

**Conservation Commission  
Town of Wallingford  
October 8, 2009**

**MINUTES**

The Regular Meeting of the Wallingford Conservation Commission was held on Thursday, October 8, 2009, in the Basement Conference Room of the Town Hall Municipal Building, Wallingford, Connecticut.

Seated from the Commission were Chairperson Jeffrey Borne, Vice Chairperson Mary Heffernon, Carl Arsenault, John Lathrop, James Pyskaty, Kenneth Ryan, and Dianne Saunders.

Absent were Thomas Pietras, Scott Trauner

Town staff persons present were Ms. Erin O'Hare, Environmental Planner and Natural Resources Planner, Don Roe, Program Planner and Recording Secretary Sonja Vining.

Chairman Borne called the meeting to order at 7:12 p.m.

**1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

**A. September 10, 2009 – Regular Meeting**

Ms. Saunders made two changes to the Minutes as submitted:

Page 2 - B.1.a. – first paragraph second to the last sentence to read, Ms. Saunders would like to see if a match could be made by the Engineering Department to repair the erosion of the road.

Page 5 – E. 2. – second paragraph last sentence to read, as “Round-Up” may impact amphibians, its use was not recommended, “Rodeo” should be used instead.

**MOTION:** Mr. Lathrop to approve the Minutes of the September 10, 2009 meeting as corrected.

**SECOND:** Mr. Ryan

**VOTE:** Unanimous

**2. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT:**

**A. Tyler Mill Preserve**

1. Trail system Improvement Program

- a. DEP Recreational Trails Grant (re: southern portion) – report, D. Roe

Mr. Roe reported that this item is on the consent agenda for the next Town Council meeting. Mr. Roe will draft bid documents and get them to the Commission for its review.

Ms. Heffernon read her Trails Committee report dated October 8, 2009 that included several areas of concern where the Commission would like to see some maintenance done. She presented a colored map where she looped the major trails and asked for input from the Commission. The Commission discussed the looping concept along with the colors and the possibility of naming the major trails. The overall feeling of the Commission was that looping trails are generally what hikers like to travel. The Commissioners reviewed the map and discussed the possibility of connecting some of the trails to make larger loops. Ms. Heffernon thanked all of the Commissioners that attended the walk.

Ms. O'Hare mentioned the blazing contract. Mr. Roe suggested that not only southern Tyler Mill should be included but that Ms. O'Hare should also include Ferguson Woods, Bertini Park and Luftbery Park. These other items could be put in the bid as itemized add ons or deletes.

b. Required maintenance

Ms. Saunders discussed a trouble spot at the south end of Tyler Mill, near the swamp, that needs to be addressed. Ms. O'Hare will not be available to walk the site and show the Engineering Department the area so Commissioners would have to volunteer to do that. Ms. Saunders made it clear that no pipe should flow to the swamp because of lawn chemicals that could be in the water. The Commission also wants to be sure that no silt or invasive species travel through the water to that swamp.

Ms. Heffernon and Mr. Arsenault reported that they supervised a group of Boy Scouts who spent several hours clearing the trails in the northern park. Wayne Fogg had provided them with a map and report that they used for guidance. The Boy Scouts worked all day in the rain and never complained. They did a tremendous amount of work and the Commission thanked them for their help.

There was some discussion about the White Trail and how wet it is. The Commission feels there is a need for a new boardwalk at the entrance to the trail. Ms. Heffernon will contact Henry McCully to discuss the issue and also suggest that a garbage can be placed at the Northford Road entrance to Tyler Mill.

2. Deer management – aerial population survey proposal

Mr. Borne reported that the Mayor was provided the report sent to the Commission from Howard Kilpatrick, Deer Project Leader, DEP regarding deer management. The Mayor indicated that he would like to see some more detailed documentation regarding deer population management. Mr. Roe indicated that he believed that John Gawlack from the Parks and Recreation Department would be paying the \$800 to have the aerial population survey done. Mr. Roe will contact P&R to confirm and work out the details.

