

**CONSERVATION COMMISSION
TOWN OF WALLINGFORD
April 9, 2009**

MINUTES

The Wallingford Conservation Commission held a Regular Meeting on Thursday, April 9, 2009, at 7:00 p.m. in the Basement Conference Room of the Town Hall Municipal Building, 45 South Main Street, Wallingford, CT. Present were Chairman Jeffrey Borne, Vice Chairperson Mary Heffernon, and Commissioners Carl Arsenault (arrived later), John Lathrop, Thomas Pietras, James Pyskaty, Kenneth Ryan, Dianne Saunders, and Scott Trauner. Town staff persons present were Ms. Erin O'Hare, Environmental and Natural Resources Planner, and Recording Secretary Ms. Kathleen Burns. No one was present from the public.

Chairman Borne called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Minutes of March 12, 2009

These corrections were made:

- On p. 2, at item 5. third paragraph, first sentence, to delete "be"; and in paragraph 4, fifth sentence, to delete "and he".
- On p. 3, at item 5. first paragraph, second sentence, to change "with" to "within".
- On p. 5 at item 2.B.2., second paragraph, last sentence, to delete "realizing that Farmland Lease fields should have passive recreation as a companion use" and to insert "collaborating more". In the third paragraph, last sentence, to insert "the" before "Keer property".
- On p. 5, at the end of item 2.B.4, to insert "be", to read: "This will be discussed at the (above) AFT/CCM meeting."

Motion: Jim Pyskaty, to approve the minutes of the March 12th Meeting as corrected above

Second: Mary Heffernon.

Vote: Unanimous.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairman Borne announced that Recording Secretary Kathleen Burns will be leaving the Commission's service after the May meeting.

Budget for 2009-2010 - Chairman Borne and Erin O'Hare attended the April 7th Town Council meeting. They explained the Conservation Commission's budget request. For now, it appears that the Commission's request will remain intact. Tonight Chairman Borne proposed that he would write a letter to the Town Council in further support of the budget. The economy is down, and this is a time when people would look to use their local resources, such as the Town's open space properties, for recreation. One thing the Commission plans to do next year is create maps for the public of the open space properties. The letter will enclose the Commission's Annual Report by Mary Heffernon. The Commission endorsed this course of action.

2. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

A. Tyler Mill Preserve

1. Trails System Improvement Program
 - a. DEP Recreational Trails Grant

Ms. O'Hare had received the archaeologist's report completed for the DEP on March 30. She showed it to the Commissioners, who will read it in turn. The archaeologist recommends that the invasives found by the old foundations at Tyler Mill should be flush-cut - not pulled out or dug out - so as not to disturb the foundation itself. He had also returned a bound copy of Lisa Toman's 1999 report entitled "Town Trails: A Guide and Natural History".

Note: Commissioner Carl Arsenault arrived at 7:32 p.m.

Motion: Dianne Saunders, that the Commission use the volunteers to help trim the invasives around the foundations in Tyler Mill Preserve.

Second: John Lathrop.

Vote: Unanimous.

Dianne will assist and supervise volunteers Mrs. Kumnick, Mr. Daley, and Mr. Corcoran to cut the invasives as directed and treat the remaining vegetation in place.

- b. Blazing Contract

Erin O'Hare and Mary Heffernon will confer on April 14th, about the content of the trailblazing contract.

B. Farmland Lease Properties Program

1. Field 14A – 205 Main Street, Yalesville – Encroachment
Corporation Counsel Adam Mantzaris has retained a title searcher to proceed with legal action on this matter.

