the impact to wildlife from the various usages, and she's also working to figure out who uses which areas. Bockes mentioned the concern with all the deadwood, brush, etc. that has not been taken care of after major storms, or even at all for quite a while, and which constitutes a big fire hazard. Zuleger then brought up numerous issues having to do with the property that are very frustrating. The large stones that have been used to block the old driveways into what had been house sites in order to try to prevent illegal dumping also would block access for fire trucks. There should be proper gates. There was a lot of discussion, and we are hoping to be able to work on this with her.

CELEBRATE WEST GREENWICH DAYS: Notices are up about the time capsule, so we are hoping for a good response.

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WIND ENERGY FORUM: There will be a forum about the wind farm in Greene, at the Greene Public Library. It will be on June 21, at 7:00 pm. Zuleger had the notice from the Reminder paper. It is free, but they would prefer reservations.

Zuleger moved to adjourn at 8:45 P.M. Bockes seconded. Voted: unanimously (6-0) - Aye.

Sandra S. Bockes, Secretary

Sandra S. Bockes

**TOWN OF WEST GREENWICH
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING**

JULY 7, 2016

A regular meeting of the West Greenwich Conservation Commission was held on July 7, 2016. Present were: Christopher Grube, Linda Eastman, Clifton Sundelin, Daniel Novak and Sandra Bockes. Absent: Robert Zuleger and Claudia Chappelle. Also present were: Krista Noe and Gabrielle Enright.

Grube called the meeting to order at 7:10 P.M.

There were no requests for advisory reviews.

MINUTES: Novak had some comments regarding solar power and what might be in the Comprehensive Plan about it. Novak moved to accept the Minutes as written. Sundelin seconded. Voted: unanimously (5-0) - Aye.

CORRESPONDENCE: None.

NEWS & UPCOMING EVENTS: On July 18 there will be a meeting with Governor Raimondo in Burrillville about the proposed fracked gas plant. Although it is being touted as cleaner than other plants, Grube pointed out that it will have oil for backup. Environmental organizations are against it, and there is a question as to whether the demand is really there for the energy it would be producing. Grube stated that with the growth in renewable forms of energy this plant, that would have a lifespan of at least forty years, would be a "dinosaur" in fifteen years. Tesla, for example, is testing battery walls in Vermont.

LED lights are being installed along highways in some places as a way to save energy, but now doctors are saying that the light spectrum from them is too intense and that it is harmful to both humans and animals.

Grube stated that we should be moving away from fossil fuel energy plants as quickly as possible and used as an example a so-called "Clean Coal" plant that is being built that is two billion dollars over budget. He opined that "the only clean coal is the coal that is left in the ground".

TREASURER'S REPORT: The new balance is \$1,800.00, which starts the fiscal year.

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING: Bockes stated that she had attended the June meeting at which the town was presented a beautiful container for a flag retirement bin that had been made by a boy scout for his Eagle Scout project.

BIG RIVER: We are still exploring options for next year's Cleanup lunch.

Grube stated that he had spoken with a forestry man from DEM. They are working on a management plan, and he said that the best thing that could happen in there would be a fast fire to clear out the deadwood and brush. Bockes stated that she doubted the wildlife living there would agree.

WOOD PAWCATUCK STUDY: Grube reported that they will be issuing updates to the towns. He said that they need photos of the Wood River from Hazard Pond down to Westerly. This could be something for our interns. Grube mentioned a company that had been located on the Wood River back in the 1980's, when John Chafee was governor, which was called United Nuclear and at which a death from radiation had occurred. He said it was just shy of being a superfund site, but almost nobody knows about it.

OTHER: Mention was made of the letter that Novak had sent to the interns.

2016/2017 WORK PLAN: Assisting the Wood Pawcatuck study; involvement with DEM on Big River; the Cleanup; the Comprehensive Plan; the Technical Review Board; general outreach.

Novak moved to adjourn at 8:25 P.M. Bockes seconded. Voted: unanimously (5-0) - Aye.

Sandra S. Bockes, Secretary WGCC

Sandra S. Bockes