**B. Farmland Lease Properties Program**

1. Field 14A – 205 Main Street – encroachment – report, Law Dept.

Ms. O'Hare indicated that there was nothing new to report.

2. Field 3A – encroachment – report

Ms. Heffernon indicated that she and Henry McCully visited the site and Henry feels that the trees cut down were not located on town property. Brush has been cut and trees have been limbed but no town trees were cut. Ms. O'Hare is unclear as to whether the Engineering Department has been out there to re-mark and re-post the property boundaries. Ms. Heffernon and Mr. Roe indicated that before the next meeting they will go out and look at the area. Obviously, once the Engineering Department does its part it will be much easier to see exactly what has been done and on whose property.

3. Gates – report, D.Roe

Mr. Roe reported that the gates ordered approximately three weeks ago have not come in yet, and will be installed by the vendor.

4. Map updates – field maps and town wide map

Ms. O'Hare indicated that this matter is on hold.

**C. Fresh Meadow Swamp at Cheshire Road**

1. Wetlands mapping updates

Ms. O'Hare indicated that this matter is on hold. The Commission reviewed locations for fall tree installation by Public Works Department.

2. Mowing Plan – maintenance estimate

Ms. O'Hare indicated that this matter is on hold.

3. Walking Path Concept Plan contract – status & input

Ms. O'Hare indicated that there was nothing new to report.

4. Old Gate Road property – Tennessee Gas Pipeline Co. activity – status report

Ms. O'Hare reported that Tennessee Gas has done its plantings. She described how the plantings were small and at this time do not screen the equipment. She suggested perhaps using some of the trees that the town has in stock to be installed in this area. The trees would be installed on town property not on the Tennessee right of way. Mr. Ryan indicated that he has seen the area but would revisit the site to see if it would be a good location for the trees to be planted. Other areas that were suggested for these trees were around the Galco pond and the butterfly meadow.

**D. Beseck Mountain**

1. Cliffside Trail – boundary plantings

Chairman Borne indicated Public Works will install cedars here.

2. Encroachment behind 35 Wisk-Key Wind Road – report, Law Dept.

Ms. O'Hare indicated there was nothing new to report.

**E. Ferguson Woods**

1. former driveway

The Commission is waiting to hear back from Henry McCully on the dirt pile. Ms. Heffernon will follow-up since she has other issues to discuss with him.

**F. 1250 Whirlwind Hill Road**

1. boundary marking

The Mayor would like to see the boundary marked by the Engineering Department. The issue of how to handle access is undecided at this time.

2. site visit

The Commission will schedule a walk for November and talk about the use or maintenance of the area. Mr. Roe feels that there should be no other activity on the site except for the mowing of the hay.

**G. Invasive Species Eradication**

1. Long-term invasive species management program – update, D. Saunders

Ms. Saunders indicated that there is nothing new to report. She noted several private property owners abutting Tyler Mill Preserve are now eradicating invasive plants on their properties.

2. Annual program expenditure

There was discussion about the previously approved \$2,000 from the Open Space Resource Management Fund for invasive plant management. Since it is so late in the year, the Commission feels that the best time to do this activity would be in the spring. Maps, photos, and memos have to be gathered. Mr. Roe indicated that he would handle putting everything together. Someone would have to be hired to do the work and that would take place in the spring with a three-quote system.

3. Tyler Mill Preserve entrance proposal

Nothing new to report. The \$2,000 expenditure will address the entrance area.

### **H. Volunteer Work Program**

Ms. Heffernon and Mr. Ryan stated that they have been contacted by a local Girl Scout troop who is looking to do some volunteer work in the area of the Fresh Meadow. Mr. Ryan and Ms. Heffernon made several suggestions but the one that seemed to peak the most interest was the possibility of the girl scouts building a little bridge in the Fresh Meadow. Ms. Heffernon is hoping that they decide to do the project and is waiting to hear back.

