

**TOWN OF WEST GREENWICH
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
JANUARY 6, 2011**

A regular meeting of the West Greenwich Conservation Commission was held on January 6, 2011. Present were: Daniel Novak, Robert Zuleger, Terrence Gray, Karen O'Neil and Sandra Bockes. Absent: Clifton Sundelin and Jon Sawyer. Guests in attendance were: Linda Eastman, Kathleen Swann, Lisa Tomasso, Gail Murray and Paul Kaltschnee.

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

There were no requests for advisory reviews.

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

CORRESPONDENCE: There was a letter and application from RIDEM regarding being a "Tree City", but the deadline has already passed. Bockes stated that it frequently happens that we receive mail, that would need to be acted upon, right after one of our meetings and with a deadline before the next one, or so soon after the next one that there would be no time to do anything about it.

NEWS & OBSERVATIONS: Some of the Citizens of Big River have received responses to their letters to Governor Chafee.

Novak stated that there are serious environmental concerns about some of the new people in Washington.

The new head of RIDEM is Janet Coit. She came from the Nature Conservancy and is interested in citizen engagements and partnerships.

The question was raised as to whether there could be some grant money available for projects from "Grassroots".

TOWN COUNCIL: It was reported that the Conservation Development Ordinance passed at the December meeting. Additional letters have been sent to both Governor Carciari and Governor-Elect Chafee on behalf of the Big River people. There have been meetings with Frank Maher, and some compromise may be able to be worked out for the residents.

TREASURER'S REPORT: There were expenses of \$22.18, so the balance is \$859.81.

LAKE MISHNOCK: Paul Kaltschnee stated that there was no meeting in December, but that they are still very active.

BIG RIVER: Zuleger stated that he is still "keeping an eye on things" because he is still through there all the time. We need to start working on plans for the Earth Day Clean-Up. The RIDEM grant will be available again. We would like to expand and maybe get neighborhoods involved. The next meeting of the Citizens group will be Sunday, January 9, at 6:30 P.M. After checking the calendar, Zuleger moved to have the Earth Day Clean-Up on April 16. Bockes seconded. Voted: unanimously (5-0) - Aye.

WORK PLAN: Novak passed out copies of last year's work plan and asked that we be thinking of things for this year for our next meeting.

CONVERSATION #2: Kathleen Swann started the discussion on how we plan to run the next Citizen Conversation. There will be five stations that participants will rotate through to give their ideas and questions during the first part. The second part will be for what are we going to do? People will be working on that in whichever group most interests them. There will also be a quick form for feedback that night. There will be a notice in the Reminder.

Mrs. Swann asked that if anyone had any old pictures of West Greenwich, prior

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to 1980, that she is looking for them for a book she is writing. Also, if you know of someone she should speak to about the history of the town, she would appreciate that information.

RIACC: Workshops are coming up as well as the Summit in March.

WEBSITE: It is much improved, although there are no links as yet.

Bockes moved to adjourn at 9:25 P.M. O'Neil seconded. Voted: unanimously (3-0) - Aye. Two members had needed to leave at 8:30 P.M.

Sandra S. Bockes, Secretary WGCC

Sandra S. Bockes

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

FEBRUARY 3, 2011

A regular meeting of the West Greenwich Conservation Commission was held on February 3, 2011. Present were: Daniel Novak, Robert Zuleger, Clifton Sundelin, Linda Eastman and Sandra Bockes. Absent: Terrence Gray, Karen O'Neil, Jon Sawyer and Debra Cotrone. Also present were: Peter Gengler and Alan Winsor from the Mountain Bikers group and Carl Ciampanelli, an intern with the Water Resources Board.

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

There were no requests for advisory reviews.

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

CORRESPONDENCE: There was a letter from the RIDEM about the "America the Beautiful" grants, but the 60% match is out of our reach. There was also a copy of the CRMC newsletter which, among other things, addressed the issue of another invasive species that was found in the Providence River: an Asian shrimp. It mentioned others with the potential to do serious damage to our ecosystem.

NEWS & OBSERVATIONS: Bockes suggested that it would be helpful if members who were unable to attend a meeting would inform the Chairman prior to the meeting so that they could start as close to 7:00 as possible. She also stated that this may not always be possible as emergencies and other unforeseen events do take place, but that in general she felt that would be a good policy. We are pleased that the Conservation Development Ordinance passed. Novak stated that in Smithfield there is a group composed of members from each of their boards that does a pre-review of projects so that a developer can address any issues when he comes in for the formal reviews. Novak mentioned that the Clerk informed him that Jim Whalen's obituary had requested that in lieu of flowers he wanted donations to go to the Commission.

TREASURER'S REPORT: The balance is still \$859.81 as there were no expenses.

BIG RIVER: The next meeting of the Concerned Citizens group is scheduled for February 13. The final meeting regarding the residents has not yet taken place. Land Use Plan hearings will be coming up; it would be good if the town could be involved with that.

RIACC: The workshop at the Rochambeau Library has been rescheduled due to bad weather. It will now be the 2nd or 3rd week in February. March 4th is the deadline for early registration for the Summit; the fee is \$40.00, but \$55.00 after that.

CITIZEN CONVERSATIONS: The third meeting will be Sunday, February 27. Those who answered the survey after the second meeting were positive about it. People were really communicating with each other. There was a lot of interest in local economies/businesses and clean energy and alternative technologies.

