

1 Wallingford Conservation Commission
2 Regular Meeting
3 Thursday, May 10, 2012
4 7 p.m.
5 Town Hall, Basement Conference Room
6 45 South Main Street
7 Wallingford, CT
8 **Minutes**
9

10
11 **Present:** Chairman Jeff Borne; Vice-Chair Mary Heffernon; Commissioners Dianne
12 Lendler; Dianne Saunders; John Lathrop; Ken Ryan; Tom Pietras; Carl Arsenault.

13 **Not Present:** Commissioner Jim Pyskaty.

14 **Guest:** Karin Burghardt, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology doctoral candidate, Yale
15 University.

16
17 Chairman Borne called the meeting to order at 7 p.m. and took the agenda in the
18 following order.

19
20 **1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

21 **A. Minutes, April 12, 2012**

22
23 Vice-Chair Heffernon said on page 2, line 26, the screws were for footbridges, not for
24 signage.

25
26 Page 2, line 28 should be "Interpretative Trail Signs" not "Open Space."

27
28 Page 3, line 44, should be "Butterfly Films," not "Goodnight Films."
29

30 **MOTION: A motion by Vice-Chair Heffernon second by Commissioner Lathrop**
31 **to approve the April 12, 2012 minutes as amended. The motion passed**
32 **unanimously.**

33
34 **A. Fresh Meadow Swamp At Cheshire Road**

35
36 3. Yale Study – presentation of findings (also Field 4C) – K, Burghardt.
37

38 Karin Burghardt presented findings review of last summer's research project and
39 distributed a report entitled "Wallingford Open Lands Project Plan: 2011 Review." She
40 spoke about grasshopper survival vs. clipped and unclipped grasses and the use of
41 spiders and grasshoppers to increase the diversity of herbs. She also spoke about the
42 best mowing techniques to control goldenrod.
43

44 She noted the unusually warm weather in March which prompted early growth. She
45 also spoke about what was controlling the plant community at these fields.
46 She said there are a number of goldenrod species in the fields which are contributing to
47 diversity. She had chosen three fields to perform her cage studies: the Fresh Meadow
48 site, the field west of the former Cuneo home, and the "onion field" and at Whirlwind

1 Hill which have slightly different mowing regimes. She said WhirlWind Hill is mowed
2 every year in July but only one-third at a time and this field had the greatest diversity.
3 She said the "onion field" and the other Fresh Meadows are usually mowed in October
4 although they were not this past year.

5
6 Mowing in October gives an advantage to invasive plant species. It is best to mow in
7 June and mow in 10-foot wide rows for diversity. Goldenrod and cottonwoods (now in
8 the "onion field") can be brushhogged in strips. Invasive plants do not offer food sources
9 to support insect diversity. Clipped goldenrod is sweeter so bugs eat more of it.

10
11 Ms. Burghardt explained the diagram of the experiment she performed on the fields
12 using cages. She said she manipulated whether there was just a plant community; a
13 plant community and an herbivore community or a plant, herbivore and predator
14 community. She said on half of the fields, she clipped all of the vegetation and let it
15 grow, in order to come up with a successful mowing regime where goldenrod is just
16 starting to grow and to get to the point where the grasshoppers could control it because
17 she noticed a lot of dominant goldenrod in many areas.

18
19 She said preliminary results are that clipping (mowing) in June made it easier for the
20 grasshoppers to diminish the goldenrod and allow other plants to grow. She said for
21 this coming year, she was not going to perform such a detailed cage study, but take
22 more observations; monitoring what grows out this year and the legacy effect from the
23 grasshopper and insect treatments she applies. She said she also plans on taking leaf
24 samples and performing genetic work to determine a recommended mowing timetable.

25
26 *Ms. O'Hare will communicate with Ms. Burghardt regarding mowing and the mowing*
27 *schedule for Public Works for study fields.*

28 29 **2. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT**

30 31 **A. Tyler Mill Preserve**

- 32 1. Ravine Restoration (west of Field 7A).

33
34 Ms. O'Hare said Mayor Dickinson approved spending \$1,995 from the Open Space
35 Resource Management Fund which was then sent to the Purchasing Department and
36 was rejected. She said the proposal was re-done and was rejected again by the
37 Purchasing Department. Ms. O'Hare said Ferrucci & Walicki are withdrawing their
38 original bid and will re-bid on the ravine, but this time two other verbal bids must be
39 obtained.

