

WALLINGFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION, July 9, 2009

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

MINUTES

The Regular Meeting of the Wallingford Conservation Commission was held on Thursday, July 9, 2009, in the Basement Conference Room of the Town Hall Municipal Building, Wallingford, Connecticut.

Seated from the Commission were Chairman Jeffrey Borne, Vice Chairperson Mary Heffernon, John Lathrop, Scott Trauner, James Pyskaty, Kenneth Ryan, and Dianne Saunders. Town staff persons present were Ms. Erin O'Hare, Environmental Planner, and Program Planner, Don Roe. Also present were: Mayor Bill Dickinson, Roger Dann, General Manager, Sewer & Water Division, George Adair, Director of Public Utilities, and Earl "Doug" Mackenzie. Ms. O'Hare acted as Recording Secretary.

Chairman Borne called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m., and entertained Item 7.B. first.

7. CORRESPONDENCE

B. State Plan of Conservation & Development - interim change request, staff

The Mayor indicated he just came from a meeting at South Central Regional Council of Governments at which the Regional Plan was approved endorsing the changes which we will be discussing. The PUC has approved the changes. PZC will review the proposed changes Monday. On Tuesday, the Town Council will review the changes. Upon its approval, a request will be forwarded to OPM to request action. George Adair, Director of Public Utilities, added that OPM has specified that changes should be presented on a USGS map. The PUC has approved a resolution relative to changes in the State Plan of Conservation and Development document relative to the text and to the Locational Guide Map.

The Mayor added that we are not looking to expand areas of development but to have the State map reflect actual conditions regarding water and sewer lines that are not currently properly depicted as containing water and sewer utilities in the State's Locational Guide Map.

Roger Dann, General Manager, Sewer and Water Division, explained the various land use categories of the State Plan, and the basis for these categories referring to a full-scale current map of the Town in the representative colors of the State Plan Location Guide Map land use categories as completed by his office. He compared it to a revised colored map that represents colors revised to reflect the existence of water and sewer lines - which also results in revised use categories. Next, he described the USGS-based map he had prepared working with the Town Planner and the Engineering Dept. The represented changes that will be requested in an Interim Change Application are keyed to a numbered system with four different categories (#1, #2, #3, and #4) which corresponds to the narrative the Mayor's Office had forwarded previously to the Commission. He indicated there is a three-month process for the State's decision to accept our request. He stressed that it is not the intent to change the use of land in the three green land use categories. In these areas, the State does not promote sewer and water utilities, and, therefore, the colors must be changed to attain consistency. The one exception was the High Hill Road area - a residentially developed area

WALLINGFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION, July 9, 2009

where the Health Director has indicated that the need for sewers to replace septic systems in the future is highly likely due to the high probability of septic system failures. He feels this change will not lead to downzoning and that is not the intent. It is mostly infilling.

Relative to Cooke Road, Dianne Saunders felt that changing the map will place development pressure on that area when the original intent was to service a farm not to allow increased density. She feels folks would rather hook up than continually replace costly septic systems. Roger indicated it's our policy that we will not recommend the extension of sewers out there as it is within our watershed, and, additionally, due to cost, there is no economic incentive to do so.

Chairman Borne stated that this is essentially the proposal approved by the Commission in April.

Motion Mary Heffernon, that the Conservation Commission has reviewed and supports the Town of Wallingford proposed Interim Changes to the State Plan of Conservation and Development Policies and the associated Locational Guide Map.

Second: John Lathrop

Vote: Unanimous

Chairman Borne entertained Item 2.B.2. next.

2. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

B. Tyler Mill Preserve

2. Deer management proposal

Earl "Doug" Mackenzie introduced himself relative to this subject. He worked in forestry for the Regional Water Authority for 30 years. He wishes to see Tyler Mill Preserve open to bow-hunting for deer. Archery season goes from September 15 to December 31. He requested the Commission consider opening it up in Tyler Mill or elsewhere.