EARTH DAY: The Clean-Up will be April 16. The guests joined us for the discussion of the logistics and funds. Mr. Gengler stated that his group will not be able to donate as much as last year. He also stated that he has had tentative talks with WRB people. We discussed various groups that might want to participate. There was also discussion on how to get greater participation throughout the town in the neighborhoods.

BUDGET: We discussed a tentative budget for the next fiscal year.

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WORK PLAN: This was postponed to next month when it was hoped there would be more members present.

Bockes moved to adjourn at 9:07 P.M. Eastman seconded. Voted: unanimously (4-0) - Aye. Zuleger had needed to leave at 8:30 P.M.

Sandra S. Bockes, Secretary WGCC

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

MARCH 3, 2011

A regular meeting of the West Greenwich Conservation Commission was held on March 3, 2011. Present were: Daniel Novak, Robert Zuleger, Clifton Sundelin, Linda Eastman and Sandra Bockes. Absent: Terrence Gray, Karen O'Neil, Jon Sawyer and Debra Cotrone.

Guests present were: Peter Gengler, Alan Winsor, Paul and Mary Kaltschnee, Chris Grube, Elaine McGuire, Will Rivero and Carl Ciampanelli.

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

There were no requests for advisory reviews.

EARTH DAY: Mr. Gengler and Mr. Winsor presented us with a check for \$500.00 for Earth Day expenses from the New England Mountain Bikers Association. The Clean-Up will be April 16, with people assembling at the Exit 6A Park-and-Ride at 8:30 A.M. Mr. Rivero, from the Water Resources Board, stated that they want to help out, and both he and Mrs. McGuire had some good ideas and information. There was discussion on identifying sites to clean. Many of the largest sites have already been pretty well dealt with in prior years, so the thinking for this year is that there will probably be a few big sites and the rest roadside cleaning. After more discussion on various aspects of the logistics, this part of the meeting concluded with everyone having some homework to do.

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

CORRESPONDENCE: There was a copy of a letter from the Town Solicitor's office to the Attorney General's office requesting an Advisory Opinion regarding the use of Facebook accounts by town boards and how Open Meeting Laws might affect the ability to do that.

NEWS & OBSERVATIONS: Bockes presented several news articles on: how gardeners can help save endangered plants, the additional land protected by the Nature Conservancy in the west end of town, the windmill at Shalom Housing, a report on hexavalent chromium found in the water in 31 out of 35 cities tested, some new technology that could reduce the need for cell towers and the extremely annoying trend by companies to reduce the sizes of their products while keeping the prices the same which effectively makes for a price increase in a sneaky way. Charlestown is investigating windmills. Light pollution is a concern. March 26 is the Land and Water Summit and also the Land Trust's turkey dinner.

TOWN COUNCIL: The School Committee wants a 1.4 million dollar increase over last year's budget. Voting this year will be in an all-day referendum.

TREASURER'S REPORT: The balance is still at \$859.81.

LAKE MISHNOCK: The LMPA is still very active.

BIG RIVER: There is to be some dispensation for the few remaining residents, but most of the people have already left.

CITIZEN'S CONVERSATIONS: Discussion on this was brief as there will be a report when all the information has been collated. In general it was felt that they went quite well with the participants very enthusiastic about them. A number of participants stated that they would like to see them continue.

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WEBSITE: The question was raised as to whether the subject of ticks ought to be put onto our website as there may well be a bumper crop of these pests this Spring. Invasive plants was another possible item. They tend to come up sooner than the natives, so crowd them out.

MEMBERSHIP: Novak stated that we will be losing another member as Terry Gray has asked not to be reappointed due to work and family commitments.

We have not had a Vice-Chair since losing Joe Unsworth to the Planning Board, so Novak moved to elect Linda Eastman to that position. Zuleger seconded. Voted: unanimously (5-0) - Aye.

Bockes moved to adjourn at 9:06 P.M. Eastman seconded. Voted: unanimously (5-0) - Aye.

Sandra S. Bockes, Secretary

Sandra S. Bockes

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

APRIL 7, 2011

A regular meeting of the West Greenwich Conservation Commission was held on April 7, 2011. Present were: Daniel Novak, Terrence Gray, Clifton Sundelin, Linda Eastman and Sandra Bockes. Absent: Robert Zuleger, Karen O'Neil, Jon Sawyer and Debra Cotrone. Also present were: Christopher Grube, Darren Cooper from the Rhody Rovers and Peter Gengler and Alan Winsor from NEMBA and Will Riverso from the Water Resources Board.

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

There were no requests for advisory reviews.

EARTH DAY: Peter Gengler stated that the sites have been pretty well worked out and the locations for the dumpsters. Mr. Cooper will be donating food for the morning, and we are still working on the coffee. We picked the design for the tee shirt and the sizes; there will be 100 shirts. The lunch will be done by MealWorks and will be at the Mishnock Barn. Terry Gray said that he wants to come sign in at the parking lot and get gloves and bags and then have his Cub Scouts working along Plain Meeting House Road as they had done last year. There was discussion on a few more details after which our guests left.

MINUTES: Eastman moved to accept the Minutes as written. Novak seconded. Voted: unanimously (4-0) - Aye.

CORRESPONDENCE: There was a notice from the Northern R.I. Conservation District about its annual seedling sale, but the deadline had passed as it was received right after our last meeting.

