

Environment Council of Rhode Island



Full Board Meeting, RI Dept. of Admin. Bldg., One Capitol Hill, Room B
January 8, 2018, 5:30 PM – 7:30 PM

Attendees: Martin Custodio, Katherine Gibson, Paul Beaudette, Erika Niedowski, Kat Burnham, Justin Boyan, Richard Dionne, Kenneth Filarski, Jerry Elmer, David Veliz, Jonathan Ursillo, Judee Burr, Meg Kerr, Greg Gerritt, David Brunetti, Angie Koziara, Rachel Calabro, Lisa Petrie, Timmons Roberts, Mark Hengen, Eugenia Marks, Amy Moses, John Berard, Kai Salem, Lauren Manuus, Laura Landen

Agenda:

- 5:30 – 5:35 Introductions and approval of prior minutes
- 5:35 – 5:50 President’s Report
- 5:50 – 6:05 Office Report
- 6:05 – 6:35 PolComm (including Coffee hour and emerging legislative priorities) (Kat & Co.)
- 6:35 – 6:50 Discussion of proposed Green New Deal for RI (Ken & Timmons)
- 6:50 – 7:00 Surf Rider Action on Trump Re-opening Offshore Drilling in New England (Meg Kerr)

Minutes

December Minutes

Judee moves to approve the minutes, Kat seconds, all in favor except Paul Beaudette abstains. Minutes approved.

President’s Report – Jerry Elmer

- We are in a new legislative session – ECRI members are the ones who form ECRI’s legislative agenda. Engage with PolComm to give input. Handout of “Guidelines for ECRI Lobbyists” is given out to everyone. Ken notes re. number 8 – sometimes you need 30 copies. Check.
- *Letter to Scott Pruitt:* Indicating opposition to repeal of the Clean Power Plan. Discussion: Fossil Free RI does not necessarily feel that this is a step forward. We need something stronger. A repeal doesn’t move us forward at all, but the letter doesn’t ask for a stronger bill. Eugenia moves to approve the letter, Paul Beaudette seconds. All in favor except, Lisa Petrie for Fossil Free RI abstains. **Letter Approved.** Greg will submit this tomorrow.
- *Officer:* In February, we will be re-opening ECRI’s nominating committee for officers for next year. Many officer positions will be opened.
- *Update on Invenergy:* Invenergy is seeking to transfer costs to ratepayers, lawsuit at FERC, CLF and Burrillville asks the EFSB for a show cause hearing, will be held Tuesday, January 30. Attending this session is a good way to show the EFSB and the press that there is public opposition to the proposed

power plant. It's likely that the EFSB will suspend the docket pending the FERC decision. If they do, it's hard to see how Invenenergy will get a permit.

Office Report – Greg Gerritt

- *Current balances:*
ECRI \$30,996.62 (Last year on 1/8/17 \$30,022.78)
Ed Fund operations \$45,734.76 (Last year on 1/8/18 \$41,190.48)
- *Volunteers for Events:* Volunteers needed for Video Festival to handle check in/registrations on 2/10/18 at Save the Bay: Laura Landen, Martin Custodio. Check in/registration, Compost conference on 3/8/18 RIC, 2 get free admission: Brown students can probably volunteer – They will let Greg know. Two people to sell raffle tickets at Land and Water Conservation Summit on 3/10/18 at URI, people who would attend anyway need 20 minutes at lunch time: Ken Filarski, Timmons Roberts, Judee Burr
- *Annual Meeting:* Annual meeting will be at 5:30pm at the Harborview in Cranston, just south of Johnson & Wales Campus. Committee will be meeting to discuss further details. \$40 tickets.

Policy Committee – Kat Burnham

Next PolComm: Monday, January 22, 4pm at People's Power & Light Office

- *Coffee Hour:* January 17 at the State House. The event is free. Event friends/colleagues/legislators – forward them the invitation. There will be coffee and refreshments. Send Kat edits on the Emerging Priorities handout.
- *Energize RI 2018:* Timmons Roberts handout on Energize RI 2018, legislation being introduced again this year. Carbon pricing bill, collect money with a fee, give money back to citizens, businesses per employee, and 28% into a fund to create jobs, do energy efficiency projects, renewable energy, and transportation. There are some new developments this year: lower admin costs; won't go into affect unless 2 other states pass similar legislation – NY is moving now, VT is moving; oversight board; a federal carbon pricing law would supercede RI's law; commitment to Paris Agreement. More of a focus on climate change than jobs this year. Senator Caulkin sponsoring on the Senate side, her top priority. Reaganberg has sponsored for years. E-version will be circulated.
- *Candidate Questionnaire:* John Berard at Clean Water Action has sent a questionnaire for candidates around to ECRI members – send him questions that we want to include.

Green New Deal – Ken Filarski

- A note about the Green Buildings Act – getting a lot of National attention, ECRI's support helped get RI's strong act passed
- *Discussion of the Green New Deal:* Part of efforts to build a larger statewide coalition of groups. Draft passed around – Ken emphasizes this is the beginning, needs to be nurtured. Timmons Roberts: This is time to be bold, it's an election year, what should we really be asking for as an environmental community. We want your input – what vision do you have for each of these sectors. What's here is an outline, we need input from more organizations. Goal is to get this beyond ECRI.
- *Comments?* Marshall Plan may not be the appropriate word; John Berard and Greg: Addressing economic and waste streams is important in the big vision, compost; Greg: Carbon sequestration and sustainable agriculture; Eugenia: Greening the port of Providence and electricity, Urban gardening, Groundwork RI and Southside Community Land Trust; Paul Beaudette: Are we giving opponents the chance to take this apart before we get started, is "new deal" too provocative? How do we get this to

resonate with everyone instead of playing defense? Timmons says yes this is all very political, this idea grew from conversations with Aaron Regunberg about creating an environmental platform, want to think big while campaigning for Lt. Governor; Judee: Sustainable food systems relating to carbon storage and transportation and effective land use, all this through the lens of a just transition – a green world for everyone; Meg: Can we promote this without coloring it environmental? All these things are good for Rhode Island. Also smart siting for renewable energy; Kathy Gibson: Great ideas here – how do we market this? Lisa Petrie: New Deal says that this is for ordinary people; David Veliz: Missing the environmental justice perspective; John Berard: get some kind of professional marketing analysis?; Laura Landen: Call it a “Common Sense Deal”; Angie Koziera: Call it a “United Deal”

- Erica: Who is taking the lead in developing this? Timmons, Ken. Is this a political document (a platform) or a policy document (something that will be handed out at campaign rallies)? It is a policy document says Ken. Jerry says that if it is a policy document, multiple ECRI members will not be able to be affiliated with it.

Surf Rider Action on Trump Re-opening Offshore Drilling in New England – Meg Kerr

January 25 testimony needed, 3pm, Marriot, Providence Downtown: CLF testimony at New England states during meet-and-greet hearings at the DEM people; Sierra Club will be working on it; Please include these events in the ECRI calendar; Sue AnderBois and food plan may be a good connection; SAMP would be a good connection

Paul: Should we send a letter to our congressional delegations saying that we support their stances against this. Jerry – someone could draft this and put it on the February agenda.

Announcements

- Fossil Free RI and Tomaquag Museum will be screening new documentary “Awake: A Dream from Standing Rock” in Peacedale
- RI Student Summit being planned for February 24 – want to reach as many college students as possible
- Eugenia: Water commission going forward
- David: Handout of children with lead poisoning in each city in RI
- Justin: Climate Action RI meetings first and third Tuesdays of every month
- Rich: Thank you for writing the letters that you have to the ProJo about the Invenenergy Plant