Tom Pietras asked what other towns have opened up town land to archery hunting. Ms. O'Hare referred to a DEP document on the subject that John Gawlak had submitted for Commission review. The report indicates several towns have taken advantage of a 2003 statute which allows the option of deer hunting on town land. For instance, Darien promoted an 8-day hunt, Greenwich conducted a 4-night hunt, and New Canaan opened up town land to hunting.

Earl indicated that there is no limit for archery comparable to the 500-foot limit from residences for firearms hunting.

Chairman Borne said our policy for open space land is that it is open for passive recreation, and hunting is usually not considered passive, but archery would present less of an incompatible activity for a multi-use park. Dianne Saunders wondered if it would be better for the Rod and Gun Club to manage such a program. Tom Pietras wondered if the Mayor and the Law Dept. should be apprised of our possible interest in managing deer overpopulation as a first step.

Ms. O'Hare indicated that John Gawlak had indicated that if there was preliminary interest on the part of the Commission, he would have Mr. Kilpatrick, DEP, present to us

WALLINGFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION, July 9, 2009

on the topic of municipal deer management programs. Mr. Mackenzie was asked to report back to us regarding a possible hunting time frame.

Chairman Borne said there are two issues on the table: 1., over-population in need of control, and, 2., archery hunting as a compatible use for Tyler Mill Preserve or other open space properties.

Don Roe indicated that John Gawlak is in the process of researching if there is a Town ordinance that prohibits deer hunting on Town-owned land. Dianne Saunders pointed out it is state law that you can't hunt on public land as a general rule. Splitting up the week at Tyler Mill was incepted when liability laws changed about ten years ago, Don Roe indicated. Tom Pietras suggested first write to Law Dept. that the Commission is considering utilization of certain open space lands and include a copy of the Deer Report and a proposed time frame.

Discussion ensued on are we culling a herd or providing a sport.

Mr. Mackenzie indicated 25 yards is the furthest shot you are going take with archery hunting. Easton has a Water Company land requirement you must take archery stands up and down in the same day. Stands are attached with a slide strap and we lock them, he said. Mr. Mackenzie left the meeting at this time.

The Commission agreed to have Ms. O'Hare and John Gawlak schedule DEP staff to come discuss the issue. Don Roe suggested Park and Recreation Commissioners may be interested in that presentation. Ms. O'Hare will ask the DEP representative who else he felt should be at the meeting to hear him.

Chairman Borne entertained Item 7.C. next.

7. CORRESPONDENCE/REPORTS

C. Choate Rosemary Hall - environmental education center proposal

Chairman Borne gave a synopsis of Choate's proposal for the closure of Old Durham Road and the development of an environmental center.

Don Roe feels the Commission's interest would be how the environmental center will be accessed and how the open space will be memorialized (i.e. natural in perpetuity).

The Commission is conceptionally in favor of the proposal subject to further details.

Don Roe left the meeting at this time.

Chairman Borne entertained Item 1., next.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Minutes, June 11, 2009 – Regular Meeting

Motion: John Lathrop, to approve the Minutes with the correction, noted by Ken Ryan, that the reference to "the March 12 Minutes" should be "the April 9 Minutes".

Second: Mary Heffernan

Vote: Unanimous

B. Minutes, May 7, 2009 – Special Meeting

Motion: Mary Heffernon, to approve the May 7 Minutes.

Second: Kenneth Ryan

Vote: Unanimous

2. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT**A. Bertini Park**

1. ATV barrier

Ms. O'Hare indicated that John Gawlak, Director, Park & Recreation Dept., requested the installation of a barrier to deter ATV use at Bertini Park. The Commission favored this action.

2. Blazing contract

It was agreed that the blazing of Ferguson Woods and Bertini Park will be treated as one contract. The Trail Committee will be meeting to make recommendations on these trail systems.

