

Environment Council of Rhode Island



Membership Meeting, Dept. of Admin. Bldg., Conference Room B
November 13, 2018, 5:30 PM – 7:30 PM

Attendees: Jerry Elmer, David Brunetti, Barry Schiller, Greg Gerritt, Peter Shelley, Amy Moses, Emma Akraui, Seth handy, Mal Skowron, Angie Koziara, John Berard, Sue Korte, Paul Beaudette, Don Rhodes, Katherine Gibson, Greg Schultz, Meg Kerr, Christopher Ratcliffe, Lisa Petrie

Agenda:

- Welcome
- Introductions
- Approval of minutes
- President's report (Meg Kerr)
 - ECRI coffee hour (Kai)
 - ECRI lobby day (Ken F.)
 - Dates for upcoming meetings (Dec. 3 general membership, Nov. 19 Pol Comm/Ex Comm)
- Office report (Greg Gerritt)

- Presentations

- Reports
 - ECRI retreat
 - Pol Comm (including election recap) (John Berard)
 - Dates for upcoming meetings (Dec. 3 general membership, Nov. 19 Pol Comm/Ex Comm)

- Reports from ECRI fiscal agency projects
 - Primary recap (John Berard)
 - Bond
 - Plastic task force (John Berard)

- Reports from ECRI fiscal agency projects
 - Green Infrastructure Coalition
 - Energize Coalition
 - School Recycling Club/Triple M Productions (Chris Ratcliffe)

- Announcements (all)

Minutes:

Welcome/Introductions

- President Meg Kerr opens the meeting, followed by a round of introductions.

Approval of minutes

- Minutes from October meeting approved as written.

President's report (Meg Kerr)

- Short mention of Coffee Hour and Lobby Day planning.
- Volunteers for both events welcome.
- December 3 meeting will discuss water in RI with Macky McCleary of DPUC and someone (TBD) from the City of Providence.
- Sign on letter on Restore Americas Wildlife Act offered by NWF. Approved signing on.

Office Report (Greg Gerritt)

Balances as of 11/7/18

- Energize \$35,446.09
- GIC \$64,995.97
- Parks Video project \$10,000
- CWS \$1,475.41

- Office \$49,644.70 11/7/17 \$44,763.17

- ECRI \$30,672.09 11/7/17 \$31,473.52

- Dues so far this year \$5,820

Bond issue Finances

- Contributions so far \$7,500
- Expenses \$8,494.20
- Net (\$994.20)
- There will be further discussion of this at next ExComm meeting.

Compost conference preparing for 2019 March 14 at RIC, volunteers welcome. Long term looking to transfer compost conference to a group more focused on food systems of compost.

Annual meeting: June 3 2019. Need a topic and location and committee members. Have one suggestion so far, more needed.

Tisdale awards: Applications due on November 21. If there are a number of applications, will ask for volunteers to read and grade them.

Presentation: Northeast Canyons and Seamounts National Monument (Peter Shelley, CLF)

There are threats to the monument within Trump administration, as there are threats to many other national monuments, mostly at the instigation of commercial interests including fishing and oil and gas.

Currently 2 companies fish there and they have a 7 year period to transition out of the monument. Some in administration want to open it up to more commercial fishing despite recent studies showing even more biodiversity and endangered species than previously noted. There are a series of lawsuits about whether Presidents can undo monuments under the Antiquities Act of 1906. Act says Presidents can create monuments, nothing in the law says presidents can erase them. Another law suit is whether or not the Interior Dept control of fisheries in the Monument can be transferred to commerce Departments Marine Fisheries Council, which are run by commercial fishing industry.

ECRI has been asked to sign onto a letter calling for keeping the monuments intact and not turning them over to the Fisheries Council. ECRI agreed that we would bring the letter up at the December meeting for a vote unless things are changing fast, in which case the Ex Comm could make that decision.

One interesting note, in the tropics there is good data that protecting areas from fishing have spill over effects improving fishing in adjacent areas. In temperate areas, there is no such data.

Presentation: Invenergy (Jerry Elmer, CLF)

Several recent decisions have made it much less likely power plant will be built, including ISO cancellation of contract for electricity in 2021 and the EFSB deciding that the PUC statement that the power is needed being no longer valid. Even so, Invenergy continues to fight for a permit and is likely to litigate to the bitter end.

The water issues are unlikely to be the factor that decides the case, but the lawsuit about the contract with Johnston violating state law continues. It has been heard, and we are awaiting a decision.

Presentation: The ECRI October Retreat (Sue Korté read Judee Burr's report)

We had 32 people in attendance representing about a third of ECRI's member organizations. Thank you everyone who was in attendance.

We had important conversations as a large group and in small groups. The retreat was divided into three segments all of which elicited great ideas for future ECRI priorities and actions:

- Visioning, Goal-setting and planning, facilitated by Ken Filarski
- Diversity, equity and inclusiveness, facilitated by Priscilla de la Cruz
- Expanding membership and encouraging participation, facilitated by Greg Ohadoma and Judee Burr.

We will be summarizing the results of our conversations into a presentation and strategy document, to be brought to you at one of our meetings early next year (likely January if there's room on the agenda)

Does anyone have any feedback or comments on the retreat, or wishes for the report-back we're planning?

PolComm and Elections Report (John Berard)

Green Report Card is out and has received a fair bit of publicity. All of us wish it had come out earlier.

Suggestions on process to make it easier to put out in timely fashion are welcome.

Election results were not bad for environment. Specific results are too much to include in these notes.

Governor has committed to setting actual carbon reduction enforceable targets.

Also has created a plastics reduction task force.

Fiscal Agency Reports

GIC is very active, working in Middletown on a stormwater Utility district and in providence on many projects including RWP as a stormwater management research center.

Have not yet heard on RIF grant

Energize: Carbon fee sponsors from last time are no longer in legislature, rethinking approach and may go more towards enforceable carbon reduction goals with carbon fee as a tool for that

School Recycling Club: Christopher Ratcliffe gave a bit of the history of the project and ECRI's involvement over the last 20 years. Current emphasis, using a VW settlement SEP grant is focused on food waste reduction in schools, with pilot studies in 3 communities about to begin. Seems like 14 million pounds of food waste is generated in RI schools each year.

State parks video: Received an RIF grant for Public Television show, should be ready in early part of 2019.

Announcements

Adjourned