NEWS & OBSERVATIONS: Bockes said that she had heard of there being fishers in Providence that had been the cause of a couple of people needing to get shots for rabies, and we know they are in this area so people should be careful for their children and pets and themselves not to come into contact with them.

MEMBERSHIP: Due to having lost several members we are in need of new ones.

TOWN COUNCIL: There have been a number of workshops about the budget, and the all-day referendum on the school budget will be on April 11.

TREASURER'S REPORT: The beginning balance was \$859.81. There was income of \$500.00 donation from NEMBA and total expenses of \$113.71 which leaves a balance at 3/31/2011 of \$1,246.10.

WEBSITE: Eastman said she would work on a notice looking for new members.

WORK PLAN: Novak submitted a draft for approval which is just a bare minimum of our core activities. Eastman suggested an addition to the fourth item. Bockes moved to accept the plan with the amendment. Sundelin seconded. Voted: unanimously (4-0) - Aye.

CITIZEN CONVERSATIONS: There will be a presentation for the Council on April 13. Kathy Swann will be doing the power point, and there will be written handouts as well so they will have all the raw information from people.

LAND & WATER SUMMIT: Each person had attended different workshops, but all agreed with Novak that the keynote speaker had been excellent. Eastman stated that she has attended quite a few seminars and that this one was very/exceptionally well run. Sundelin said that he had learned that it is important to do Historic as well as Conservation Easements on property. Bockes had learned about problems in North Kingstown with the Hunt River which are preventing development and leading to new laws regarding how many gallons

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per person will be allowed. This is way beyond rationing of water for lawns.

LAND TRUST: May 1st will be their Earth Day event at the Library. We will have a display again.

Novak told about an Interfaith Power and Light Conference he had attended at LaSalle Academy that he said was very good.

Bockes moved to adjourn at 9:00 P.M. Eastman seconded. Voted: unanimously (4-0) - Aye.

Sandra S. Bockes, Secretary WGCC

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

MAY 5, 2011

A regular meeting of the West Greenwich Conservation Commission was held on May 5, 2011. Present were: Daniel Novak, Robert Zuleger, Clifton Sundelin, Linda Eastman and Sandra Bockes. There were also a number of guests present.

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

There were no requests for advisory reviews.

BIG RIVER: Kenneth Burke, Executive Director of the Water Resources Board spoke. He stated that the existing Land Use Plan is "centered on reacting with the tenants and it has failed miserably." Over twelve homes have been vacated and are to be removed. The remaining tenants that are not original owners are being given five years to relocate, although the leases have not yet been executed.

Mr. Burke stated that it is unlikely that there will be a reservoir in Big River, but the plan is still to have wells for producing water. They are working with an engineer, but "it may be more complicated than had been thought" because the effects of wells would go beyond the area of Big River. Novak mentioned as an aside that during World War II Donald Harrington and his family were required to leave their homes because water was piped from Carrs Pond to Quonset for the military. Another factor is that, by statute, if they start drawing water from the area it will cease to be Open Space.

Mr. Burke also stated that "nobody wants to buy the water."

Mr. Burke's hope is to have a draft of a new Land Use Plan ready within four to five months to be able to start having input and a public hearing. He stated that he would be willing to come here to Town for meetings. He also stated that he would like to continue the recreational uses if/when they start to draw water.

Peter Gengler stated that people have been taking things from the vacated properties and even from the ones still being lived in. Joanne Lemaire said she had to shoo people off her property, and Zuleger stated that things had been taken from his old house as well. The situation was described as being like the Wild West.

Kathy Swann said that once the new leases come through for the remaining tenants that the Concerned Citizens for Big River group needs to start meeting again with a new focus of advocating for Land Use Plans. Because the original group was mostly made up of tenants, many of whom are no longer there, we will need a whole new contingent.

In addition, Mrs. Swann mentioned an idea for the old WRB office that had "basically come out of our Citizen Conversations."

EARTH DAY: The consensus was that the Clean Up had gone superbly. This year we think we had around 200 people who participated because we know not everyone signed in on the sheets. Everyone also said that the food was great, and the location at the Mishnock Barn was the best so far. We were fortunate in getting a lot of sponsors and filled over twelve 30-yard dumpsters. A lot of that is things, unlike the litter, that will not come back because access to the areas to be able to dump is being cut off.

Novak mentioned that the land Trust also had a very good event and weather for their Earth Day. We had a display set up there and got good reception.

MINUTES: Eastman moved to accept the Minutes as written. Sundelin seconded.

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Voted: Novak, Sundelin, Eastman and Bockes - Aye; Zuleger - Abstain.

CORRESPONDENCE: Bockes commented that, for whatever reason, we tend to get time-sensitive material right after our meetings so that by the next meeting it is too late to be able to comment or do anything about it. A notice from RIDEM about a workshop on the statewide assessment of water quality conditions, that was to be held on April 15, was a case in point because it was postmarked the day before our April meeting and received after that meeting, and the workshop would be over by several weeks before our May meeting. We also received an invitation from the Parade Committee for Memorial Day. Bockes stated that she felt it would be good to march in the parade this year, if others would be available. Four members committed to do so, and Bockes said she would send in the paperwork.

OUTDOOR FURNACES: Lisa Tomasso brought up that there is a bill up at the State House regarding these that would regulate them in ways that rural towns might not prefer.