40
41 **MOTION: A motion by Commissioner Lathrop second by Commissioner Ryan**
42 **to waive Article 1, Section 1 of the Freedom of Information Commission**
43 **regulations to add Property Acquisition to the agenda. The motion passed**
44 **unanimously.**

45 46 **PROPERTY AQUISITION**

1 Ms. O'Hare spoke about the Town possibly pursuing a certain piece of property. Ms.
2 O'Hare also spoke about another piece of property offered for purchase to the Town.
3 She said Mayor Dickinson wants an opinion on this possible acquisition. Upon Chairman
4 Borne's request, Commissioners Ryan and Arsenault formed a Sub-Committee to look
5 at this other piece of property upon Mayoral approval to do so.

6
7 *Commissioners Ryan and Arsenault will report back to Chairman Borne regarding this*
8 *possible property acquisition if it moves forward. Ms. O'Hare will work with the Sub-*
9 *Committee.*

10
11 Ms. O'Hare said Parks and Recreation Director John Gawlak would like the Commission
12 to think about potential properties, seven to eight acres of open space (existing or
13 future) that he needs for soccer and lacrosse fields.

14
15 A. DEP Recreational Trails Grant Program

16 a. Work progress – report, Trails Committee

17
18 Vice-Chair Heffernon distributed the Ferrucci & Walicki quote for new items to be
19 completed at a cost of \$9,146. The matter will be revisited.

20
21 c. Parking lots, entranceway, and kiosks

22
23 Vice-Chair Heffernon said she is waiting on a meeting with Department Heads to move
24 this project along. Ms. O'Hare said she went to see the kiosk at the Public Works storage
25 garage that Public Works constructed which was damaged by a snow plow last winter.

26
27 Commissioner Lathrop said the Boy Scouts had just finished a Land Trust project and
28 built five kiosks similar to what is at the Fishway. He said the five kiosks cost
29 approximately \$1,000. He suggested getting photos of these kiosks. Ms. O'Hare said
30 Mr. Roe suggested this project be sent out to bid. *Ms. O'Hare indicated she needs to*
31 *draw up parking area plans for the Engineering Department and the Water Division to*
32 *review.*

33
34 *Vice-Chair Heffernon will contact the Traffic Department to replace the Tyler Mill Road*
35 *road sign.*

36
37 B. Amended chainsaw policy – approval.

38
39 Ms. O'Hare said the amended policy approved by the Commission at the April 12th
40 meeting was presented to Mayor Dickinson who amended it before approving it. Vice-
41 Chair Heffernon said she then spoke to the Mayor and his comments were changed
42 slightly as reflected in the copies handed out. She said the Mayor's comments included
43 the prohibiting the cutting of healthy trees and hearing protection must be worn while
44 operating chain saws.

45
46 **MOTION: A motion by Commissioner Lathrop second by Vice-Chair Heffernon**
47 **to approve the chainsaw policy as amended by Mayor Dickinson. The motion**
48 **passed unanimously.**

1
2 4. Chainsaw training session, May 20 – budget transfer request &
3 approval of cutting of invasive trees.
4

5 Vice-Chair Heffernon said Chairman Borne met with Mayor Dickinson to discuss a
6 suggestion by Commissioner Saunders to cut healthy invasive trees, (Trees of Heaven).
7 Chairman Borne said Mayor Dickinson wants the Commission to work with Henry
8 McCully of Public Works, who is also the Tree Warden, who will put tags on the trees,
9 for ten days, which are to be cut down. Ms. O'Hare asked the Commission to approve
10 the \$321.75 quote from Ferrucci & Walicki for chemical treatment.
11

12 Commissioner Saunders said six trees out of the seven will get cut at the class but all
13 the trees will be treated with the chemical herbicide. She said the trees should be
14 treated by Tuesday in order to be cut by May 20.
15

16 **MOTION: A motion by Commissioner Lathrop second by Commissioner Ryan**
17 **to approve the \$321.75 expenditure with the stipulation that Ms. O'Hare is to**
18 **get Mayor Dickinson's authorization to spend this amount of money from the**
19 **Open Space Resources Management Fund. The motion passed with Vice-Chair**
20 **Heffernon abstaining.**

21 *Ms. O' Hare will process the Purchase Order as soon as possible afterwards.*
22

23 Ms. O'Hare said the Town Council approved the budget transfer request on its consent
24 agenda to move the funds to pay for the chainsaw training.
25

26 5. Tree down above Tyler Mill dam cribbing – status
27

28 Ms. O'Hare said she and Commissioner Saunders had gone to the site with the
29 Contractor. She said Parks and Recreation Director John Gawlak said he would pick up
30 50% of the cost from the Park and Recreation Facilities Special Fund and Revenue
31 Expense Account. She said the Mayor is being asked to expend \$1,175 from the Open
32 Space Resources Management Fund for half of the cost of cutting the tree. She said this
33 letter to the Mayor went out on May 8 but she has not gotten a response from the
34 Mayor.
35

