

**Conservation Commission
Town of Wallingford
November 12, 2009**

MINUTES

The Regular Meeting of the Wallingford Conservation Commission was held on Thursday, November 12, 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, Tom Pietras, Scott Trauner and Dianne Saunders.

Town staff person present was Recording Secretary Sonja Vining.

Chairman Borne called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A. October 8, 2009 – Regular Meeting

Some changes were made to the Minutes as submitted:

Page 2 - third paragraph – spelling correction Lufbery Park

Page 3 – B.2. – delete the sentence that reads, Ms. Heffernon and Mr. Roe indicated that before the next meeting they would go out and look at the area.

Page 4 – first paragraph – spelling correction Galko

Page 6 – 7.A. – Replace “Ms. Heffernon reported” with “It was reported”.

Page 6 – 7.B. – forth sentence – replace “Ms. Saunders” with “Mr. Roe”.

MOTION: Mr. Pyskaty to approve the Minutes of the October 8, 2009 meeting as corrected.

SECOND: Ms. Heffernon

VOTE: Unanimous

Chairman Borne made the Commissioners aware that Ms. O'Hare would not be working on any Conservation Commission business at this time. She has been directed to concentrate all of her time on IWWC business. The Commission discussed the value of having Ms. O'Hare present at the meetings. She provided valuable insight in many different areas and organized work that could only be done by a town staff member. Chairman Borne stated that any requests for information or work that was previously done by Ms. O'Hare should be directed to the Mayor's Office.

2. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT:

A. Tyler Mill Preserve

1. Trail system Improvement Program

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

Ms. Heffernon reported that Mr. Roe is working on a draft of the grant. Ms. Heffernon and Ms. Saunders will be getting together to work on a map of the invasives as requested by Mr. Roe.

- b. Required maintenance

Ms. Saunders announced to the Commission that she is looking for the historical archeology report. The report needs to be given to the Engineering Department.

2. Deer management – aerial population survey proposal, J. Gawlak

Ms. Heffernon reported that John Gawlak is working with Mr. Roe to see if a bid would be required. The aerial population survey needs to be done when there is full ground cover. The cost for the survey is \$250/hr, which would be coming from the Parks & Recreation Department.

3. Signage

Ms. Saunders reported that the DEP No Hunting signs have been posted but there are not enough. She indicated that 50-70 more signs would be required. DEP posted other signs but she does not feel they are adequate. She made a copy of the DEP No Hunting sign and did some research on the cost of having more made. She reported that Sign Stop could make the signs out of corrugated plastic 4x8 sheets. The cost for 64 signs would be \$99. Mike Falcigno would install the signs.

MOTION:

Ms. Heffernon made a motion to request that P&R cover the bill in the amount of \$99 for additional No Hunting signs to be printed by Sign Stop. If the cost were not covered by P&R it would be submitted to the Mayor's Office and covered by the Conservation Commission.

SECOND:

Mr. Lathrop

VOTE:

unanimous

B. Farmland Lease Properties Program

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

Nothing new to report.

2. Field 3A – encroachment – report, M. Heffernon

Ms. Heffernon reported that the Engineering Department installed survey markers. It was reported at the last meeting that Henry McCully felt that the trees cut down were not located on town property and that Ms. O'Hare disagreed with that assessment. Now that the boundaries have been marked Ms. Heffernon and Mr. Lathrop would revisit the site to see if they can determine where the trees were cut. The Commission discussed planting a row of trees or mountain laurel along the boundary line.

3. Gates – report, D.Roe

Ms. Heffernon reported that the gates have been installed and the bill has been paid. The gates do not have locks on them yet. Ms. Heffernon will contact Mr. Roe to discuss the locks. She reported that the gate at Anderson Road would be expensive because there is nothing to attach it to. The owner of the property does not feel there is a need for the gate. Ms. Saunders reported that there has been tree cutting and tapping in that area. She would like to see signs posted to stop those activities. Ms. Heffernon will mention that issue to Mr. Roe when she talks to him about the gate locks.

