Quotation from email by Gregory Schultz, RI Special Assistant Attorney to David Gregg, RINHS Executive Director, April 5, 2013.

Below are two RI laws regarding a land trust’s potential duty to report certain observations from its video cameras.

§ 11-1-5.1. Reports of crimes to law enforcement officials
A person who knows that another person is a victim of sexual assault, murder, manslaughter, or armed robbery and who is at the scene of the crime shall, to the extent that the person can do so without danger of peril to the person or others, report the crime to an appropriate law enforcement official as soon as reasonably practicable. Any person who violates the provisions of this section shall be subject to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six (6) months, or by a fine of not less than five hundred dollars ($500) nor more than one thousand dollars ($1,000).

§ 11-1-5. Compounding or concealing felony
Every person who shall be convicted of having knowledge of the commission of any felony offense, and of taking any money, gratuity, or reward, or any engagement upon an agreement or understanding, express or implied, to compound or conceal that crime or offense, or not to prosecute for the offense, or not to give evidence relative to the offense, shall be imprisoned not exceeding five (5) years or be fined not exceeding five thousand dollars ($5,000), provided that the person shall not be subject to a fine or imprisonment exceeding the felony pertaining to this offense.

I would suggest that if a land trust films activity that potentially identifies illegal activity, it should immediately contact its legal counsel. If there is evidence of a sexual assault, murder, manslaughter, or armed robbery, the police should also be immediately notified.

Gregory S. Schultz
Special Assistant Attorney General
Rhode Island Department of Attorney General
150 South Main Street
Providence, RI 02903
Tel.: (401) 274-4400, Ext. 2400
Fax: (401) 222-3016