NEWS & OBSERVATIONS: The extreme weather events in the South were mentioned. Also, Novak brought up an article on the oiling of eggs as a way to control the population of Canada geese, which are major polluters of waterways.

TREASURER'S REPORT: The balance at April 30, 2011 was \$1,218.95. This includes several donations toward Earth Day, but major expenses still need to be paid.

Novak stated that he had spoken with Dan Albro and if there was enough we would try to give him something for hosting the lunch at the Barn. Novak then moved to send him \$100.00, if there was enough after the other bills had been paid. Bockes seconded. Voted: unanimously (5-0) - Aye.

RIACC: There is a conference planned for the Fall titled "On the Same Page, and Speaking with One Voice". Also, they have concerns with proposed state legislation regarding conservation development.

TRAILS FOR TOURISM: The International Mountain Bikers and NEMBA will be making trails in Burlingame State Park as part of their "Better Living Through Trails" program. These can be quite a tourist draw and economic value to a community according to Peter Gengler and might be something that could be a value in the Big River Area if properly advertised.

WEBSITE: There was brief discussion.

CITIZEN CONVERSATIONS: The report was made to the Council at its last meeting. There were over a hundred recommendations in the raw data. Kathy Swann was the facilitator for the Conversations and presented the report so as to not take up too much of the Council's time. Bockes stated that she has already been working on one of the action steps having to do with an invasive plant.

Zuleger moved to adjourn at 9:13 P.M. Eastman seconded. Voted: unanimously (5-0) - Aye.

Sandra S. Bockes, Secretary WGCC

Sandra S. Bockes

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

JUNE 2, 2011

A regular meeting of the West Greenwich Conservation commission was held on June 2, 2011. Present were: Daniel Novak, Clifton Sundelin, Linda Eastman and Sandra Bockes. Absent: Robert Zuleger. Guests: Christopher Grube, Paul Kaltschnee, Stephanie Madden and Joanne Lemaire.

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

There were no requests for advisory reviews.

MINUTES: Eastman moved to accept the minutes as written. Sundelin seconded. Voted: unanimously (4-0) - Aye.

CORRESPONDENCE: Nothing requiring action.

NEWS/OBSERVATIONS/CHANGES: Novak had brought in some books for those who wanted to borrow.

There was some discussion on some of the extreme weather we seem to be seeing lately. Bockes remarked on the flooding up in the Burlington/Montpelier/Stowe area of Vermont and that there had been a tornado for the first time since the 1930's while she was up there. That brought up the tornadoes in Springfield, Massachusetts. There was discussion as to whether most people are at all prepared for something like that. The Greek philosopher Heraclitus maintained that change is omnipresent and "You cannot even step into the same stream twice". Novak stated that he had seen a fisher and that he is doing his first serious garden this year.

June 20 is the Town Financial Meeting.

TOWN COUNCIL: Mr. Kaltschnee explained what the School Committee had done, which was totally against what the voters had voted for, and how that will affect the town's budget.

TREASURER'S REPORT: The beginning balance was \$1,218.95. There were expenses of \$1,342.20 and a donation of \$100.00 which leaves a balance of (\$23.25). We do, however, expect an additional donation.

BIG RIVER AREA: The primary directive is as a water resource, but it also has value as a preserve for animals and natural resources, as a town asset, for recreational uses, as an educational location and for some residential use for a while longer. It would be hoped that any new Land Use Plan that is decided on would have input from the town. Eastman stated that she would like to see it used more and to see more trails for fire safety.

MEMORIAL DAY: Bockes and Eastman said that they felt it had been a great day. Bockes showed a picture of our members who marched in the parade with our banner.

WEBSITE: Novak stated that he would like to put animal sightings, among other things, such as the fisher he had seen on the site. Eastman said that she had seen a hen turkey chase a fox away from her babies and that people might find that interesting, too.

TRANSFER STATION BULLETIN BOARD: This is a great communication idea as a large percentage of residents use the transfer station. It is for upcoming events, not junk and not political or commercial notices. The Town Sergeant will be maintaining it.

RIACC: There will be a Fall Conference, details to follow.

WORK PLAN: Novak stated that the Greene School students are eager to help us and that he thinks one of our outreach things should be with them this Fall.

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JAPANESE KNOTWEED: Bockes spoke about the presentation by the Natural History Survey people, held here at the Town Hall, for the our DPW people and some from other towns. They all realized that they had been trying to deal with it in exactly the wrong way because they were just chopping it up and thereby spreading it. The presentation was well received, and it seemed they intended to put the BMP's to use.

There was some discussion on some of the things the Commission has done over the years. One particular success was the Earthgro situation with its stench. Mr. Grube had a similar story about a sewer outfall where he had previously lived, in Connecticut.

Bockes moved to adjourn at 9:47 P.M. Eastman seconded. Voted: unanimously (4-0) - Aye.

Sandra S. Bockes, Secretary WGCC

Sandra S. Bockes

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

JULY 7, 2011

A regular meeting of the West Greenwich Conservation Commission was held on July 7, 2011. Present were: Daniel Novak, Linda Eastman, Clifton Sundelin, Stephanie Madden, Christopher Grube and Sandra Bockes. Absent: Robert Zuleger. Also present were Paul and Mary Kaltschnee and Robert McGuire.

Novak called the meeting to order at 7:07 P.M.

There were no requests for advisory reviews.

Mr. McGuire asked to borrow a copy of the Conservation Inventory as he is thinking of placing some of his property under protection. Eastman loaned him her copy.

