

Environment Council of Rhode Island



Membership Meeting, Dept. of Admin. Bldg., Conference Room B
January 6, 2020 5:30 PM – 7:00 PM

Attendees:

Emily Koo, Victoria Leytin, Justin Boyan, Terry Gray, Jim Stahl, Paige Therrien, Ken Filarski, Paul Beaudette, Nicole DiPaolo, Dana Goodman, Katherine Gibson, Judee Burr, Greg Gerritt, Mal Skowron, Hank Webster, Liza Burkin, David Brunetti, Meg Kerr, Angie Koziara, Paul Roselli, Kai Salem, Jerry Elmer, Sue Korte, Ryan Mulcahey, Eugenia Marks, John Flaherty, Barry Schiller, Grant Dulgarrian, Greg Schultz.

Agenda:

1. Welcome
2. Introductions
3. Approval of December minutes
4. Office report (Greg Gerritt)
5. No President's report (Priscilla is away)
6. Speakers:
 - a. Transportation and Climate Initiative, Terry Gray
 - b. RI Transit Master Plan, John Flaherty
 - c. Our Streets PVD, Liza Burkin
7. Reports:
 - a. Pol Comm (Kai Salem)
 - b. Providence Environmental Task Force
8. Reports from ECRI fiscal agency projects
 - a. Green Infrastructure Coalition
 - b. Energize Coalition
 - c. School recycling
9. Discussion

Minutes

1. Welcome

Greg convenes the meeting at 5:30. Begins with overview of what ECRI and the ECRI Ed Fund is. Reminder that ECRI members can vote, non-members cannot vote but can otherwise freely participate in the meeting and discussions.

2. Introductions

3. Approval of December Minutes

Jerry moves to approve the minutes, Ken seconds. All vote in favor. Minutes approved.

4. Office Report (Greg):

- \$32,532 ECRI and \$42,027 EdFund
- We are on budget this year
- We will send out a press release for the Tisdale Awards very soon.
- Send Greg your raffle items if you have any.
- RI Nature Video festival notice was sent out today.
- Preparing for 50th Earth Day at RI College.No President's Report (Priscilla is away)

5. No President's Report (Priscilla is away)

6. Speakers:

a. Transportation and Climate Initiative, Terry Gray

- Bi-partisan group, 13 government entities – market-based program to minimize emissions from transportation sector.
- This initiative represents a significant amount of people, money and vehicles: 52 million registered vehicles among participating entities.
- Allowances for emissions to be purchased by oil companies in an auction process, participating states would set a regional cap which would decrease overtime.
- Memorandum of understanding has been developed, now open for public comment.
- Teri is hoping that ECRI members will look at the MOU and support it. Says it is a powerful part of what is needed to reduce emissions to targeted levels in the transportation sector.
- 20, 22 or 25 % reduction from 2022 – 2032 to force innovation and force emissions reductions.
- Governor Baker and Governor Raimondo are behind this initiative.
- Will be seeking legislation to authorize this in 2021.
- Comments from environmental justice groups have been incorporated into the MOU. Areas near highways are most impacted by pollution from the transportation sector.
- Target to have Governor's sign on to this MOU by April to commit to seeking legislative authority.
- Concern over negative narrative that's already circulating around this initiative, thinking through seeking professional communications help.

6. Speakers, continued:

b. *RI Transit Master Plan*, John Flaherty

- Transit Master Plan: Transit Forward RI 2040
- RIPTA is authoring the plan, though they were unable to be here tonight
- Less than 3% of RI population uses transit to commute to work. While most of state's population lives within a 10 minute walk to work.
- We're one of two statewide transit systems in the country (the other being Delaware)
- Our inadequate transit is starting to change – more of a connection between having a good transit system and having healthy and thriving communities. People & employers starting to care much more about good transit.
- Three transit scenarios, a kind of good, better, best. It's going to come with a big price tag. The Transportation & Climate Initiative can be part of the funding. More funding from the federal government. You need a clear plan with community buy-in to get this federal funding; that's why we're going through this thorough process. We need to be ready with a plan and a vision when funds come around that we can apply for.
- Discussion of changes going on within the MBTA, including the Providence line. Electrification and other improvements could shorten the Providence-Boston trip to 45 minutes with trains every 30 minutes.

c. *Our Streets PVD*, Liza Burkin

- Coalition focused on Providence, local branch of a national organization that Liza works for that's based in Colorado; modeled after organizations in other cities.
- Goal of building mobility networks quickly in US cities; broaden and deepen the conversation locally. Members include Farm Fresh RI; Grow Smart RI; Southside Community Land Trust; and more.
- Our Streets PVD – streets are used for a multitude of activities and this coalition exists to bring them together.
- Local mode shift to get people out of their cars and into other forms of transportation.
- Objectives: Broaden support for this work; Deepen connections between organizations; Selling the campaign.
- Example: Protected bike lane installed on Eaton Street without enough public outreach and approval – now the city is dismantling it.
- Running this campaign as if they were electing a candidate: Ads, phone banks, canvassing, even direct action.
- Not asking people to stop driving; asking people to accept changes to the street that would allow for more choices.
- Discussion of free fare – hard to compete with free parking. Brown and RI College give free transit to their students and affiliates.
- See more at OurStreetsPVD.org/Join

7. Reports:

a) Pol Comm – Climate Crisis Campaign and Coffee Hour (Kai Salem)

- Coffee Hour: January 15, 2020 at 3 pm. Please invite people.
- Wednesday, Jan 8 at 4pm – Help Kai sign postcards at DoA.
- Climate Crisis Campaign finalized statement for other groups to sign to join and support the campaign.
- Send Kai your information if you'd like to be a part of the "Faces of ECRI" booklet.
- Next PolComm meeting is next Monday at 4:30-6pm.
- Climate Crisis Campaign Communications Group is meeting tomorrow, Tuesday at Clean Water Action at 9am.

b) Providence Environmental Task Force

- Julian Dricks presented about the Port of Providence at the last meeting.
- Providence Sustainability Task Force is doing some good restructuring.
- Kai gave an update at the Climate Crisis Campaign.
- Next Meeting Jan 22 at 4pm.

8. Reports from ECRI fiscal agency projects

a) *Green Infrastructure Coalition*

- Working to launch Providence Stormwater Innovation Center at Roger Williams Park.
- Audubon RI hiring full-time coordinator for this thanks to a grant.

b) Energize Coalition

- No activity.

c) School Recycling

- No activity.

9. Discussion

- Discussion of how to make ECRI's work more visible in the news and in the community.
- Meeting adjourned 7 pm.