

Bonnet Shores Land Trust Meeting Minutes 2/17/26 FINAL

Tuesday, February 17, 2026
Bonnet Shores Community Center

Present:

J. Fandetti (Chair), K. Sheridan, P. Brousseau, T. Beaty, K. Dolan, A. Girardi

1. Call to Order

- The meeting was called to order by Chair Joan Fandetti at 6:30 PM.
- The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

2. Announcements

- A Lake Road resident reported to a BFSFD Council member that she observed two women trimming trees on an empty lot held by the Land Trust. The Land Trust will place signage on Land Trust property indicating that trimming/taking plants, wood, etc. from Land Trust Property is prohibited.
- The deadline for returning Memorial Bench Holder Signed Consent Forms is March 31, 2026. Only 5 bench holders have returned forms; J. Fandetti will continue outreach and P. Brousseau will text bench holders with a reminder.
- The public is asked to refrain from commenting during Land Trust agenda item discussions; comments should be held until the public comment period.

3. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

- Approval of January 20, 2026 Meeting Minutes
 - Motion to approve: K. Sheridan
 - Second: J. Fandetti
 - Vote: Passed Unanimously (5-0)

4. Motion to discuss January 16, 2026 call with The Foundation Group regarding 501(c)(3) status

- Motion to discuss: K. Dolan
 - Second: T. Beaty
- Discussion
 - A. Girardi shared an update of the call
 - The Land Trust does have its own EIN and must retain it.
 - Once the 990 wasn't filed, the exemption that allowed the Land Trust to fall under the BSFD 501(c)(3) expired.
 - The Land Trust must have their own governing documents drafted, approved, and adopted.
 - The BSFD Treasurer can sit at the Fire District level and approve Land Trust expenses.
 - The Land Trust has been advised to file a Form 990 (Long) which will reflect the changes that are recommended to correct the 501(c)(3) filing. J. Fandetti will also fax a letter to the IRS outlining the changes.

- If for any reason the Fire District were ever dissolved, the Land Trust would continue operating.
 - Potential fines and penalties were not discussed during the call.
- Motion to draft Bonnet Shores Land Trust Rules & Regulations to fulfil the 501(c)(3) application requirement: P. Brousseau
 - Second: J. Fandetti
- Vote: Passed Unanimously (5-0)

5. Motion to discuss a final vote re acquisition of Lot N-R873, Narragansett

- Motion to discuss: P. Brousseau
 - Second: K. Dolan
- Discussion
 - J. Fandetti read the following into the record:

The BSFD Council authorized the Land Trust to pursue this donation provided total costs do not exceed \$1,500. To ensure proper due diligence and adhere to the "Planner One" profile, the following professional evaluations were conducted:

1. Insurance & Liability Risk

Expert: Mr. Brad Weaver, Director of Property and Casualty Underwriting, The Interlocal Trust.

Finding: The BSFD property policy excludes coverage for hazardous waste or environmental contaminants, regardless of whether a prior environmental study was conducted. This places 100% of the liability on the Trust should contaminants be discovered post-acquisition.

2. Environmental & Physical Constraints

Expert: Mr. Richard Pastore, PE (RI License), RP Engineering (Civil, Structural, Coastal, and Environmental).

Finding: Lot NR-873 is a landlocked parcel containing CRMC coastal and freshwater wetlands, a high water table, and a wetlands buffer.

Conclusion: Proving the absence of contaminants would require a soil probing process. The cost of this engineering service alone is cost-prohibitive and would exceed the \$1,500 total budget allocated for the entire acquisition process (appraisal, title search, and engineering).

3. Legal & Regulatory Requirements

To meet IRS standards for the donor's 990 return and tax write-off, a certified appraisal and title search are required. Legal counsel cannot certify the absence of environmental hazards; only a licensed engineer with specific insurance can perform this task.

Conclusion: As Land Trust Chair, my research indicates that the cost to "do this the right way"—specifically the environmental soil probing required to mitigate the Trust's uninsured liability—exceeds the financial threshold set by the Council.

Based on the findings of the due diligence process initiated in late 2025, we will have the vote.

- The Land Trust discussed whether it was reasonable to assume ownership of this property given the risk associated with not undertaking these studies or having proper insurance.
- Motion to reject the property: K. Dolan
 - Second: J. Fandetti
- Vote: Passed Unanimously (5-0)

6. Next Meeting

- Proposed date: Monday, March 16,, 2026 at 6:30 PM
 - Motion: K. Sheridan
 - Second: K. Dolan
 - Vote: Passed unanimously (5-0)

7. Public Comment

- Steve Danuszar, 120 Bonnet Shores Road, asked whether the Land Trust had received estimates for testing the property and what amount of cost we might consider spending beyond the \$1500. He recommended letting the IRS know, in addition to filing the Form 990 (Long), that we are correcting errors on the 501(c)(3) application.
- J. Fandetti, Chair, noted that the two green and white causeway signs that had been paid for by the Land Trust (approx. value \$1000) that had been taken down between April 24, 2025 and May 5, 2025 are missing. They had been stored in the community center shed, for which the only key is kept locked in the manager's office. A police report was filed and the Council will ask the manager to continue looking for the signs.

8. Adjournment

- Motion to Adjourn: K. Dolan
 - Second: J. Fandetti
- Vote: Passed unanimously (5-0)
- Meeting adjourned 7:14 PM

Respectfully submitted,



Kelly R. Sheridan
Bonnet Shores Land Trust Committee Secretary
<https://www.bonnetshoreslandtrust.org/>