MINUTES: Eastman moved to accept the Minutes as written with the addition of her \$25.00 donation to the Treasurer's Report. Sundelin seconded. Voted: Novak, Eastman, Sundelin and Bockes - Aye; Madden and Grube - Abstain.

CORRESPONDENCE: On Tuesday, July 12, the Louttit Library will be having Dave Marchetti and his animals at 6:30 P.M. He's always fun.

NEWS & OBSERVATIONS: Bockes was able to identify the "cobra-like" snake that was seen on Congdon Mill Road as an Eastern Hog-nose Snake, which is completely harmless unless you're a toad which is their preferred food. It tries to make itself look dangerous, but then will play dead if you continue to bother it.

There was a letter in the Providence Journal from a prior head of the Water Resources Board about eminent domain and the Big River property. He stated that the law would require the property to be offered back to the original owners, or their heirs, and then to the City of Providence, if it is not used for the purpose for which it was taken.

There was discussion on different experiences people have had with appliances having the Energy Star rating.

TOWN COUNCIL: The major thing was the Financial Meeting. Novak stated that he had been very impressed with the work done on that and had said so at the meeting. Mr. Kaltschnee stated that the plan is to keep the taxes even as long as possible.

TREASURER'S REPORT: There were two \$100.00 expenses in June, so we ended the year with a balance of \$26.75. We are starting the new fiscal year with \$1,200.00.

CITIZEN'S CONVERSATIONS: The Council will be discussing that at their July meeting. Novak said that he has some questions for the new Economic Development Commission.

WATER/AIR/RESOURCE MONITORING: Nothing to report at this meeting.

BIG RIVER: There was a meeting with the WRB and the tenants, and the outcome is that the original people will get leases that go to 2034 and the others to 2016, an extension of five years. Unfortunately, there seems to be no aid available for the ones whose rents have been increased to market rate.

GREENE SCHOOL: Novak reported that the dinner of all local products was wonderful and that the kids did a great job. They want to be involved in things with us.

RIACC: There will not be a Fall conference, but an expanded annual meeting in March. There is a new person on the board.

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WEB PAGES: Novak stated that we should have all sorts of interesting things on our web site. The fact that we still need two alternates should be on it. There was discussion about facebook, but that needs further research and a legal opinion.

NEW & CONTINUING BUSINESS: There was orientation for the two new members. Novak passed out the work plan and review criteria. A bill that would have forced towns to have smaller lots and abused the idea of conservation development was defeated.

There was discussion regarding an August meeting after which Bockes moved to adjourn to the next meeting in September. Madden seconded. Voted: unanimously (6-0) - Aye. Meeting adjourned at 8:35 P.M.

Sandra S. Bockes, Secretary WGCC

Sandra S. Bockes

**TOWN OF WEST GREENWICH
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
AUGUST 4, 2011**

This meeting was cancelled by unanimous vote at the July meeting.

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

SEPTEMBER 8, 2011

A regular meeting of the West Greenwich Conservation Commission was held on September 8, 2011. Present were: Daniel Novak, Robert Zuleger, Linda Eastman, Stephanie Madden, Christopher Grube and Sandra Bockes. Absent: Clifton Sundelin.

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

There were no requests for advisor reviews.

MINUTES: Novak stated that he wanted to add to the July Minutes, under the section having to do with the Town Council, that he had also asked a question at the Financial Meeting about the long-term plan for the town. He then moved to accept the Minutes with that one amendment. Grube seconded. Voted: Novak, Eastman, Madden, Grube and Bockes - Aye. Zuleger - Abstain.

CORRESPONDENCE: None.

NEWS & OBSERVATIONS: Eastman brought in two articles from the Journal. One was by Henry Homeyer on invasive plants and insects and ways to battle them. The other was a great article by Scott Turner on the Tillinghast Management Area in which he refers to it as being "as close to natural royalty as we've found in Rhode Island."

Novak stated that it is becoming increasingly difficult to talk about the environment by itself in light of more powerful storms, etc. People then told their personal stories about "Irene". Bockes stated that most of the trees she had seen down broke at a place that already had rot in it. She also said that the way the trees get trimmed by the people hired by National Grid is terrible. This year in particular they have been topping pine trees and others and basically guaranteeing they will die and fall within a very short time. The other thing she mentioned is the policy of getting areas back onto power where the greatest population is, which is the cities, but those people have city water and sewer and usually natural gas, so they have water to drink and bathe with and have sanitary facilities and as long as they have a gas range can also cook. The people in the rural areas that are on private wells lose their water and therefore their sanitary facilities when they lose their power, so those should really be the ones that are the priorities, after hospitals, fire stations and police stations, of course.

Eastman stated that she had spoken with one of the workers from another state who goes around to help get the power back when there is a problem like this, and that he had never seen a place where the trees were allowed to be as close to the wires as here. She said he told her that in other parts of the country trees are completely cut back from the poles and wires and a lot farther than they are here.

TOWN COUNCIL: Paul Kaltschnee stated that things have been pretty quiet and that negotiations are ongoing. As for the storm, he said that the roads had been able to be kept pretty clear, but that the big problem was with getting the electricity back on especially in the areas with a lot of trees down along with the wires.

TREASURER'S REPORT: The Treasurer was absent but had called Novak to say that the balance was still at \$1,200.00.

