

Blackstone River Watershed Council/ Friends of the Blackstone
Minutes of the meeting of February 21, 2007

Place: Albion Fire Station

Present: David Newton, Keith Hainley, Arthur Plitt, Frank Geary, Sandra Belliveau, Ron Belliveau, John Marlsand, Roland Gauvin, Alice Clemente, Bob Charpentier, Frank Matta (presiding), Paul Roselli, Judy Hadley, David Pothier, Ray Lippe, Debra Carr

The minutes of the January meeting were approved.

Patty McAlpine, BVTC, who was scheduled to speak to the Council, did not attend.

Re a potential volunteer recommended by Meg Kerr: Frank Geary will ask Meg for details since Joy is no longer working with us. Dave Newton recommended that we obtain a resume.

Arthur Plitt reported on the Rivers Council meeting. Grants will be available by the end of April; applications will come soon. The grants will be awarded preferably to those who will be able to complete projects by October.

Ron Belliveau raised the issue of Conservation Commissions and their ability to intervene in enforcing watershed laws. Whereas in Massachusetts, Conservation Commissions are specifically required by law to enforce watershed legislation, in RI that is not the case. It was felt that since DEM is often unable to fulfill this role effectively because of lack of staff, bureaucracy, etc., it would be good to have a system like the one existing in MA. Sandra suggested that we might want to lobby for such a change.

Lincoln Zoning changes: They have submitted Rule 2 notices and will have a hearing on March 1. There is concern over a number of parcels adjacent to the river whose owners have requested zoning changes. Judy will speak on a river overlay at the hearing.

The land along the river in Cumberland that has been given to the Indians may pose some problems involving sewer easements, wetlands and the Super Fund site. Any future owner will be jointly and severally responsible for all debts.

A new after-school education office in Cumberland will partner with existing programs: Franklin farms, canoe program and possibly other BRWC/FOB projects. We could inform them about our cleanups.

Fish ladders: Frank Geary and Frank Matta met with Senator Sheldon Whitehouse, along with Wenley Ferguson, Tom Ardito, Tony Nobrega, Roylene Rideatthedoor. Whitehouse, a canoe and kayaking enthusiast, needs to be educated re fish ladders. All of the attendees explained what their organizations can contribute. Wenley Ferguson stated that she had never seen a project so well put together before in her time at Save the Bay.

Roland Gauvin distributed the draft of a letter to Duncan Broatch, Summit Hydropower Inc., re the SEPs related to their rehabilitation of Thundermist in Woonsocket. The letter pointed out the inadequacies of their plan and made suggestions that might be beneficial for the fish ladder project. Also, RI Surfcasters has circulated a petition supporting the fish ladder project. Concerns were stated about the Manville, Albion and Ashton dams and it was suggested that there should be a second stream gauge in Ashton. All agreed that hydro and fish ladders can coexist with the pertinent BMPs.

BRWC Treasurer's report: A check was received from BVTC for \$5509.75 for the BRWC's funds remaining in their possession. Sandra sent a follow up letter requesting an accounting. She reported a balance of \$12, 613.88 including the check. Of the total, \$2234.39 is from grants.

River Clean up 2007: the Corridorkeepers are making up a calendar with events being planned throughout the watershed. The cleanup on April 14, designed to complement the Historic Preservation Conference in Pawtucket, will be corridor wide. Although we are supporting this cleanup, our main effort will be on the 21st. On March 31, there will be the Valley Breeze cleanup. Paul Roselli is working on a press release and asked that those involved in planning send him the information.

Guest David Pothier commented on trash and fill in the river. He himself cleans in the Manville area.

Riverfest will take place on May 19. Planning meetings are on the second Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at Arline's house. The next one will be March 13. Mike Ferry will bring students and their projects to Riverfest between 11 and 3 on that day, since the Clean Water Festival has been cancelled for this year. BRWC is not participating in Rivers Day but will give its awards out at Riverfest. The Environmental Excellence award will be given to John Carr and his crew.

It was suggested that rather than the usual scholarships, an award should be given to the Blackstone Academy. We could ask them to do a river project. The science teacher will be invited to our next meeting.

It was suggested that an appreciation cookout be held for Trout Unlimited and other groups that have supported us.

Clarification: The Corridorkeepers want to produce an online listing of all clean up sites in both MA and RI and the contact people at each site.

Frank Geary asked that if Meg Kerr's volunteer is not appropriate for the position of fish ladder intern, he be allowed to contact Tom Ardito to fill the position. The motion was approved.

Annual meeting: May 9

A nominating committee composed of David Newton, David Coutu and Robert Charpentier will produce a slate of candidates for Vice President and Treasurer.

We will try for the big room at the Cumberland Public Library for this meeting. A possible speaker would be David Gregg.

A By-laws committee made up of Frank Matta, Frank Geary, Judy Hadley and Alice Clemente will suggest needed amendments.

FOB Treasurer's report: Bob reported that he had written a check for \$2355.55 for the buoys (FOB will get back \$1800). The total balance is thus \$951.31 plus \$1800.

He also announced that there will be a fundraiser at Papagino's at Lincoln Mall on Sunday, March 25. Information on this is to be sent to Paul Roselli.

It was decided that we would apply for two legislative grants for \$1000 each, one in the name of BRWC and the other, FOB.

The possibility of buying a kayak for FOB was considered, as well as the possibility of buying materials for cleanups.

The next meeting was set for March 21.