Minutes of the Environment Council of RI Board Meeting

September 12, 2011

Present: Timmons Roberts, Terry Sullivan, Connie McGreavy, Tim Faulkner, Sue Korte, Tricia Jedele, Meg Kerr, Emily Maxwell, Michael Roles, Abigail Anthony, Ames Colt, John Torgan, Jane Austin, Jim Amspacher, Sheila Dormody, Greg Gerritt, Taryn Hallweaver, Katherine Gibson, Jack Schempp, Jed Greenberg, Amelia Rose, David Brunetti, Amy Kullenberg, Jerry Elmer, Nicholas Oliver, Channing Jones, Eugenia Marks, Abby Savitch-Lew

The September 12, 2011, meeting of the ECRI Board was called to order at 5:41 pm at the Department of Administration Building, Conference Room B, Smith St, Providence, RI, by President Tricia Jedele, followed by a round of introductions.

Secretary Susan KortÃ© noted that the minutes of the June 6 meetings had been distributed before the meeting and in paper copies at the meeting and asked for corrections or additions. There being none, Susan moved, and Meg Kerr seconded, that the minutes be approved as presented, which motion passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report: Greg Gerritt reviewed the treasurer's reports for ECRI and the ECRI Ed Fund, which were in the pre-meeting email and in the packet handed out at the meeting.

Fiscal agent proposal for Sustainable Communities Initiative (SCI).

After reviewing information submitted by Jed Greenberg at the last Executive Committee meeting, ExComm recommended to the Board that ECRI Ed Fund be the fiscal agent for this project. The Ed Fund has a responsibility to nurture the environmental community. One thing we can do is facilitate projects with fiscal agency.

Jed Greenberg presented on SCI. The purpose is to help the public be more engaged in climate change and sustainability. The project is connected with RI College. There will be a lecture series on sustainability open to the public plus an SCI enrichment course in the spring 2012 semester, a blended learning program with an online component and community discussion groups. The project also aims to create a sustainability index to evaluate the sustainability performance of municipalities. This index will help citizens identify gaps and decide what initiatives to move forward on. SCI intends to build a loose network of volunteer citizen groups that can initiate from grassroots.

Jerry Elmer moved that the Board ratify and approve the action of ExComm to accept the responsibility of SCI fiscal agency. Sheila Dormody seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

President's Report

Tricia Jedele reported that at the end of the June meeting, questions were raised about the relationship ECRI has with National Wildlife Federation (NWF). Some ECRI members are familiar with the details of the relationship, but the information had not been written down and is not known by newer members. A meeting with NWF representative Don Hooper in late June 2011 clarified the relationship and was very helpful. Chris Kearns, Paul Beaudette, Greg Gerritt, Meg Kerr, Tricia Jedele, and Sue KortÃ© were present. We concluded after this meeting that we needed to write down a description of the relationship to give to new members. This led to a further identification of the need to structure Board meetings so that NWF always was on the agenda. Additionally, Board meetings agendas will now always include committee reports, project reports, and affiliatory/commission reports.

Tricia presented the first draft of the new ECRI Handbook, and Susan pointed out the year's calendar in it. Sheila Dormody expressed appreciation for such a useful document that gathers all of ECRI's working documents all in one place.

There have been no sign-on letters since the June meeting.

Nominations:

Climate Commission

Jane Austin summarized the work of this commission. Because Kevin Essington can no longer serve, the Board considered nominations for a replacement to recommend to the governor.

Meg Kerr was nominated by Sheila Dormody, seconded by Jerry Elmer.

Michael Roles was nominated by Abel Collins, seconded by Amelia Rose.

Connie McGreavy was nominated by Steve Kitchin, seconded by Sue KortÃ©.

After each nominee made a short statement describing their qualifications and reasons they want to serve, the Board members present voted by paper ballot, nominating Meg Kerr.

ECRI Ed Fund VP for Development ~ There are no nominations yet for this position.

Ocean SAMP Habitat Advisory Board -- ECRI can recommend people to fill four seats and is particularly interested in selecting science-oriented people. This advisory board will make sure that critical habitat areas are protected and provide advice to CRMC regarding development application decisions.

The appointees, whose bios were circulated to members via email before the meeting, all are extraordinarily accomplished scientists, are:

Dr Priscilla Brooks (Conservation Law Foundation - CLF)

Larry Taft (Audubon)

John Torgan - (Save the Bay)

Sally McGee (The Nature Conservancy)

Eugenia Marks moved, and Terry Sullivan seconded, that the Board affirm these nominations by acclamation, which passed. Eugenia thanked Tricia and CLF for initiating the establishment of this board.

ECRI should promote this in some way if appropriate, because these are truly impressive nominations.

Distributed Generation Board

Jerry Elmer was nominated to be recommended to the governor for appointment to this board. Sheila Dormody and Jane Austin moved and Timmons Roberts seconded Jerry's nomination, which passed unanimously.

ECRI Committee Structure

Meg Kerr explained the committee structure and pointed out the two pages in the handbook that describe their work. Committee responsibilities need to be reviewed. Chafee dinner is so important it should be a separate committee. Development committee could be writing grant applications. ECRI could add a Program committee since moving forward, ECRI may have more programs and projects.

ECRI Communications:

ECRI should consider sending members a newsletter, perhaps twice a year. The RI Foundation grant included funding for revising the website, which is also intended to improve communication. The new website should also be easier to keep updated. The reworking of the website is in progress.

Financial Processes

Jim Amspacher described the part of the RI Foundation grant for upgrading financial procedures. The new computer equipment has been purchased and received, and new software will be installed soon so that reports can be generated from QuickBooks.

Tricia thanked Jim, Greg, Meg, and Sue for their work on the RI Foundation grant projects.

Michael Roles reported on the Climate Adaptation grant project, and is submitting a separate written report of progress to date.

Greg Gerritt reported on the Compost project. Funding from USDA for 3 years ends next June. RIRRC will have an anaerobic composter that can handle up to 150 tons of food scrap/day. Johnson & Wales is receptive to adding composting to their curriculum. J&W may also be the site for the 3rd annual RI compost conference. The goal is to have a conference and trade expo. Greg is looking for sponsors and currently has about 8-9 sponsors tentatively lined up.

NWF

Emily Maxwell, NWF representative, reported on NWF's offshore wind campaign. She will continue to work with ECRI ExComm to assure that ECRI is coordinated with NWF and offered to be a contact for anyone needing NWF assistance. Regarding federal legislation, NWF is seeking stories about specific groups, people, and issues that may be hurt by budget cuts. NWF is also working on how to increase diversity in environmental groups and is training their staff in this area. Michael Roles attended an NWF leadership development meeting in August that shared best practices on improving our public presence, including leveraging Facebook and other social media.

Rhode Island Energy Efficiency and Resources Management Council (EERMC)

Abigail Anthony presented a detailed report on the work of EERMC, describing savings during the years 2008-2010 among other accomplishments. The second triennial plan for 2012-2014 is under development, emphasizing efficiency, new technologies (LEDs); energy efficiency for everyone, and growing RI economy (increase for weatherization).

Narragansett Bay Journal Fall 2011

It was noted that this issue has many fine stories including one by Greg Gerritt about compost. The journal issue is available here: http://www.nbep.org/admin/Final%20Articles/NBJ-20-FALL-Issue.pdf

Among the announcements of ongoing interest to ECRI members: Jim Amspacher announced that he is looking for placements for Brown U interns.

Meeting adjourned at 7:40.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan KortÃ©

Secretary