BIG RIVER: There will be a meeting of the citizen's group on Sunday, September 11, at 6:30 P.M. at the Fire Station. The WRB will now be under Statewide

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Zuleger stated that there is a lot of dumping going on, that near Tarbox Pond the debris from the catch basin had just been left in the way. The comment was also made that the field and meadow restoration that was done a few years ago was just a big waste of money because its a huge mess because the stumps and tree debris were never removed, so trees and brush are just growing back through all the mess.

WEB PAGES: Novak stated that there is no systematic way to add to it or make changes. We would like some ideas for the next meeting.

TRANSFER STATION BULLETIN BOARD: Novak wants to speak with the Sergeant about putting notices on it.

RIACC: They are looking at the legislation on Conservation Development. The Summit will be in March.

NEW & CONTINUED BUSINESS: The Greene School wants to be a resource for us.

The land Trust event is on Sunday, September 25 from Noon to 5:00 P.M. We will have a table there again. One thing we may do is ask for ideas on how to get along without electricity. Zuleger said that he had taken his solar garden lights into the house to use instead of flashlights or candles. Then they went outside the next day to recharge.

BOOK REPORTS: As there was no meeting in August, Novak had suggested that we each read something on which to report at this meeting. Madden went first. She had read a book entitled Break Through. The gist of the book is that environmentalists need to change to more positive images/messages from the horror stories they have been using to try to get people to change their behavior. They should advocate for more renewable energy sources rather than just the sacrifices because guilt doesn't work.

Bockes was second. She reported on articles from three different publications. The first, from the "Environmental Observer" was on the Strategic Flood Map that Northern Ireland has developed. They have projected out the risks to the year 2030 with the idea that land-use planning can then avoid allowing new development in the floodplains. They have been experiencing increasing significant flooding in recent years and are taking climate change seriously.

The second article was published on the website "Truthout" and is about two projects the Obama administration is trying to fast-track, both of which are environmental disasters. One is a coal mining project in the Powder River Basin in Montana and Wyoming. The coal would have to be shipped to the Pacific coast and then to Asia. The second is the tar sands pipeline across the middle of the country from Canada. Both projects would be immensely damaging to the environment. Ireland wants to protect its citizens, while our government seems to do the most harm it possible can.

The third article is about people who deny climate change and the excuses they make from the "New Internationalist" magazine. It identifies five types of deniers, but basically they are all people who are either getting something from denying it, or who may at least sort of believe in it, but who don't want to give up any of their stuff or conveniences because, after all, life is short.

Eastman was third. She read the book Cradle to Cradle. One part that most interested her was about a large company that had constructed its buildings using all environmental technology and even had a green roof with grass on it. It intrigued her so that she suggested that maybe an area along Route 95 could be used for a company like that that could showcase green technology. She suggested the junkyard near Exit 6A and that maybe the land could be free, but

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the company would have to clean it up because it's almost certainly contaminated. Even though it's part of the Big River Area, it's not pristine land. Novak stated that "out-of-sight, out-of-mind doesn't work anymore."

The rest of the reports will be given at the next meeting.

Zuleger moved to adjourn at 8:50 P.M. Bockes seconded. Voted: unanimously (6-0) - Aye.

Sandra S. Bockes, Secretary WGCC

Sandra S. Bockes

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

OCTOBER 6, 2011

A regular meeting of the West Greenwich Conservation Commission was held on October 6, 2011. Present were: Daniel Novak, Linda Eastman, Robert Zuleger, Clifton Sundelin, Christopher Grube and Sandra Bockes. Absent: Stephanie Madden. Also present were: Paul and Mary Kaltschnee and Lisa Tomasso.

Novak called the meeting to order at 7:02 P.M.

There were no requests for advisory reviews.

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

CORRESPONDENCE: Bockes had received a letter from the RI Natural History Survey about the fact that the project to control Japanese Knotweed along Route 165 had been completed with a 95% success rate and that it would now be up to individual homeowners and communities to watch out for it and take steps to control it. Included was a pamphlet on Best Management Practices for doing that; chopping it up is the worst thing that can be done because each node will take root and start a new plant.

NEWS & OBSERVATIONS: Novak said that his neighbors want to get together after hurricane/tropical storm Irene and that he is looking into a solar battery back-up or generator for his water pump. Bockes stated that the town had done a good job getting ready and then getting crews out and also mentioned the Emergency Preparedness facility near Dan's Place and that they had helped.

Novak mentioned that he knows someone who is interested in wind power for his property, and Mr. Kaltschnee stated that the Planning Board is working on an ordinance about that.

Everyone said that they had gotten very low electric bills, and Zuleger said he had heard the power company had way exceeded their emergency fund for dealing with the storm and would be having to charge its customers a surcharge to make it up.

Bockes stated that she had attended the grand opening of the Maxwell Mays Nature Reserve on Route 102 in Coventry. There are walking trails and even a cottage on the pond available for rent by the day, or week.

The Scituate Art Festival is this week-end.

Bockes mentioned having attended the "Publick Occurences" about pensions at RI College.

Novak stated that environmental organizations are hurting due to the economy.

New England Grassroots Environmental Fund seminar is October 22. They give lots of small seed grants for environmental purposes. It will be in New Bedford.

TOWN COUNCIL: Mr. Kaltschnee stated that there is not a lot to report right now. The Financial Committee is looking at a number of things.