2. American Farmland Trust Technical Assistance Meeting, March 31

Dianne Saunders said she, Erin O'Hare, Don Roe and Carl Arsenault had met with Mr. Henry Talmadge, the Connecticut Farmland Trust, Mr. Kipen Kolesinskas, NRCS, and Ben Howell, American Farmland Trust, on March 31st. They discussed best practices and trends in agriculture. It was both a general and technical discussion. Ms. O'Hare will send map packets to Mr. Kolesinskas, who will advise the Commission about conservation plans for three Farmland Lease fields that have to go out to bid in the fall. Two fields are off North Branford Road, 1A, and 1C—and the third field is 7A on Northford Road. Ms. O'Hare will provide the maps and a sample of Wallingford's Farmland Lease document. Separately, Mr. Kolesinskas said he will send a formal letter to the State DEP requesting that the term of Farmland Leases should be extended. Dianne did ask whether the Commission should specify to lease bidders that zone tillage should be used, and Kip advised that the bidding farmer should suggest what techniques he would use on each field. Dianne prepared a draft report of the meeting for Erin's review and she will submit the final report at the May meeting. (See related discussion concerning Field 7A at item.4. below.)

3. Lease Bid Proposal

Ms. O'Hare said Fields 7E and 7F are ready to be bid now; but the Conservation Commission agreed to bid these fields in the fall, along with the three fields mentioned in 2.B.2. above.

5. Field 1A – Request for Staging Area for French Alliance Weekend

Procession, June 20 – Sean Chait, Troop 5, Boy Scouts

Town-owned Field 1A is off North Branford Road, across from Blue Trail Rifle Range. Mayor Dickinson asked the Commission to comment on the proposed use of this field for horses that would be part of the reenactment of General Rochambeau's 1781 march through this part of Wallingford. The procession would involve 75 cavalry horses, 600 reenactment troops, plus Governor Rell, the Governor's Horse Guard, Mayor Dickinson, and several dignitaries. The June 20th procession is an Eagle Scout project, and a second Eagle Scout project is planned that day to dedicate a monument at Mackenzie Reservoir. Ms. O'Hare noted that the dredging work will begin at Mackenzie Reservoir in mid-May.

Note: Commissioner John Lathrop left the meeting at this time.

The Commission felt that this June 20th activity could occur since Field 1A is not yet leased out. The field itself is on a hill, higher than the road. It could be very muddy if it is wet. They asked Ms. O'Hare to work out the details of using this field or another field nearby. The following motion was voted:

Motion: Tom Pietras, that the Commission will assist in making a suitable Town of Wallingford field available to fulfill the Eagle Scout project request for the June 20th French Alliance Weekend Procession.

Second: Scott Trauner.

Vote: Unanimous.

4. Field 7A – Northford Road – Restoration Project – Soil & Water Conservation Society Grant Application

Dianne Saunders said that any work on this grant application has been deferred until the Commission can receive information from Mr. Kipen Kolesinskas.

C. Fresh Meadow Swamp at Cheshire Road

1. Butterfly Meadow – Seeding status

The butterfly meadow mix will be planted very soon by Will Schultz and his students and should germinate this spring. Mary Heffernon will check on the proper mowing instructions for later in the year.

2. Walking Path Concept Plan (Phase Two) Contract

Erin O'Hare will attend to this contract after the trail blazing contract is set.

3. Horseback Riding Request

Ms. O'Hare communicated this request to Parks and Recreation Director John Gawlak has not yet responded to a request for further details. The Commissioners prefer that the Walking Path Concept Plan would be developed first before any horseback riding request is considered and the consultant should be asked to comment on horseback riders use on this property.

Separately, Mary Heffernon showed the Town of Southington Open Space Parcels pamphlet, as a sample of what the Wallingford Conservation Commission could produce for the public.

D. Invasive Species Eradication

1. Long-term Invasive Species Management Program

Dianne Saunders had no report tonight. Mary Heffernon stated that Tilcon Connecticut has not responded to her letter about invasive plants.

E. Keer & Scard Road Properties

1. Walk, March 15th

This walk was well attended by Commissioners. Chairman Borne said they thoroughly examined both properties. They saw a lot of multiflora rose on the Keer property, which is Town of Wallingford Open Space. As to managing the Keer property, Chairman Borne knows someone who uses a small bulldozer to push and then pull out the plants and burn them. Then he plants other species that suppress the invasive plants followed by hay. The other choice would be to encourage a heavy canopy to prevent sun from getting at the multiflora rose. Tom Pietras said it is good to mow pastures to prevent invasive growth. He thought that a double-row fence could be placed along the road with multiflora rose behind it. That would discourage people from entering onto the Keer property. No consensus was taken, and the Commissioners decided to table discussion of the Keer property.