4. Field 4A – report, D. Saunders

Ms. Saunders has not yet spoken to Mr. Wall about cutting the fields but she will get to it this month.

C. Fresh Meadow Swamp at Cheshire Road

1. Filming request

Alex and Linda Calvo, makers of The Other Side of the Tracks, gave a brief presentation. They are working on a new film, The Melancholy Fantastic and would like to shot a scene in the Fresh Meadow Swamp area. The scene would involve the burning of a doll. Mr. & Mrs. Calvo have gotten all of the necessary approvals and permits from the Risk Manager and the Fire Marshall. Filming would take place on December 8th and 9th, weather permitting. They assured the Committee that all of the appropriate people including the Mayor and John Gawlak would be notified to the exact date and time of the filming. Mr. & Mrs. Calvo were made aware that there is a gas line running through the property.

MOTION: Ms. Heffernon made a motion to approve the filming at Fresh Meadow Swamp at Cheshire Road as proposed by Mr. & Mrs. Calvo.
SECOND: Mr. Ryan
VOTE: unanimous

2. Butterfly Meadow – leaf dumping

Ms. Heffernon reported that Ms. O'Hare made her aware that there was some dumping of leaves that had been done in the butterfly meadow. Ms. Heffernon visited the site and reported that it appears that a neighbor has been dumping the leaves. There have been letters sent out to the area property owners stating that there is no dumping allowed in that area.

Mr. Pietras asked about the Town's mowing plan/schedule. He wanted to know how many fields the Town actually cuts. Ms. Heffernon did not know the exact number but did stated that Henry McCully has pointed out that the number of fields that have to be cut seem to be increasing but his staff is not. Mr. Pietras would like to get a copy of the mowing plan/schedule. Ms. Heffernon would contact the Mayor's Office for that information. Ms. Saunders believes that a copy could also be found at Henry McCully's office.

3. Tree planting

Ms. Heffernon reported that the trees are being held until spring due to the fact that Ms. O'Hare has not had the opportunity to mark where they are to be planted.

4. Improvements for winter activities, J Gawlak

It was reported that there would be ice-skating at Galko pond this year. There is an unsettled issue of the Public Works Department installing a barrier between the pond and the parking area. Chairman Borne would write a letter to the Mayor with a copy going to John Gawlak requesting a barrier be installed. He will send a draft of the letter to the Commissioners for their comments.

5. Old Gate Road property

a. Tennessee Gas Pipeline Co. activity – plantings

Ms. Heffernon reported that Ms. O'Hare wanted the Commission to discuss the plantings around the pipeline facility. The plantings were not installed according to the plan. Ms. O'Hare wanted the Commission to discuss the species of plants as well as the planting design. She wanted input from the Commission as to if it feels the

plantings should remain as is or have them pulled up and replanted according to the original plan. Ms. Heffernon, Mr. Lathrop and Mr. Ryan visited the site. Mr. Ryan provided photos for the Commissioners to review.

After some discussion it was determined that the Commission would wait until spring to see what survives the winter and how the site looks at that time. The plantings were thought to be small but the Commission felt that in a few years they would provide adequate screening. The Commission talked about the possibility of having the plants that don't survive replaced in the spring. It has been discussed in prior meetings that the Commission could plant some pines in that area.

D. Beseck Mountain

1. Cliffside Trail – boundary plantings

No plantings have been done.

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

Nothing new to report.

E. Ferguson Woods

1. former driveway – report, M. Heffernon

Nothing new to report.

F. 1250 Whirlwind Hill Road

1. boundary marking

Ms. Heffernon reported that the boundary markings have been done. There have been stakes as well as pavement markers installed.

2. site visit – report

The Commission scheduled a site walk for Sunday November 15, 2009 at 9:30 a.m.