HYDRONIC HEATERS: Mrs. Tomasso stated that there had been discussion on these, but the legislation did not get out of committee.

TREASURER'S REPORT: The balance is still at \$1,200.00.

WATER/AIR/RESOURCE MONITORING: Nothing to report at this time.

BIG RIVER: There is still confusion as to the status of the residents and who now has jurisdiction there. At the last meeting Ken Burke said that there are more problems with putting in wells that had been expected. If they were

to draw out as much water as they need to be able to have a buyer for the water, they would lower the water table in the wetlands too much and also adversely affect people's wells outside the area. Although the soils are such that a reservoir would leak quite a bit, it would be possible to do one there as had originally been planned. Eastman stated that the Army Corps of Engineers does not want any more surface reservoirs. Zuleger stated that he is very concerned about the State's plans for the property. There are economic pressures about developing along the Route 95 corridor. Mr. Tomasso said that there is a legislated moratorium so it can only be open space.

Zuleger stated that he had spoken with a Mr. Roger J. Massey who is studying woodcocks. Although the grouse are not making it, some of the areas that were cleared have been good for the woodcocks. He would be glad to come to one of our meetings.

At our Earth Day Clean-Up we had filled three dumpsters at what had been the Read house. Because the drive was not blocked off afterwards, people have dumping all kinds of junk in there, including a bunch of old kitchen cabinets and other construction debris obviously put there by some renovator who didn't want to pay to get rid of it. Also, Ray Moffett's house has been totally vandalized with rotten food left there. The demolitions have not taken place in a timely fashion.

CELEBRATE WEST GREENWICH DAY: This was a great event put on by the Land Trust. Kathy Swann and Kevin Breene did a very interesting presentation on her book, and it sold very well. Novak said the conversations with people, many about energy sources, were quite valuable. Some people also filled out our comment cards, with one child drawing a picture.

WEBSITE: Madden stated she would take a look at it and make suggestions.

RIACC: The Summit is still planned for March.

GREENE SCHOOL: Novak has had some dialogue with their science teacher as to how we could partner with them on projects. They were a big help at our Earth Day Clean-Up and would like to do more. We wish more of our residents would participate and maybe get groups together in their own neighborhoods to clean up. Many of our participants come from all over the state and even from other states.

BOOK REPORT: Grube reported on the book The Ripple Effect by Alex Prud'homme. It is about water and all the things that have been done to it and how we manage this essential resource (very badly in many cases.) China's water is so polluted that they can't use it to cool their nuclear reactors. It talks about the water wars in California and the fact that they have drawn down their aquifer to the point that it is getting intrusion by saltwater. There has been talk about a pipeline from the Mississippi when what is really needed is some serious conservation measures and improvements to existing infrastructure. One thing that would help would be to have separate storm and waste sewers. That is very expensive to retrofit, but separate sewers would allow the rainwater to go back into the aquifers instead of being mixed with the polluting sewage. New York has banned hydrofracking for gas because the chemicals could pollute their water source for some nine million people. There are no easy answers, but there is also no more water on this planet than there has ever been. Very little of that is freshwater, so it doesn't make sense to do things to it that make it unfit for consumption.

Zuleger moved to adjourn at 8:50 P.M. Bockes seconded. Voted: Unanimously (6-0) - Aye.

Sandra S. Bockes, Secretary WGCC

Sandra S. Bockes

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

NOVEMBER 3, 2011

A regular meeting of the West Greenwich Conservation Commission was held on November 3, 2011. Present were: Daniel Novak, Linda Eastman, Robert Zuleger, Stephanie Madden, Christopher Grube and Sandra Bockes. Absent: Clifton Sundelin.

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

There were no requests for advisory reviews.

PRESENTATION BY ROGER J. MASSE ON THE AMERICAN WOODCOCK: They are being studied in the Big River area, Arcadia and the Great Swamp. According to Mr. Masse the population of woodcock is doing pretty well, and the clear-cutting that was done in some areas of Big River has been a help to them, although not so much for the grouse. Woodcock need young forests with patches of open areas that are a minimum of three acres in size. They spend their days feeding in wet thickets and then go to open meadows to avoid predators at night. About 80% of their diet is earthworms. This study is a combined URI and DEM project, and the presentation showed how the (mostly male) birds are captured and fitted with radio transmitters so they can be tracked. One thing the researchers are trying to determine is if the woodcock can/should be considered an "umbrella species" because it needs a fairly large habitat, so if it is protected it will then protect other species that need smaller areas within its larger one.

BIG RIVER: There is concern that the town be able to have serious input into any new management plan for the area. Within a few days after our October meeting Ray Moffett's house, which was vacant and had been severely vandalized already, was destroyed by arson. Peter Gengler stated that a sustainable trails system would be a good type of economic development because there are two and a half (2½) times more mountain bikers in the United States than there are golfers. Such trails are also good for hikers, and people who come to an area for the recreation then also spend money at local businesses. One thing that people may not realize is that although there are issues with building an actual reservoir, all of them are solvable, so that is still a possibility because apparently it is not true that the soils cannot hold water. It would leak, but then so does the Scituate Reservoir.

MINUTES: The question was raised as to the proper way to have referred to Lisa Tomasso. Novak felt it should have been something other than "Mrs." Tomasso. The correct answer, with thanks to Kathy Swann and apologies to Lisa Tomasso should have been "The Honorable." Grube moved to accept the Minutes as written with that correction. Zuleger seconded. Voted: Novak, Eastman, Zuleger, Grube and Bockes - Aye; Madden - Abstain.

