



## Cliff Walk Commission Minutes

April 15, 2015

5PM: Newport Public Library

**Commission Members in Attendance:** John Hirschboeck, Peter Janaros, Dave McLaughlin, Bob Power (Chair).

**Ombudsman for the Cliff Walk:** Bill Corcoran

**For the City of Newport:** Scott Wheeler: Building and Grounds Supervisor/Tree Warden

**For Salve Regina University:** Professor Samuel Sacco, Business Studies & Economics; Stacey Carter, Center for Business Outreach; Heather Higgins, intern to Stacey Carter

### I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes from the 3/18/15 CWC meeting were approved.

### II. CURRENT BUSINESS

#### **A. Trail Marker Program & Maps Status**

John advised that he has provided Scott the 16 QR code plates that Boy Scout Troop #3 will install on the trail markers the weekend of April 24. John and Scott have marked these locations.

#### **B. Menco Property Repairs**

Peter discussed status with Bob Fairbanks of Kirby Perkins. Construction will begin this fall and therefore will not interfere with peak tourist season.

#### **C. Repairs between Webster St. and 40 Steps**

Scott reported on the latest status of the \$347,000 grant request for repairs from the Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission (HP&HC) via the National Park Service, which is pending review of the project and corresponding bid documents.

#### **D. Pell Property and Fencing**

Bob updated the Commission on discussions he had regarding proposed fencing at the Pell property in which he suggested to Dallas Pell that the Commission might help with its installation, given the significant expense of a new fence and its importance in protecting the Walk's easement past the property. Scott suggested it would be most beneficial if the fence could be of one style/look, extending beyond the Pell property to adjacent neighbors, perhaps funded through a grant. Peter expressed concern that should the CWC and/or City help fund such a fence without public scrutiny and approval processes, it would establish a precedent for other homeowners to request similar treatment.

The next step is to meet with Ms. Pell to determine the proposed fence and define boundaries between her property and the Walk before the CWC prior to any financial commitments independent of a public vetting process (CWC, City, CRMC).

#### **E. Economic Impact Survey Discussion**

Stacey Carter indicated that she had learned that little, if any, data on the economic impact of Cliff Walk existed, even though it is referenced as Rhode Island's #1 tourist attraction. If Salve and the Commission would embark upon such an economic impact survey, the Commission would act as "the client" and have full use and ownership of the results, at no cost.

Professor Sacco discussed how the Commission would interact with Salve and his Department via 3 phases:

1. Develop a questionnaire that would address the economic impact of those visiting the Walk, including demographics, geographic origins, reasons why they visited the walk, how they heard about the walk, what else did they do while in Newport, how much was spent, what did or didn't they enjoy, etc., etc.
2. Administer the survey at different times of the year. \$500 or so was suggested as a stipend to pay for those conducting the surveys.
3. Professor Sacco's Econometrics class (spring, 2016) would analyze the data, derive conclusions and provide a hard copy report, including data, graphs and tables and an Executive Summary.

The Commission agreed with the overall objectives and methodologies and felt such a study would have value for future grant applications and improvements to the Walk. Dave will partner with John to serve as the Commission's liaison on the project.

#### **F. CRMC Rights of Way, including Marine Avenue**

Scott advised that URI's Coastal Resources Center is exploring the watershed at Marine Avenue as a possible pilot program for the terracing of runoff.

#### **G. Anglesea Fencing and Shoreline Access**

Scott had advised that the Director has approved fencing on the marine wall that would indicate the end of the Walk, but would still permit access for fishermen and surfers. Construction would be part of the \$347,000 grant request.

#### **H. Photo Journal & Mileage Markers**

Dave advised that he has identified a student that will assist in taking pictures and that the mileage markers have yet to be installed.

#### **I. No Smoking Ordinance**

Still awaiting the City Manager's approval.

### **III. NEW BUSINESS**

A. The Cultural Landscape Foundation's "*What's Up Weekend*," May 8, 9 10. Cliff Walk Tours at 10am, Saturday, 5/9 and 1pm Sunday, 5/10

B. Daffodillion Soiree Reception @ The Chanler, April 22 from 5:30-7pm. All invited.

**NEXT CWC MEETING: May 20th, 5PM; NEWPORT PUBLIC LIBRARY**