### **3. PROPERTY DISPOSITIONS:**

1. Letters to owners of large property

Mr. Roe reviewed a list he had on file with the names and dates of certain large property owners who were previously mailed letters. Most of the letters went out in March of 2008 and there has been no response from any of the property owners. The Commission reviewed, along with Mr. Roe, a map of the properties discussed and other properties that have potential such as Mountainside, Powder Ridge and the Y Camp property. Mr. Roe feels that a list of some of those properties should be assembled and then the Commission could think about what would be the best approach.

2. Dayton Pond / Muddy River dam property access

Chairman Borne reported that the Town is to acquire the dam and the surrounding property. Mr. Roe will update the matter at the next meeting.

3. Other

Mr. Borne indicated that the Commission did a field visit earlier in the day and he would be preparing a report.

#### **4. GRASSLAND BIRD HABITAT ENHANCEMENT/RESTORATION INITIATIVE:**

Nothing new to report except Ms. Saunders noted that when leases come due, leases for pastures should require regular mowing so fields won't grow in. She will call Tom Wall about Field 4A.

#### **5. OPEN SPACE PLAN, 1999**

A. Committee update – D. Saunders – No update

#### **6. OPEN SPACE MANAGEMENT MEETING, Sept. 16 – report**

Outcomes from the O.S.M. meeting has been incorporated throughout the discussion of the evening.

#### **7. PUBLIC OUTREACH PROGRAMS**

A. Family Day, September 12 – report

Ms. Heffernon reported that the turnout was fine but there did not seem to be too much interest. It is difficult to compete for children's attention when there are games and toys and all sorts of fun things around to do. They still plan on doing the event next year.

B. Speaker Event – October 21

1. Status report
2. Promotion

Ms. Saunders reported that everything is going well and on track for the event. Ms. Heffernon did the promotional TV spot and did a great job. The brochures for the event are scheduled to be delivered. Ms. Saunders will be sending out advertisement to the abutters of open space, and will be putting it on the town access channel as well as in the newspaper. Some items that will be covered at the event will be organic lawn care, invasive species, composting, and riparian buffers. The Connecticut Agriculture Experiment Station will also be there to discuss beetles. Ms. Saunders is scheduling a Tyler Mill invasive species walk on November 8<sup>th</sup> with the hopes that the Speaker event will spark some interest and excitement to learn more and see these species first hand.

#### **8. CORRESPONDENCE / REPORTS**

A. Mackenzie Reservoir Dredging Project

Ms. O'Hare indicated that there was nothing new to report.

B. New England National Scenic Trail – Stewardship Council re: representatives  
Mr. Borne indicated that he submitted the names of Ken Ryan, Carl Arsenault, and Wayne Fogg to the Mayor for consideration. It is up to the Mayor to choose two nominees.

C. DEP – Diversion of Water application – Wallingford Country Club  
Ms. O'Hare reported that there has been a recent notice of DEP application submitted regarding withdrawal of water. Mr. Borne read a report from the DEP but this item would have no effect on the Conservation Commission.

D. State of CT Conservation & Development Plan – interim change request – status  
Ms. O'Hare read from Regional Planning Agency Minutes that indicate that the Town of Cheshire objects to the actions taken by Wallingford and requested a hearing.

E. Other

Ms. Saunders pointed out that hunting season starts very soon and would like to install red signs indicating where hunting is permitted and not permitted. Some signs have been installed but the way things are going it doesn't look like the red signs will be installed in time for opening day. Ms. Saunders indicated that if she can get the signs she would be willing to install them herself. After some discussion it was determined that Ms. Saunders should contact Mr. Roe to discuss the matter.

**9. NEXT MEETING** – November 12, 2009

**10. ADJOURNMENT:**

MOTION: Mr. Lathrop to adjourn.

SECOND: Mr. Arsenault

VOTE: Unanimous

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sonja Vining  
Recording Secretary