CORRESPONDENCE: There was a nice letter via e-mail from Terry Gray; the annual cub scout turkey dinner will be on November 12. The Greene School dinner and auction will be tomorrow night. There is a Drinking Water Workshop on December 1; space is limited.

OBSERVATIONS: Gail Murray has been tracking the power outages from the last storm in Connecticut; it is projected to take weeks to get everyone back.

Bockes referenced an article by Scott Turner in the October 29 Journal. He was talking about preserving coastal open space for migrating shorebirds, but ends by saying how valuable and vital the preserved and conserved land is for the future of all species, including our own.

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TOWN COUNCIL: Nothing to report.

TREASURER'S REPORT: There was one expense of \$16.03, which leaves a balance of \$1,183.97.

WEB PAGE: Madden is working on it.

REGIONAL/STATE: Novak stated that he had attended the Bioneers Conference in New Bedford on October 22. The Land and Water Summit will be in March.

Zuleger stated that he would get Mr. Masse's address so the Secretary could send him a thank you note.

Bockes moved to adjourn at 9:05 P.M. Zuleger seconded. Voted: unanimously (6-0) - Aye.

Sandra S. Bockes, Secretary WGCC

Sandra S. Bockes

**TOWN OF WEST GREENWICH
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
DECEMBER 8, 2011**

A regular meeting of the West Greenwich Conservation Commission was held on December 8, 2011. Present were: Daniel Novak, Linda Eastman, Clifton Sundelin, Stephanie Madden, Christopher Grube and Sandra Bockes. Absent: Robert Zuleger. Also present were: Paul and Mary Kaltschnee and, from the Greene School, Max Bromberg and his father, Ephraim.

Novak called the meeting to order at 7:07 P.M.

There were no requests for advisory reviews.

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

CORRESPONDENCE: There was a letter from RIACC requesting the names of two members to attend the business meeting at the Summit in March and to answer a short survey. Bockes and Grube volunteered as the two attendees, and the survey and form will be completed by Bockes and returned to RIACC.

NEWS/OBSERVATIONS/QUESTIONS: Bockes mentioned several items having to do with wildlife. The first was an article having to do with the fact that after it got to the U.S. West Nile Virus mutated and found a new host in the American Robin and became more easily transmitted by local mosquitoes. Then there is the new Tiger Mosquito that got here from a load of tires from Asia, is larger than the local ones and flies during the day, and is better at transmitting both EEE and West Nile diseases.

The other article was more hopeful as it was about the Wolf Conservation Center outside New York City where red wolves are being raised with the hope of being able to return them to the wild in North Carolina or along the Arizona-New Mexico border.

2012 CALENDAR: After brief discussion, Bockes moved to accept all the dates for the 2012 meetings. Grube seconded. Voted: unanimously (6-0) - Aye.

TOWN COUNCIL: Lee Kissinger was appointed to fulfill Greg Coucher's position on the School Board as he had needed to resign. The Financial Review Committee is up and running but will need to get a replacement for Lee Kissinger. The Auditor was at the last meeting. Due to the fact that the State had told the town the wrong amount it needed to pay into the pension fund, and the town has paid every penny it was told to, we are underfunded there, but are otherwise in good condition. The Auditor and Town Treasurer will be looking into the underfunding problem.

TREASURER'S REPORT: There were no expenses in November, so the balance is still at \$1,183.97.

DRINKING WATER CONFERENCE: Grube attended this and reported some findings. An Inventory such as we have done was strongly recommended as being very good to do. Regulations to protect watersheds are needed. North Kingstown tracks all septic systems: when they are pumped (they require pumping every three [3] years from the date of installation.) If not properly maintained, the new types of septic systems are worse than the standard ones. There is a recommendation that all subdivisions have a central septic system to service all the homes because that is much better for the aquifer than having a well and septic system for each lot. The tank acts as a "shock absorber." Another thing is that affordable housing projects are wreaking havoc on aquifers and the environment. Novak commented that affordable housing has been very poorly done by the State. Grube continued that impervious areas create drainage problems and there needs to be strategies for dealing with those. Jamestown only allows a certain

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percentage of coverage on any lot so as to try to avoid drainage problems.

Kaltschnee stated that Ken Burke has just presented a 47-page report on a plan for water in the State. Stage one has a plan for land use in Big River included.

BIG RIVER: The next meeting will be this Sunday, December 11, at 6:30 P.M. The State is now looking at using water from the area for the southern part of the State rather than the north as originally planned. Elaine McGuire is looking into the archives; there are some 250, or so, boxes with the information jumbled together because it was not carefully packed up.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Narragansett is going to be doing a series of citizen conversations this coming year.

The Greene School will be doing a free program on Nature and Society at the Mishnock Barn on December 13, from 5:00 to 7:00 P.M.

STUDENT LIAISON: Max Bromberg will be doing a project for his science class at the Greene School and wants to work with us on it. Various possibilities were discussed.

WEBSITE: Madden stated that she had connected with the Town Planner about it. The thought is to have a picture for the main page, Minutes of the meetings, the need for two (2) alternates, the Mission Statement, maybe some links to other sites, and so forth.

EARTH DAY: There was brief discussion about the need to start planning early.

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

Sandra S. Bockes, Secretary WGCC

Sandra S. Bockes