36 Vice-Chair Heffernon requested that Ms. O'Hare photocopy on two sides of the copy
37 paper to cut down on waste moving forward.
38

39 6. Filming- report
40

41 Vice-Chair Heffernon said the filming by Wallingford filmmaker Alex Calvo went well. She
42 said they seemed very professional at the library and on scene.
43

44 Ms. O'Hare said a verbal request by the film crew for permission to go 15 feet onto
45 Town open space on a field along Scard Road came in at 4:30 p.m. one Friday for
46 immediate authorization. She had contacted Park and Recreation for possible permission
47 and it was denied due to liability issues absent a timely review.
48

1 Ms. O'Hare said she was instructed by the Commission at the April meeting to ask
2 Parks and Recreation Director John Gawlak to look into writing up an ordinance for
3 permitting and digging activities. She said Mr. Gawlak sent a memo to Janice Small of
4 the Law Department who is working on this. Ms. O'Hare said the Park and Recreation
5 Commission endorsed an ATV Ordinance like the one Middletown uses and also a
6 digging and threshold ordinance. She said these two ordinances are going to be on the
7 Town Council's Ordinance Committee agenda. Ms. O'Hare passed around a copy of the
8 ATV ordinance.

9
10 **B. Fresh Meadow Swamp At Cheshire Road**

- 11
12 1. DEEP Recreational Trail Grant application – status – Nothing to
13 report.
14
15 2. Improvements

16
17 Ms. O'Hare spoke about the \$6,000 in the professional services budget to be expended
18 before June 30. She said the purchase order went out for the Town Contractor Ed the
19 Treeman to cut the mark trees at the erratic boulder. She said All Habitat Services, LLC
20 quoted the work, to have brush cut in the area and seven acres of invasive species
21 eradicated. but the Purchasing Department is requiring two additional bids. Ms. O'Hare
22 said she is going out on Friday with a second contractor regarding the project.

23
24 Vice-Chair Heffernon suggested planning some time to discuss herbicides. She added
25 that she and Commissioner Arsenault went out and installed the "Magic Halos" and she
26 and Commissioner Lathrop replaced three Interpretive Trail signs. Commissioner
27 Lathrop suggested putting green spots on the bottom pertinent trees to indicate where
28 Interpretive Trail signs should be located.

29
30 **C. Beseck Mountain – unauthorized trail and use off Wisk-Key Wind Rd.**

31
32 Commissioner Arsenault said there is a cul-de-sac at the end of Wisk-Key Wind Rd.
33 ATV's have accessed the adjacent Town open space and there is a blazed trail made by
34 the ATV-users. He also spoke about yard waste dumping which is also occurring in this
35 area and suggested a guardrail be constructed from to block ATV use and dumping. Ms.
36 O'Hare said Wayne Fogg suggested expanding on the guardrail by adding a fence one -
37 foot off of the Town property line. *Ms. O'Hare will write a memo to Henry McCully about*
38 *installing the metal guardrail and fencing.*

39
40 Chairman Borne suggested blocking off the area for the time being until the guardrail
41 can be constructed.

42 Ms. O'Hare passed around three different maps of various illicit trails as identified and
43 mapped by Wayne Fogg acting with CFPA.

44
45 **D. Invasive Species Eradication**

- 46
47 1. Long-term invasive species management program – update,
48 D. Saunders.

1
2 Commissioner Saunders passed around her report on long-term invasive species
3 management program which outlined what the Stewards of Tyler Mill have been doing;
4 current work by the Stewards of Tyler Mill, and identification of various invasive plants.
5 The report also suggested the Commission schedule treatment of Japanese knotweed at
6 Muddy River edge and two islands, northern edge of Tyler Mill Preserve at Tyler Mill
7 Road before the plants spread seed down the Muddy River.
8

9 The report also recommended the Commission follow up on retaining a contractor for
10 cutting/removal of invasive species, (oriental bittersweet, three autumn olive trees and
11 multiflora rose) along the edge of Tyler Mill trail bridge treatment site. She said removal
12 is not optional.
13

14 2. Invasive bamboo report – staff

15
16 Ms. O'Hare said she received a call from a woman in Woodbridge who is organizing to
17 stop the spread of invasive bamboo in the State. Ms. O'Hare passed around photos of
18 invasive bamboo spreading off Pond Hill Road. The woman said this plant is very
19 invasive, other states have passed ordinances banning the plant, and is requesting that
20 people inform her of any location of bamboo in the State.
21

