

COMMON FENCE POINT PREPAREDNESS COMMITTEE (CFPPC)

Minutes – December 6, 2023

**PURPOSE:** Discuss the issues, goals and purposes, along with the wonderful things which have happened, and are to come.

**CALL TO ORDER:** Nicole Gotovich 6:36pm

**ATTENDEES:** Nicole Gotovich                      Paula Connolly                      Tom Charbonneau  
Ray Perry    Nancy Arruda Nary                      John Vitkevich (Vit)  
Mervyn Woolf (Merv)

**ZOOM:** Chuck Miksis                                      Laura Hosley                                      Mil Kinsella (joined later)

**BUSINESS:**

- Motion to approve November 2023. Approved. The motion was seconded. Minutes approved.

**CFPIA:**

- Jim Fogerty was unable to attend this December meeting. December will be active at the hall and in the neighborhood. There will be a Holiday Party for children co sponsored by the YMCA, Christmas Caroling on Horseback with the same equestrian group again for the second year and food donations will be collected for St John's Food Pantry in Portsmouth.
- Music@thepoint is scheduling more events for January, February, and March. David Breton is facilitating scheduling and assisting with sound.
- CFPIA membership meetings are on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month.

**SEPAC:**

- Target date for the Taylor's Point saltmarsh dredging project has been postponed until January or February depending on what DPW Brian Woodhead and Chuck Miksis survey at Taylor's Point due to Scott Boyd clearing some of the debris at the mouth of the saltmarsh. If the dredging happenings, DPW will provide the operator and the State of RI the grader. Brian Woodhead (Portsmouth DPW), Wenley Ferguson (Save the Bay), and Pam Rubinoff (URI Coastal Resilience and Extension; Coastal Resources Center & RI Sea Grant) are all involved in following through with the project.
- Nicole informed us that Jeff Prater and his family has relocated to Florida. They might be back in May 2024. Jeff is a very key part of the grant writing and work that has been accomplished and continues to be done by SEPAC. He facilitated with his committee the plantings on Common Fence Blvd, which are doing so well and the dredging of the Taylor's Marsh so it can flow smoothly. Chuck Miksis is the point person while Jeff is away.
- We all miss Jeff and Stacy Prater so much but are so happy for them. Jeff is continuing his involvement by phone and email.

**NEWSLETTER:**

- Newsletter update by Nancy. There is a meeting with Alex Pouliot from URI being scheduled for January 2024. Alex is very knowledgeable at layout and format for newsletters and we are so grateful she has agreed to assist us. This newsletter has been in the planning stages for many months. Our goal is to have it out by the end of the winter! The purpose is to educate and enlighten residents in regard to; preparedness, mitigation, and best practices in light of coastal and environmental changes. We will also address current projects, their status as well as future endeavors, and some history of Common Fence Point (CFP).

## FORUMS:

- Nicole informed us that on December 2<sup>nd</sup> from 11 AM to 1 PM Clean Ocean Access, along with SouthCoast Wind, sponsored a beach cleanup near the railroad tracks and under the Sakonnet River Bridge. There were 33 volunteers that were there 2 hours and picked up 526 pounds of thrash.
- In October 2023 CFP and Save the Bay picked up 472 pounds of trash for all of CFP, some of which came from the same area of the railroad tracks.

## GRANTS:

- Chris Thompson was unable to attend this meeting but he and Tom Charbonneau have been wonderful in taking the time to understand the Federal, State, and Town grant processes. Tom reported that the focus for many grants are; Mitigation, Environmental Protection, Habitat Restoration, Invasive Plant Species Removal, and Storm water and Drainage Issues. The RI Infrastructure Bank addresses Storm water issues as well, just like at the entrance to CFP.
- Tom will be approaching the Portsmouth Conservation Committee (PCC) to see if we can offer assistance of collaborating with us. Barbara Jones was connected with the PCC through Jim Fogerty and she invited them to the CFP pond near the playground to ask for guidance. Barbara has been working tirelessly on this very involved project to remove phragmites and clean the pond. A big factor is the street and storm water runoff into the pond.
- Tom also is working with the RI Infrastructure Bank. The RI Infrastructure bank has provided funding for the storm water issue at the CFP entrance, plantings on CFP Blvd and the Taylor's Point saltmarsh maintenance as well as Map My Neighborhood on Prudence Island.
  - Contacts have been; Paige Myatt from the RI Infrastructure Bank, Lea Hitchen Portsmouth's Town Planner, and Brian Woodhead Portsmouth's DPW Director.
- Need to highlight our concerns in order to apply for grants. Suggested needs for CFP;
  - CF Blvd and Beach flooding and erosion
  - Taylor's Point Area
  - Anthony Rd flooding closer to the tip
  - CFP Pond
  - Saltmarshes and habitat
  - Generator, solar, and charging stations at the community hall

