

**CHARLESTOWN CONSERVATION COMMISSION**  
**March 22, 2016**  
**Charlestown Town Hall**  
**4540 S. County Trail, Charlestown, RI 02813**

- I. **CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 7:01 PM by L. Arnold, Chair.
- II. **ROLL CALL:** Present: L. Arnold, C. Connery, F. Safford and R. Thieke. Excused: G. Klinger, H. Hultgren and K. Simoneau.
- III. **INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS AND PUBLIC COMMENTS:** None.
- IV. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Motion to approve the minutes of February 23, 2016 by F. Safford. 2<sup>nd</sup>: L. Arnold. Aye: L. Arnold, F. Safford and R. Thieke. Nay: None. Abstain: C. Connery.
- V. **OLD BUSINESS:**
- A. Report on Sprague Property**
- a. Members of the Commission walked the property in order to be able to supply the Town Council with an advisory opinion as to its purchase for Town owned open space. Below is a copy of the advisory sent to the Council.
- b. R. Thieke reported that at the Town Council meeting on March 14, 2016, the Council voted unanimously to acquire the property and directed the Commission and Charlestown Land Trust (who will be co-holder with RIDEM of a conservation easement) to draft a management plan. Commission members reviewed the drafted Plan and it will be forwarded to the Land Trust for their comments
- c. Property will be known as Carolina Pawcatuck River Preserve.
- B. Report on Charlestown Moraine Preserve**
- a. Trail – C. Connery reported that he and R. Thieke completed brush cutting of the trail on March 19<sup>th</sup> and that he and F. Safford will blow the leaves off the entire trail on March 27<sup>th</sup> and also check for any issues that should be addressed to make the trail safe for hikers.
- b. Kiosk and road sign – F. Safford will arrange with Public Works a time to install them once an opening date for the Preserve is decided.
- c. Grand opening – L. Arnold will contact T. Gentz about scheduling an official opening date for the Preserve preferable mid-May or late June and tie it in with a belated Arbor Day observance by planting some ornamental grasses in the area of the kiosk.
- C. Report on Schoolhouse Pond Preserve**
- a. Work Day – will set a date at our April meeting.
- D. Well Water Workshop**
- a. It is scheduled for July 12 at 5:00 PM at Cross Mills Library.
- VI. **NEW BUSINESS:**
- A. CRMC Advisories**
- a. East Branch Farms LLC has applied for expansion of its aquaculture farm by 2.5 acres in Ninigret Pond.
- b. Washington County Community Development Corp. has submitted plans for installation of a new storm water management and treatment system at the Churchwoods development. Wastewater will be treated by five RIDEM approved denitrifying on-site water treatments systems.
- B. Arnold Family White Cedar Swamp**
- a. L. Arnold reported that the cap is missing on one of the sign posts and F. Safford will repair it.

**C. Geocaching**

- a. R. Thieke reported that Richard DeLong has requested permission to place a geocache on Richard Trails and F. Safford made a motion to permit it. 2<sup>nd</sup>: C. Connery. Aye: L. Arnold, C. Connery, F. Safford and R. Thieke. Nay: None.
- b. There was discussion of the issue of geocaches on all the Town owned properties and it was agreed that H. Hultgren will be asked to be the point person on the Commission for this. Jim Cole, a Town resident and well versed in geocaching, will be asked to be coordinator.

VII. **MEMBER COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS:** None

**VIII. ADJOURNMENT:**

Motion by F. Safford to adjourn. 2<sup>nd</sup>: C. Connery. Aye: L. Arnold, C. Connery, F. Safford and R. Thieke. Nay: None

Meeting adjourned at 7:56 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Richard N Thieke, Secretary

Next Commission Meeting on April 26, 2016 at Town Hall at 7:00 PM

## **Advisory Opinion on Sprague Property**

To: Members of the Town Council

At the request of the Town Council, members of the Conservation Commission walked the Sprague Property on February 29th for the purpose of rendering to the Council their advice as to the acquisition of the parcel so as to preserve it as open space.

As you know, the property in question is located at Plat # 28, lots # 82 and 84 with access to it through lot 84 which fronts (160 feet) on Railroad Avenue.

The property consists of approximately 27 acres and is bordered on the east, west and south sides by private land and on the north by the Pawcatuck River (approximately 1600 feet of frontage). The parcel has two fields which were hayed until 2010, some wetlands and the rest is forested with undulating topography. There are some existing trails, stone walls and attractive vistas as well as vernal pools and kettle ponds. The parcel supports a number of flora and wildlife species including turkeys, pheasants, deer, coyote, possums, woodchucks, rabbits, hawks, wood ducks, geese, songbirds and many others.

It appears that the property could provide a variety of passive recreation activities including hiking, cross country skiing and snowshoeing while at the same time protecting our watershed from development along the river.

The Conservation Commission advises the Town Council that this parcel is very attractive and worthy of consideration for acquisition as open space for passive recreation.

Sincerely,

Lillian Arnold, Chair  
Richard Thieke, Secretary

cc: Amy Weinreich, Town Clerk  
Mark Stankiewicz, Town Administrator