G. Invasive Species Eradication

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

2. Volunteer walk, November 8 – report, D. Saunders

Ms. Saunders reported that the Invasive Species Hike has been rescheduled to November 22, 2009. She handed out a flyer to each Commissioner. The volunteers would be concentrating on bittersweet. Ms. Saunders has done mailings to her usual volunteers as well as abutting property owners.

3. Annual program expenditure

On hold until spring.

H. Volunteer Work Program

Ms. Heffernon and Mr. Ryan reported that they had a meeting with Linda Ryan and Cindy Parent who have members of their girl scout troop who would like to do some work in the Fresh Meadow Swamp. The girl scouts put together a packet explaining all of the work that they would like to do. They would like to build a foot bridge over the stream, install benches in the butterfly meadow, install butterfly and bird boxes, plant a perennial garden, create a sunflower maze and remove invasive species. There was discussion about who would apply for the wetland permit that would be required.

MOTION: Mr. Arsenault made a motion to approve the activities of the girl scouts in the Fresh Meadow Swamp as proposed.

SECOND: Mr. Lathrop

VOTE: Unanimous

3. PROPERTY DISPOSITIONS:

1. Letters to owners of large property and other approaches.

The Commission discussed the best way to approach owners of large property. Mr. Roe provided information that he had gathered on large property owners to be targeted. He was looking for input from the Commission on other ways to reach out to large property owners. It was decided that the Town should continue to send letters as well as reach out on a personal level whenever the opportunity arises. Mr. Arsenault suggested sending out Open Space Day invitations especially to those property owners. Chairman Borne will discuss the issue with Mr. Roe.

2. Dayton Pond / Muddy River dam property access – report, D. Roe

Nothing new to report.

3. Other

The Commission briefly discussed the recent Town Council elections and the Choate proposal that was put in front of the existing Council. The Commission felt it would like to comment on any future proposals submitted by Choate for an Environmental Center.

4. GRASSLAND BIRD HABITAT ENHANCEMENT/RESTORATION INITIATIVE:

Nothing new to report.

5. OPEN SPACE PLAN, 1999

A. Committee update – D. Saunders

There has been no meeting.

6. PUBLIC OUTREACH PROGRAMS

A. Speaker Event – October 21 – report, D. Saunders

Ms. Saunders reported that the speaker was excellent. She was pleased with the booths as well. Ms. Saunders was happy to see some new faces at the event. She has sent out thank you notes to all of those who participated.

7. MEETING SCHEDULE 2010 – adopt

Ms. Heffernon made a motion to approve the 2010 meeting schedule as submitted. The motion was seconded by Mr. Lathrop and passed unanimously.

8. CORRESPONDENCE / REPORTS

A. Mackenzie Reservoir Dredging Project

Ms. Heffernon read comments made by Ms. O'Hare at the last IWWC meeting. The comments were provided by Ms. O'Hare.

B. New England National Scenic Trail Stewardship Council meeting, Oct. 13 – report

Chairman Borne reported that he attended the meeting. The Mayor has appointed Mr. Arsenault and Mr. Ryan to the Council.

C. State of CT Conservation & Development Plan – interim change request – update

Nothing to report.

D. CT Butterfly Association Fall Meeting, Nov. 16, 7:30 p.m.

E. DEP Notice of Intent to Adopt Regulations and Hold Public Hearing re: establishment of flow standards and other regulatory requirements for all river and stream systems in the State

F. CFPA Conference: CT's Forests in a Changing World: From Global to Local, Nov. 24

Chairman Borne reported that he has attended this conference in the past and he would recommend it to all Commissioners.

G. CFPA magazine, CT Woodlands, Fall '09

H. Other

9. NEXT MEETING – December 10, 2009

10. ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION: Ms. Heffernon to adjourn.

SECOND: Mr. Pyskaty

VOTE: Unanimous

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sonja Vining
Recording Secretary