

Environment Council of Rhode Island



Membership Meeting, Dept. of Admin. Bldg., Conference Room B
September 4, 2018, 5:30 PM – 7:30 PM

Attendees: Meg Kerr, Eugenia Marks, Katherine Gibson, Sue Korte, Kai Salam, Erica Niedowski, Jerry Elmer, Richard Dionne, Ken Filarski, Rupert Friday, Judee Burr, Angie Koziara, John Berard, Paul Beaudette, Greg Gerritt, Erich Stephens, Sophia Owen

Agenda:

1. Approval of minutes
2. Office report (Greg Gerritt)
3. President's report (Meg Kerr)
 - a. ECRI coffee hour
 - b. ECRI lobby day
 - c. Discussion of invited presentations for upcoming meetings
4. PolComm Report (John Berard)
5. Report on ECRI retreat planning
6. Invenergy update (Jerry Elmer)
7. Presentation on Vineyard Wind (Erich Stephens)
8. Reports from ECRI representatives on boards and commissions
 - a. WRB
 - b. EERMC
 - c. Other
9. Reports from ECRI fiscal agency projects
 - a. Green Infrastructure Coalition
 - b. Energize Coalition
10. Announcements (all)

Minutes

1. Approval of May minutes

Paul Beaudette moves to approve the May meeting minutes, Jerry Elmer seconds. All in favor.

2. Office Report (Greg Geritt)

Office moving? Hopefully not, but we need to find someone to replace RILTC which is moving to a bigger space in our shared office. Either that or move. SEG may find a roommate for the office, but maybe not. We have enough stuff that we need an office door that locks. But not much to move if you have a suitable affordable space. Current rent \$250 per month.

Finances

ECRI \$31,984.17 – most ever in the account and \$360 more than same date last year dues. Since June 1, \$5,450, which is over 90% of the budgeted \$6000. Those who have not yet paid, will get dues follow up in September. Last year by this date only \$4,925 in dues which ended up by 6/1/2018 as \$6,200. Last year Income \$7569, Expenses \$8,732.25, Net (- \$1,163.25)

Ed Fund Office for FY 2017. Income \$33,440.53, Expenses \$29654.16, Net \$3786.37

If you want the details, Greg can provide them.

Balance 8/30/18: \$53,016.79; 8/30/17: \$50,010.23

We have approximately 2 years budget in the bank with no debt.

Fiscal agency account: GIC - \$65,931.97; Energize - \$46.09; CWS - \$1,475.41; Total \$67,453.47

We shall be getting a check soon for RI School Recycling Club grant.

Greg thinking ahead on a topic and a place for the annual meeting next year.

The National Wildlife Federation is forming a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice committee – does anyone else in ECRI want to join this committee? Judee and Greg will discuss

Please sign up with Greg to bring snacks to the meeting!

3. President's Report (Meg Kerr)

We do not have people responsible to coordinate ECRI coffee hour or ECRI lobby day yet. Contact Meg if you are interested. Meg has a step-by-step guide on how to run these. Greg has volunteered to support this; Genie can help with hospitality.

Discussion of invited presentations for upcoming meetings:

- Janet Coit and someone from the RI Woodland Partnership, likely GrowSmart: Renewable Energy Siting and conservation of forested land – let's have a robust conversation about this at one meeting
- Macky McCleary talking about water issues – Water Resources Board
- Port of Providence/Port Authority – greening the port of providence
- Frank Carini/Childhood Lead Action Project talking about lead contamination in Providence
- John Berard talking about plastics work
- Climate Action or Indivisible – the politics of climate change
- Carbon Neutral Providence project – with an equity lens
- Young Farmer's Network – talk about organic farming in Rhode Island and how the environmental community can support organic farming

4. Retreat Update

When: October 11 from 4:30pm - 8:30pm

Where: 99 Morris Avenue, at the Friends Meeting House. Intersection Olney and Hope St. One long block from Hope Street and #1 RIPTA bus.

The topics:

1. Visioning, Planning and Goal-setting for ECRI - Discussing goals for the year ahead and our long-term vision and goals
2. Equity in ECRI: Discussion of diversity and representation of individuals and organizations in ECRI, brainstorming ways to make ECRI welcoming and accessible to all organizations.
3. How to Encourage ECRI Member Participation - How can we expand our membership? How do we facilitate exciting programs that our members want to participate in? What is the role and future of ECRI staff?

A handful of people who responded to our survey said they'd like to volunteer. Would other ECRI members like to help plan and facilitate our retreat? Sign up on the sheet. Jobs include:

Prior to retreat, includes (and could require at least 1 in person meeting and a couple of planning calls)

- Helping to finalize the agenda and topic content & related activities
- Coordinating on food options and placing order

Retreat day, includes:

- Set up and breakdown
- Time keeper(s)
- Note taker(s)
- Facilitation of topics and related activities

Let's have a call out to get ECRI members to come!

Send an email to Greg with an excited invitation – accessible by bus! There will be food.

4. PolComm Report (John Berard)

John passed around a copy of the data for the report card – need support finalizing the formula for evaluating the House. Right now, the formula is making members of the House of Representatives especially look like they are doing more than they actually have done recently.

