

PORTSMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
OCTOBER 14, 2023 (Saturday)
MINUTES

10:00 AM – Prudence Island Improvement Hall, 0620 Narragansett Avenue, Prudence Island

MEMBERS PRESENT: Kevin M. Aguiar, Leonard B. Katzman, David M. Gleason, Keith E. Hamilton, J. Mark Ryan

MEMBERS ABSENT: Daniela T. Abbott, and Charles J. Levesque

Time: 10:05 AM

EMERGENCY EVACUATION PLAN

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

SITTING AS THE PORTSMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

1. Roll Call

INTRODUCTION OF PRUDENCE ISLAND STATE LEGISLATORS

1. Senator Linda Ujifusa
2. Representative Susan Donovan

OPEN FORUM (Discussion/Action) – No votes were taken.

1. RI Energy Update. / J. Alfonso, RI Energy
 - a. Nag Creek utility burial - The project is scheduled to start the week of Oct 16th with the start of the civil work, followed by the electric line installation and cutover. The final step will be to remove the poles.
 - b. Tree trimming program - Starting the week of Oct 23rd, RIE contractors (ABC Tree Services) will be on the island to discuss tree trimming and hazard tree removals with residents, Prudence Conservancy, DEM and Town DPW. This outreach and coordination will take approximately 2 weeks to complete. Once the outreach is complete and necessary approvals received, the forestry crews will be on the island at the beginning of November to start the work. This work should last approximately a month. Shortly after the forestry work is done, the RIE inspection team will be on the island to inspect each utility pole on the island. The inspections might result in some immediate work on the island and/or additional work in the next few months.
 - c. Prudence Island Fire Station pole removal - The Prudence Island Fire Dept had requested RIE remove a pole on the property. This work was completed a few months ago.
2. Narragansett Bay Research Reserve. / C. Chaffee, Reserve Manager
 - a. Prescribed burns and wildfire protection - NBNERR is working in coordination with the PIVFD, PI Preparedness Committee and RIDEM Division of Forestry to help with the 5-year update to the Community Wildfire Protection Plan. This update is required for PIVFD to be eligible for certain funding programs. Prescribed controlled burns update -
 - Originally schedule for early fall but pushed back due to turtle activity
 - Tentatively rescheduled for late October/early November at south end, area across from Reserve main building.

- We will post updates in the kiosks at the ferry landing and at the Reserve and our website (www.nbnerr.org).
- The go/no go decision is highly dependent on weather conditions and will be made the day before.

b. Enforcement concerns - There were incidents of illegal camping at the south end this summer. The largest groups were recorded the weekend of 8/11 and Labor Day weekend. Our primary concern related to these incidents is threats to public safety and the safety of visitors. The Reserve hired a seasonal ranger, Linda O'Brien, in order to have a presence and inform people of the rules and regulations (i.e., no camping, no charcoal grills, carry out trash, etc.). Linda submitted reports for each day she was on duty this summer. These reports recorded 8 days when there were over 20 people gathered at T-Wharf and two instances of large groups camping overnight. On the Saturday of Labor Day weekend, DEM Division of Law Enforcement were called by the Reserve and visited the south end by boat. Warnings were issued but no citations. NBNERR staff are doing what we can to make sure visitors are informed of the rules. We do not have the authority to issue citations. That authority is with Law Enforcement (DEM and Town of Portsmouth). It is sometimes difficult for DEM to dispatch a boat to Prudence because they have few in the water and are responsible for all Narragansett Bay, the South Shore, and Block Island. We will continue to monitor the situation, improve signage, and keep DEM Law Enforcement informed. The DEM Law Enforcement dispatch can see the PORTS camera at the south end and can observe activity that way as well. Residents who wish to report illegal activity should call DEM Law Enforcement at 401-222-3070. Residents who have other concerns can contact Reserve Manager Caitlin Chaffee at 401-683-7365.

3. Prudence Island Volunteer Fire Department. / Chief K. Blount, PIVFD

- a. Introduction of New Fire Chief - Louis Lepere will become the new Prudence Island Volunteer Fire Chief. He will start sometime in the next two months.
- b. Prudence Island Volunteer Fire Department being incorporated into the Portsmouth Fire Department starting FY 2025 - The Prudence Island Volunteer Fire Department will be removed from Civic Support and a line item will be added under the Portsmouth Fire Department budget.