## PORTSMOUTH EMA:

- Ray Perry discussed the WELLNESS team's binder/matrix of all local, state, and federal service groups. It is a spread sheet that can be up dated.
- Ray is encouraging the group (CFPPC) to invite and collaborate with the neighborhoods of; Island Park, the Hummocks, and Prudence Island in investigating grants for mitigation and preparedness. The focus of Agencies offering grant monies is on collaborative efforts. Communities working together with like needs for the best funded outcomes.
- He brought out that CFPIA already having a 501.c3 and a meeting place is an advantage in working on the grant process. Collaborating with like neighborhoods with the same vulnerabilities will enhance the likelihood an application would be considered on the town level, state level, and Federal.
- Example: the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) Grant is for 3 towns on the island collaborating on a Hazard Mitigation Plan. Portsmouth, Middletown, and Newport will receive \$75,000.00.
- Ray shared that in 2019 there was a collaborative meeting at Tremblay's on preparedness for Island Park and the Hummocks, which was very well attended, but a committee was not organized and COVID happened. John Vit said there is a Facebook page called "Island Park Preservation Society" that is still active by Michael Macfarlane.

- It was suggested that larger groups could meet quarterly or every other month, neighborhood groups such as CFPPC could still meet monthly. The group did not decide how the January 10<sup>th</sup> meeting would be advertised but that a neighborhood Matrix, like the one CFP did with URI, would be helpful for them to see where their needs are. Ray's suggested neighborhood needs;
  - Prudence Island: Fire focus
  - CFP: Mitigation focus
  - Island Park: Evacuation focus due to those who need more assistance
- We have in our favor the collaboration with experts from DEM, Save the Bay, and URI. There is a formal process; CFPPC, CFPIA (Common Fence Point Improvement Association) to add weight to the grant.
  - Grant agencies are looking for governance in a group, a mediator or lead person, a matrix.

#### **RESILIENCE BUILDING:**

- Pam Rubinoff and Jen West were unable to attend this meeting.

#### **OTHER:**

- The group discussed the possibility of requesting funds from SouthCoast Wind for projects such as a generator, etc. The group would have to discuss this with the Board of CFPIA and the Trustees
- Generator for the CFP Center. This has been a topic of discussion before. A generator at the hall would serve the community well. The Center may not qualify as a State Disaster Center but it could act as a Warming/Cooling/Charging center. Nicole has approached TESLA again. Nicole mentioned that SouthCoast Wind would love to help fund this community hall project but was said that with CFP being a nonprofit, they probably could not help. Nancy said that the CFPIA cannot take a political position but can have education about wind power.
- It was mentioned that the Utility Sitting Board and the State of RI would not look at the application for SouthCoast Wind until Massachusetts does. The Sitting board has a web site for more information and so does CRMC (Coastal Resources Management Council). The project seems to be on hold at this time.
- John Vit let everyone know there will be a Polar Plunge in Island Park on January 1, 2024 at noon and a get together at Tremblay's afterwards.
- John also stressed the need for help with Island Park's sea wall. He said that it is eroding away and needs attention, but he's finding it difficult for ownership; Town of Portsmouth vs State?
- Merv Woolf discussed the freezing of pipes in people's homes during these winter storms and King tides with flooding. His pipes burst last year, December of 2022. He did know what steps to take to protect his property and were not preferred ones from the professionals who came in to rectify the damage. Merv suggested a forum on how to protect heating systems etc. in these extreme events. "Winter storms, the unexpected hazard, how do we prepare." Best practices could be addressed; insulation, dripping facets, open cabinets, turn heat on high, draining all pipes in house before long away times, etc.

**AJOURNED:** 7:59pm

**Next Meeting:** January 10, 2024 is hoping to be scheduled in Island Park with resident of CFP, The Hummocks, and Island Park. Prudence Island residents will also be invited. John Vit is looking into a location for the meeting. Nicole will provide more information if this happens.