Paul's suggestion – we could weight the bills to give higher priority to ECRI priorities.

Meg's suggestion – we could grade on a curve.

PolComm will be meeting on the second Monday of the month from 4:30pm to 6pm at the Clean Water Action office.

5. Invenergy update (Jerry Elmer)

Final hearing for the permitting of the Invenergy plant taking place between now and December 6, 2018. Moving more slowly than expected. Protest signs are allowed in the hearing – all hearings are held in the PUC build-

ing at 89 Jefferson Blvd., Conference Room A. Sessions on Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 10am and on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 9:30am. The witnesses on GHG emissions and climate impacts will be heard Sept 18, 20, and 26. The witnesses on biodiversity and forest impacts will be Nov 1. The witnesses on whether the plant is needed will be October 16, 17 and 30.

September 28 – capacity supply obligation (CSO) for Invenergy, will it be disqualified by the ISO? There is currently no plant or permit for a plant. Will make a decision between September 2018 and February 2019.

6. Presentation on Vineyard Wind (Erich Stephens)

Erich is the founding executive director of People’s Power and Light.

Offshore wind policy is finally paving the way for projects. MA law requires 2400 MW additional procurement of offshore wind. NJ 3500 MW of offshore wind by 2030. And more in New England.

This company is a partnership between Avangrid Renewables (more than 6500 MW of wind and solar, part of Iberdola) and Copenhagen Infrastructure Partners (invest in the name of Danish pension funds). Not looking for funds – ready to build projects.

Community benefits agreement with Vineyard Power Coop – more of a community-oriented way to develop large-scale renewable projects

Won competitive bid to serve Massachusetts – Section 83C (requires 1600 MW of offshore wind). Vineyard Wind bid 800 MW – because of pricing (6.5 cents/kWh). Selected from 27 proposals. Submitted permit sooner to capture Federal Tax Credit before it is phased out.

2010 – 2017: Stakeholder process of consultation with many stakeholders

The Vineyard Wind project:

- 800 MW
- 106 turbine locations
- 8-19 MW turbines – up to 100 turbines
- 14 miles from Martha’s Vineyard and Nantucket
- Use of local ports: New Bedford and Vineyard Haven

Environmental Benefits: ~6% of Massachusetts energy use from this project! Emissions reductions. Also, there is a “Resiliency and Affordability Fund” for community use. This will be baseload energy when it is needed most.

3 years, extensive study to minimize environmental impacts of cable route – chose shortest route with fewest sensitive habitat. Cable landing already degraded habitat. Meeting with environmental advocates especially about North Atlantic Right Whale. There’s a time of year they don’t install for the sake of the whales and they monitor during other times of year. Whales and Wind Fund that Vineyard Wind is contributing to, \$3 million commitment.

Permitting process: mostly dealing with Federal and Massachusetts policies.

Vineyard Wind needs approval from Rhode Island related to fishing permitting and use. Diagonal row layout for transiting vessels. Point Judith fishermen do fish in the area although most fishermen transit through the area. Vineyard Wind is proposing the lowest density project in the world in order to accommodate fishermen. Do fishermen navigate through large projects in other places? In the UK Erich says.

Erich will provide us with a copy of the slides from this presentation. Contact Greg for a copy.

7. Reports from ECRI representatives on boards and commissions

Genie: Water Resources Board is physically housed at DPUC now. What can be done to get Water Resources Board into the DPUC and functioning in a more coordinated way.

Kai: First draft of 2019 energy efficiency plan released by National Grid. Close to meeting the annual savings target but energy efficiency advocates want a better lifetime savings target. Peak demand savings target is also included by could be better.

Power Sector Transformation Update (Kai): discussions among energy stakeholders about how our electric grid will adapt to the future of renewable energy. Ended in November, power sector transformation report released. June 6 – diverse group of stakeholders released a settlement agreement in rate case based on power sector transformation conclusions. Approved August 24.

Green Buildings Act (Ken): Pilot projects for green buildings in the state, some have been selected but design/construction has not moved forward. Some challenges identifying projects.

8. Reports from ECRI fiscal agency projects

Green Infrastructure Coalition (Meg): Goal is to get green infrastructure stormwater solutions implemented as policy in RI municipalities.

September 27 workshop – industry together with government and non-profits to discuss challenges.

Completing projects on Aquidneck Island now.

Energize Coalition (Ken): Renewing past grants, evaluating strategies in Energize retreats, thinking about collaboration with other initiatives

9. Announcements (all)

Greg – Demo against National Grid at Waterfire this Saturday night with Climate Action RI. Contact Greg to get involved.

John – Elect-ober Fest at the Hot Club, free beer from Abita

Angie Koziara – Hikes and Walks through September

Ken – oldest building awarded LEED Platinum

Kai – Drive Electric and Music Festival for People's Power and Light

Sophia Owen – New England Grassroots Environment Fund grassroots conversation in Coventry

Meg – Peter Galvin, Nature's Trust Rhode Island going to file against DEM for climate action.

Audubon – Raptor weekend this weekend.