

**Conservation Commission  
Town of Wallingford  
December 10, 2009**

**MINUTES**

The Regular Meeting of the Wallingford Conservation Commission was held on Thursday, December 10, 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, Kenneth Ryan, Tom Pietras, and Dianne Saunders. Absent were: John Lathrop, James Pyskaty, and Scott Trauner  
Town staff person present was Recording Secretary Sonja Vining.

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

**1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

**A. November 12, 2009 – Regular Meeting**

Some changes were made to the Minutes as submitted:

Page 1 - second paragraph – add to attendees, Alex and Linda Calvo

Page 2 - A2. – third line change “ground cover” to “snow cover” – last line should read “from the Parks & Recreation Department’s budget.”

Page 3 – B3. – Line 4 – change “owner” to “Lessee”

C1. – Line 3 – change “shot” to “film”

Page 4 – 2. – Second Paragraph – third line change “stated” to “state”

2. – Second Paragraph – fourth line change “seen” to “seem”

4. – First line should read “It was reported that there would be ice-skating at Galko pond this year, weather permitting. There is...”

Page 5 – Second paragraph, third line should read “plantings were thought to be small but the Commission felt that in a few years they”

Page 6 – H. – Third line should read, “some work at the Fresh Meadow Swamp property. The girl...”

Page 7 – Last line should read “Mr. Arsenault, Mr. Fogg and Mr. Ryan to the Council.”

**MOTION:** Ms. Heffernon to approve the Minutes of the November 12, 2009 meeting as corrected.

**SECOND:** Mr. Ryan

**VOTE:** Unanimous

## **2. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT:**

### **A. Tyler Mill Preserve**

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

Ms. Heffernon reported that Mr. Roe is working on the final draft of the grant.

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

Ms. Heffernon reported that John Gawlak is working with Mr. Roe to coordinate the bid specs.

Mr. Pietras, Mr. Borne and Ms. Saunders of the Conservation Commission attended a meeting of CACIWIC. No members of the Wallingford Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission were in attendance. There were several speakers including a DEP Wildlife Biologist who spoke about deer population control and related issues. The speaker stated that the overpopulation of deer hurts the habitat and hurts the deer. One way to control the deer population that was discussed was hunting. Archery hunting was mentioned. The Town of Redding uses archery hunting for population control and they do not close the open space area while hunting is taking place. The Town of Redding was pleased with the results. Mr. Pietras mentioned that in the Town of North Branford they have a two-week hunting period that they run on a lottery system. He felt that may be a good system in the open space areas of town. Mr. Ryan felt that it would be important to have public awareness and public support for this plan.

Mr. Pietras thought it would be a good idea to have a trial period and ask if the Rod & Gun Club would be interested in being involved in the lottery system. He suggested inviting the people from the Rod & Gun Club to a Conservation Commission meeting to discuss the issue, after the information is gathered from the aerial survey.

Chairman Borne felt that there might be some input from the public so it would be important to provide the Mayor with as much detailed information as possible. Ms. Saunders indicated that she would expand on the memo that she put together previously and add some more details.

3. Signage

The hunting signs are in production and expected to be ready within 2-3 days.

### **B. Farmland Lease Properties Program**

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

Mr. Ryan passed out photos taken by Mr. Lathrop for the Commission to review. Mr. Arsenault, Mr. Ryan, Mr. Lathrop and Ms. Heffernon have walked the site and discovered that the stumps that were there were covered with stones. They believe that is why on a previous visit the Town Staff did not see them. The Commission Members reported that there was one yard that was completely clear-cut of any trees. Ms. Heffernon wrote a letter to Corporation Counsel Adam Mantzaris that included a map along with the State Statute explaining the penalties for such activity. Attorney Mantzaris took the information and presented to the Homeowner's Association President.

2. Gates – report

Ms. Saunders reported that the locks have been installed on the gates. She stated that in the area of Maltby Lane and Anderson Road there is some all terrain vehicle activity, cutting of trees, and tapping of trees. Ms. Heffernon suggested sending out a letter to area property owners including the same State Statute as mentioned above.

Mr. Pietras inquired about Field 19A. Ms. Saunders stated that she has not had the opportunity to talk with Mr. Wall yet regarding the cutting of that field. She did report that the cows are out of that field for the winter.

3. Field 4A – report, D. Saunders

Nothing new to report.

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

1. Filming

Everything went well with the filming. Mr. Ryan reported that there were a few ruts created by vehicles but no major damage was done.

2. Butterfly Meadow – leaf dumping

Ms. Heffernon read a copy of a letter written by John Gawlak and sent to the area property owners regarding the dumping of leaves in the Butterfly Meadow.

3. Improvements for winter activities, J Gawlak

Ms. Heffernon gave some history on the back and forth between herself, John Gawlak and Henry McCully, Public Works. It turned out that there have been no barriers installed at the Galko pond parking area. Ms. Heffernon indicated that there are some

bollards that are not being used at the Library that could possibly be used for the parking area at the Galko pond, but Mr. McCully doesn't want them. Chairman Borne stated that he would put together a letter regarding taking take of this issue in a timely manner. He would forward the letter to Mr. Gawlak, Mr. McCully and the Mayor

#### **D. Ferguson Woods**

1. Former driveway – report, M. Heffernon

Ms. Heffernon reported that about ½ of the dirt pile has been removed at this time.