Field 19A is the Scard Road field. Mr. Wall is the Farm Field lessee nearby. The Commissioners agreed that Ms. O'Hare ought to ask Mr. Wall if he would be interested in possibly leasing Field 19A as well. He could manage it by removing the multiflora rose there, installing a fence ten feet back from the existing fence, and then keep Field 19A as pasture. The Commissioners decided to discuss these strategies again at an upcoming meeting.

F. Lufbery Park

1. Boundary Marking – No report. This will be discussed at the Open Space Management Meeting next week.

G. Beseck Mountain & Fulton-Forbes Open Space Properties

1. Tree Removal & Vehicle Trespass Issue

Tom Pietras went out to the Fulton-Forbes property to do wetlands mapping. Both he and Carl Arsenault saw that wood cutting had taken place on this property. Tom said the wetlands soils are an organic type, easily disturbed by vehicles, resulting in rutting. The members saw Tom's map and Carl's photographs relative to trespass issues on the Fulton-Forbes property. It is near Wisk-Key Wind Road and contiguous to the Beseck Mountain Open Space. He said the Engineering Department has placed boundary markers on this portion of the Fulton-Forbes land. Carl observed evidence of ATV tracks and showed photographs to the police. Chairman Borne thought the Commission ought to recognize the Fulton-Forbes property and the Beseck Mountain tract as one merged ridge property.

Motion: Jeffrey Borne, that, for clarification purposes, the Fulton-Forbes Open

Space Property off Wisk-Key Wind Road is to be considered as a portion of the Beseck Mountain tract that runs from Cliffside Drive to the top of the ridge.

Second: Mary Heffernon.

Vote: Unanimous.

Two pieces will now be represented together on Open Space maps.

Dianne Saunders recommended that the Town have boundaries marked immediately whenever an open space property is acquired.

2. MMM Trail – Metacomet, Monadnock, Mattabesset Trail – National Trails System designation

Mary Heffernon reported that President Obama signed a bill on March 30th designating that the Metacomet, Monadnock, Mattabesset Trail is now to be part of the National Trails System and recognized as a National Scenic Trail. Erin O'Hare read an article indicating that a National Parks System employee will be assigned to the MMM Trail, although the Connecticut Forest and Park Association will continue to manage it.

Tom Pietras noted that sections of the MMM Trail are right at the edge of the cliff and wondered if the Town has liability for this section. Ms. O'Hare said the Town has no liability. Scott Trauner suggested that perhaps the Connecticut Forest and Park Association could be asked to move certain parts of the trail away from the cliff edge. Carl Arsenault said mountain bikers ride the trail, even at the edge. Erin noted that Northeast Utilities did map this section of the MMM Trail and she will obtain a copy of this map for the file.

H. Volunteer Work Program

1. Planning Assignment List – Boy Scouts, etc.

Tonight Chairman Borne created a subcommittee on Volunteers. Ken Ryan agreed to serve as Chairman. He will report back in May.

2. Summer Interns – Not discussed.

3. Vo-Ag Student Projects – Erin O'Hare said the Vo-Ag students could help by doing invasive species mapping, biotic inventory surveys of properties, and other tasks that Ken Ryan's subcommittee may find.

3. GRASSLAND BIRD HABITAT ENHANCEMENT/RESTORATION INITIATIVE

Dianne Saunders reported that the swallows are back. She has not seen any bobolinks yet.

4. PROPERTY ACQUISITION

A. Reports – Ms. O'Hare reported that the Oak Street property request previously reviewed pertains to property that is Class I watershed land and therefore the Town cannot sell it.

5. OPEN SPACE MANAGEMENT MEETING

This interdepartmental meeting has been rescheduled from March 16th to April 14th at 3:00 p.m.