22 Vice-Chair Heffernon said she went out to the three purple loosestrife sites and has not
23 found any loosestrife. Commissioner Saunders said she received a report of purple
24 loosestrife near the entrance of the Muddy River. Commissioner Ryan said because the
25 Fresh Meadow property has not been mowed in over a year, there has been resurgence
26 in multi-flora.
27

28 **E. Volunteer Work Program – report, K. Ryan**

29 1. "Quinnipiac's Big Event" – volunteer project – Tyler Mill Yellow 30 Trail. 31 32

33 Commissioner Ryan reported the "Event" went very well. Commissioner Lathrop said the
34 students worked hard and finished an hour and half before the work time.
35 Commissioner Ryan said the Stewards also contributed to the success of the project.
36 Commissioner Ryan said he sent a letter to Quinnipiac University and the individual
37 students complimenting them for their work.
38

39 2. Eagle Scout project 40

41 Commissioner Ryan said the Eagle Scout has gotten approval from his troop to fence in
42 the vernal pool using materials from dead cedars. He said this has been written up and
43 submitted to his Council for its approval and he hopes to work on this project during the
44 summer.
45

46 **F. Mowing Committee – report**

47 Vice-Chair Heffernon spoke about the possibility of the Public Works Department
48 mowing fields instead of the farmers. Commissioner Saunders said the Farmland Lease

1 Committee will propose some lease areas to include mowing areas. Ms. O'Hare said
2 Public Works recently mowed Field 7A, the lane way between Fields 4A, and 4B, Field
3 6C and Field 1B.

4 5 6 **3. PUBLIC OUTREACH**

7 8 **A. Environmental Literacy Initiative – report, M. Heffernon**

9
10 Vice-Chair Heffernon said the Nature Center at the Library is moving along. She said
11 Dianne Saunders and Mark did a great job with the wildflower hike in which 27 people
12 and one child attended. She said the wildflower hike on the Land Trust property was
13 also well-attended by 27 people, including six children. She went over the upcoming
14 programs for June. Vice-Chair Heffernon spoke about going out with Scott Dombrowski
15 to observe stars. She said he will be doing a Star Party program on July 28th from 8 p.m.
16 to midnight at Veterans Memorial Field.

17
18 Commissioner Lendler spoke about attending a Smell Hike in Middletown and a hike
19 identifying things that don't belong in the woods.

20
21 Vice-Chair Heffernon reminded everyone of the CT Trails Day event on June 2 with
22 parking at Vietnam Vets Park with a shuttle to be provided.

23 24 25 **4. FARMLAND LEASE PROPERTIES PROGRAM**

26 27 **A. Farmland Lease cycle – 2013-2017 – status**

28
29 Commissioner Saunders said the Farmland Lease Committee met with Sal Amadeo to
30 develop qualifications for the planned two-envelope bid proposal. She said the
31 Committee gave Ms. O'Hare two maps and will turn in a draft report and the rest of the
32 maps to Ms. O'Hare by the end of the month. She said the Farmland Lease Committee
33 anticipates a vote on this in August.

34 35 **B. Field 9D – signage for perimeter use.**

36
37 Ms. O'Hare said the sign has been put up.

38 39 **C. Field 18A – Environmental Review Report**

40
41 Ms. O'Hare presented a draft report to Chairman Borne for his signature.

42 43 **D. Field 7A**

44
45 Chairman Borne said he contacted John Thompson requesting a report from Rob
46 Baltramaitis on issues in the back of Field 7A. He said he got a full page letter back from
47 Mr. Thompson which he will present to the Commission at the June meeting.

1 Commissioner Saunders said level spreaders would be a good idea in this area. She said
2 this worked well on Field 2C. Ms. O'Hare spoke about an independent NRCS study
3 conducted on Field 7A.

4 Ms. O'Hare said 15 5-6 foot pine trees were planted by Henry McCully of Public Works
5 at the north end of the Butterfly Meadow and by Rosick Road.

6
7 **5. OPEN SPACE PLAN UPDATE** - Nothing to report.

8
9 **6. CORRESPONDENCE/REPORTS** – Nothing to report.

10
11
12 **7. NEXT MEETING** - June 14, 2012

13
14 **8. ADJOURNMENT**

15
16 **MOTION: A motion by Commissioner Lathrop second by Commissioner Ryan**
17 **to adjourn the meeting at 9:50 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.**

18
19
20 Respectfully submitted,
21 Cynthia A. Kleist
22 Recording Secretary