4. Coastal Resiliency. / B. Woodhead, DPW

- a. Status of Mill Creek project - After last year's PI meeting we received 2 bids and the lowest price for this project came in at \$1,418,815.00. This price was well over the grant we have with DEM. The Council asked us to look for some grants to fund this project. We will be submitting a grant request to the RI Infrastructure Bank for this project. The grants are due in by October 27th and we should know more in the November/December timeframe about the award. If this grant is approved, we will be planning for a completion date in spring 2025.
- b. Neck Farm Road/Narragansett Ave/Bay Ave intersection flooding - I am aware that this area floods, especially on a king high tide. I have talked with Caitlin from the Reserve, and we will be working with her and the State (Narragansett Bay Research Reserve) to see how we can work together to come up with a solution at this area.
- c. Concern regarding isolation of DPW garage - Concern was if there was flooding it would be isolated.
- d. Concern about the rapid erosion of the embankment along the flood zone that runs between Holbrook and Edda. (The small rocks the Town placed there after Sandy have been mostly washed away or down onto the beach. The beach itself seems to be shrinking faster in the lowest areas by Madison. There is a growing concern of high tides and storms starting to undermine the road itself.) - I have talked with Kathy Apps who put this on the agenda, and I thought it would be good to leave this on so I could let everyone know what we are planning for

these areas. During one of the storms in February there was some erosion along Narragansett Ave between Holbrook and Edda, and we were able to pull back some of the rocks in these areas that were washed onto the shore. We are in the process of getting a scope of work from one of our engineers and will be applying for a CRMC Maintenance application. We may need to reach out to the Homestead Plat Property Owners (Patricia Clachrie) as some of this area of work may be on their property and there is also one privately owned property in this area that we may need to reach out to also.

5. Prudence Island Transfer Station. / B. Woodhead, DPW

a. How do possible changes on Aquidneck Island affect the Prudence Transfer Station - At this time, I do not see that there will be any possible changes to the PI Transfer Station. We have a new contract with Lawrence Waste, and we have just entered into a 5-year contract with them. I do want to let everyone know that we have 1 more e-waste collection this year on December 9th at Portsmouth High School and we will have one of our trucks at the Prudence Island Transfer Station December 2nd for drop off until December 8th.

b. Winter hours. - Requested to look into adjusting the hours to coincide with ferry departures

6. Road Maintenance. / B. Woodhead, DPW

a. Status of Broadway paving project - We just finished the wetland flagging and survey work on Broadway and the next step is to get a cost proposal for the drainage design and the drainage design plans for Broadway. This is for FY 25. After that design is completed, we will need to go out for permitting along with funding for this project. I have FY 2027 for the start of construction for this project.

b. Maintenance of roads other than Narragansett and Broadway (Harriet and Daniel) - Regarding the maintenance of roads apart from Narragansett and Broadway, Harriet, and Daniel. Public Works has been actively engaged in road improvement efforts, we utilize grading and patching to ensure the roads are passable. It's important to note that there are limitations in terms of available materials for shaping and grading these roads, and the amount of materials on hand is limited. To address these challenges, gravel has been installed to make them passable.

7. Possibility of transient docking at Town dock at Weaver Cove. - There is not a dock at Weaver Cove and the boat ramp is owned by CRMC.

8. Ferry Parking in Bristol - It was suggested that the residents look at out of the box options such as seeing if Bristol residents have parking spots in their driveways to rent out.

9. Emergency Preparedness Planning. / R. Perry

a. Updates on preparedness planning. - The Prudence Island Preparedness Group generally meets once a month. If people are interested in joining the group they can send an email to: pipreparedness@gmail.com. They have confirmed the November 2nd meeting at 6:30, Hope Brown Center/Zoom. Jon Mitchell, NBNERR Stewardship Coordinator, will do a presentation about prescribed burns. This will give the community an opportunity to learn more about ecology and habitat goals, as well as long-term ideas and planning. John Spadaro, Community Firewise Organizer, will update the community about Firewise, where we are, where we are going. Join via Zoom <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82640750709?pwd=NyttQ1ZPcXI2Kzh4S0JPN3NjS2Y3dz09> Meeting ID: 826 4075 0709, Passcode: 098016, One tap mobile +13126266799,

10. Need to continue annual Prudence Island Town Council Meetings. - No decisions were made.

FUTURE MEETINGS

Oct 23 7:00 PM – Town Council Meeting, PHS Auditorium, 120 Education Lane

Nov 13 7:00 PM – Town Council Meeting

Nov 27 7:00 PM – Town Council Meeting

ADJOURN – Motion to adjourn made by Mr. Katzman, seconded by Dr. Ryan. Motion passed unanimously.

Time: 12:49 PM

Jennifer M. West, CMC, Town Clerk