6. OPEN SPACE PLAN, 1999

Committee Chairperson Dianne Saunders indicated the subcommittee will meet sometime after April 15th with members John Lathrop, Mary Heffernon, and Environmental Planner Erin O'Hare.

7. BY-LAWS REVISION

The Commission By-Laws were revised last in May 2003, but the Town Clerk has no record of those By-Laws. In 2008, the number of Regular Members of the Commission was changed by ordinance from seven members to nine members. Tonight the Commission reviewed and updated its By-Laws. As to:

Article I., Section 3. Annual Meeting: in the last sentence, to change "All members" to "A quorum" as in "A quorum is needed for the election of officers to take place."

Article I., Section 4. Quorum: in A) "four (4)" was changed to "five (5)", meaning that five members would constitute a quorum.

Article I., Section 4. Quorum: in B) "four (4) members" was changed to "a majority of those in attendance", so any action would have to be taken by a majority vote.

Motion: Mary Heffernon, to revise the Conservation Commission By-Laws as discussed above.

Second: Ken Ryan.

Vote: Unanimous by Mary Heffernon, Ken Ryan, Carl Arsenault, Jim Pyskaty, Dianne Saunders, Tom Pietras, Scott Trauner, and Jeff Borne.

Chairman Borne will sign the revised By-Laws as adopted today, April 9, 2009, and a copy will then be filed with the Town Clerk.

8. PUBLIC OUTREACH PROGRAMS

A. Celebrate Open Space

Mary Heffernon said that the Wallingford Land Trust will again co-sponsor this annual Commission event. It is set for Saturday, May 9th, at 1:00 p.m. at the Wallingford Land Trust's Farnum Field by Tyler Mill Preserve. The focus will be the Eagle Scout project to construct a trail at Farnum Field. Public parking will be at Vietnam Veterans Memorial Park. The trail route will lead up to Farnum Field and to the Wallingford Farmland Lease Field 3A next to it. Scott Trauner and Mary Heffernon will plan the trail route. Mary will develop the Celebrate Open Space brochure with Program Planner Don Roe. It will be mailed out as usual, and there will be advance publicity in the newspaper. Environmental Planner Erin O'Hare will attend.

B. Adult and Continuing Education Class, "All About Wetlands", March 25th

Environmental Planner Erin O'Hare presented this Commission-sponsored class on the evening of March 25. Eight people registered for the class including one person from out of town. Erin said the people were very interested in this topic. Chairman Borne thanked Ms. O'Hare for teaching it. The Commission may offer more topics next year.

C. Speaker Event – The Commission has no other plans right now.

9. CORRESPONDENCE/REPORTS

1.a. Connecticut Butterfly Association Membership

This association provides four newsletters per year. The cost is \$15.00.

Motion: Mary Heffernon, that the Conservation Commission should belong to the Connecticut Butterfly Association.

Second: Ken Ryan.

Vote: Unanimous.

1.b. The Commissioners considered renewing their membership in the Connecticut Forest and Park Association.

Motion: Mary Heffernon, to pay \$75.00 to renew the Commission's membership in the Connecticut Forest and Park Association.

Second: Scott Trauner and Ken Ryan.

Vote: Unanimous.

2. Friends of Boulder Knoll, "First Annual Winter Celebration", February 28
Mary Heffernon attended this event in Cheshire.

3. "CT Land Conservation Conference", Wesleyan University, April 4
No one was able to attend this conference.

4. Wallingford Water & Sewer Service Area Map – Revised Map

Ms. O'Hare showed the Commission the revised map, which was approved by the Public Utilities Commission on February 11, 2009. She also showed the old map for comparison. Dianne Saunders had attended some of the PUC public hearings on this revision. She said the new map shows that water service is to be extended to a portion of North Haven.

5. Other – Scott Trauner said his Hamden High School Conservation Club will have an exhibit table at the Hamden Earth Day celebration on April 25th.

10. NEXT MEETING – Is scheduled for Thursday, May 14th.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: Mary Heffernon, to adjourn the meeting.

Second: Jim Pyskaty.

Vote: Unanimous.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen L. Burns, Recording Secretary