Mr. Pietras reported that the Town has acquired a new parcel of land. The parcel adjoins Ferguson Woods and is 30 plus acres in size. This parcel, known as the Poder parcel, is entirely wooded. The Commission will schedule a site walk for after the holidays.

#### **E. 1250 Whirlwind Hill Road**

1. Site visit – report

The Commission did a site walk at 1250 Whirlwind Hill Road. The Commission would discuss a management plan with Mr. Kranyak. Mr. Arsenault would like to see that field brush hogged every two years rather than being hayed like the surrounding property. He thinks it would create some good diversity in the area. Mr. Arsenault would like to try having local farmers bid on the maintenance of this piece of property. There are several local farmers who he believes may be interested and it would give the Commission some more control over the cutting schedule because they would not have to wait for Public Works to fit it into it's schedule. The feeling was that this would be a good field to try this bid process on. This item would be discussed further at the next meeting.

It was reported that at this time there is no set management/mowing plan in place with Henry McCully. He recommended to the Commission that it consider putting a formal plan together.

#### **F. Northford Road**

1. Field 7A – Report, T.Pietras

It was reported that Commissioners Pietras, Saunders, Pyskaty and Bourne conducted a site walk. Mr. Pietras stated that the field is wet with silty, slow draining soils. There is a serious erosion problem where the runoff is creating channels down slope. There is a very steep embankment that goes down toward the Muddy River. The erosion is so bad that entire trees have come down. The Commission feels that this

erosion must be controlled as soon as possible. Ms. Saunders reported that there are 4-5 severe gullies that have been created in the area. She reviewed a topography map showing where she saw the most severe erosion. Mr. Pietras wrote a letter addressed to Erin O'Hare, Environmental Planner, recommending that the area be inspected by the Engineering Department. Ms. Saunders gave some history on the farming activity in this area.

The Commission would like to address this problem as soon as possible so they will be anxious to see what comments come back from the Engineering Department. It was reported that at this time there would be no way that equipment could get in the area and pull out any silt that has collected.

### **G. Invasive Species Eradication**

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

Ms. Saunders reported that she has completed the detailed plan for the bid specs, including a keyed map, which will go to Don Roe. She has prioritized three areas for the bid. They are the mill site, the area east of the swamp, and the red trail from the bridge to Tamarac Swamp Road. Ms. Saunders stated that there are 11 miles of trail that need to be flagged for wetlands. The wetlands have to be delineated for maintenance purposes because chemical treatment would not be permitted in the wetlands.

John Thompson, Engineering Department, is to mark the Town property area around New England Drive

Ms. Saunders stated that if someone was interested in doing a history project there is evidence of glacier markings in the area.

Ms. Heffernon would be following up with a realtor regarding a piece of property in East Wallingford.

2. Volunteer walk, November 22 – report, D. Saunders

Ms. Saunders reported that the volunteer walk was filmed and went well. While filming there was ATV activity observed and that activity was reported to the police.

Ms. Saunders indicated that she would put together a list of her regular volunteers and forward it to all of the Commissioners. She reported that she is looking into getting vests or T-shirts for the volunteers to wear while they are on the trails doing maintenance. Ms. Saunders feels it is important for the public to be aware that they

are volunteers doing the cutting on the trails and not just members of the public that are allowed to do cutting.

Ms. Saunders has regularly scheduled volunteer walks for the fourth Sunday of each month going through to May and is putting together a brochure for volunteers to follow.

**H. Dayton Pond / Muddy River dam property access – report, D. Roe**  
Nothing new to report.

### **3. OTHER REPORTS:**

#### A. Mackenzie Reservoir Dredging Project

Ms. Heffernon reported that the North Reservoir is complete. The East Reservoir is 85% complete. Given the recent rain the project may shut down for now and restart back up in May or June.

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

Nothing new to report, things are at a standstill.

#### C. Other

Ms. Saunders reported that she was made aware of and became involved in a case where there was an injured coyote found on the side of the road. The woman who found the animal contacted the Wallingford Police Department who sent out an officer who told the woman that he would take care of the suffering animal. The police officer did nothing and the animal was still there in the morning after spending the entire night out in the rain and suffering. Ms. Saunders contacted the Police Department and was told that there was no record of the incident. She then contacted Lieutenant Mikulski who told Ms. Saunders that there was a policy for such an incident and forwarded her a copy. In Ms. Saunders opinion the policy had some room for judgment where perhaps it should be more straightforward. Ms. Heffernon agreed to forward a copy of the policy to each Commissioner to review for discussion at the next meeting.

### **4. NEXT MEETING: - January 14, 2010**

### **5. ADJOURNMENT:**

MOTION: Ms. Heffernon to adjourn.

SECOND: Mr. Ryan

VOTE: Unanimous  
The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sonja Vining  
Recording Secretary