Ms. O'Hare will be sure that Wayne Fogg and Joan Minion appear on the Committee List as Ad Hoc members of the Trails Committee.

3. Plant community report

Ms. O'Hare reported on the 1979 Masters Thesis report completed on the plant communities at Bertini Park. A copy will be in the file.

4. Footbridge proposal

Ms. O'Hare indicated there is no news on the location for the proposed footbridge.

B. Tyler Mill Preserve

1. Trails Improvement Program

a. DEP Recreational Trail Grant status

Ms. O'Hare reported that Don Roe checked last week and funds are still held up at the federal level.

b. Blazing contract - additional work authorized

Not taken up.

c. Required maintenance

Ms. O'Hare indicated Henry McCully was forwarded a memorandum asking if his Dept. was available to address various maintenance issues concerning the trails. These issues had been identified in a field check conducted June 22 by Mary Heffernon and staff.

Dianne Saunders submitted a map of Tyler Mill Preserve depicting location of several downed trees which block trails to horseback riders. Public Works will be asked to see if they will remove trees.

C. Farmland Lease Properties Program

1. Field 14A - 205 Main St - encroachment report, Law Dept.

No report.

2. Field 3A - encroachment - report, staff.

Ms. O'Hare had no news to report and will discuss options with Don Roe.

D. Fresh Meadow Swamp at Cheshire Road

1. Butterfly Meadow - report

Mary Heffernon reported that the butterfly meadow parcel was just cut to 6" high as per recommendations for establishment of a butterfly meadow. She read a letter from the Trust for Public Land to the Mayor regarding a bench to commemorate Mrs. Cuneo's legacy to the Town with a suggested location for the bench by the pond. Mrs. Cuneo had donated money to the Trust for Public Land.

2. Mowing Plan Contract - report review

Ms. O'Hare reported that the Draft report completed by Anthony Zembe, Baystate Environmental, had been forwarded to the Commission and final edits are now requested. The Commission agreed that reference to no night mowing should be changed to mowing should cease at dusk. The contractor's map will be reviewed at the next meeting.

3. Walking Path Concept Plan - contract status

Ms. O'Hare indicated she will be preparing the contract proposal soon.

4. Old Gate Road property

Ms. O'Hare indicated that Tennessee Gas Pipeline Company has submitted a proposed planting plan and that the matter of additional easements requested is on the Town Council agenda for July 14.

E. Beseck Mountain

1. Cliffside Trail - boundary planting

Ms. O'Hare indicated 9 white pines and 7 red cedars were purchased to be planted in the Fall. Several red cedars will be used to demarcate the boundary along Cliffside Trail near the trail head.

2. Encroachment behind 35 Wisk-Key Wind Road

Ms. O'Hare indicated a report from Law Dept is forthcoming after Adam Mantzarsis' vacation.

3. New England National Scenic Trail - celebration event, June 22

Chairman Borne attended the celebration event held June 22 at NU for the New England National Scenic Trails (NENST). He reported that one general issue is unauthorized camping on adjacent land. The Town will be asked to appoint a representative to NENST Advisory Board. Chairman Borne thought a liaison would be a good idea.

F. Ferguson Woods

1. Trail system mapping - report - Ferrucci & Walicki, LLC

The Commission commented on the Ferrucci & Walicki report forwarded earlier. The contractor will be requested to add the old driveway on the map and a recommendation regarding the future disposition of the old driveway to the former residence and a reference to the access off North Branford Road via the eastern portion of Dibble Edge Road.

Ms. O'Hare was asked to verify the water bodies and the boundaries as depicted on the contractor's map. Ms. O'Hare was directed to request boundary marking by the Engineering Dept.

2. Blazing contract

The Commission agreed a single blazing contract will go out for Ferguson Woods and Bertini Park.

G. Invasive Species Eradication

1. Long-term invasive species management program

Dianne Saunders reported that the State of CT Dept. of Health has indicated to her that Tyler Mill Preserve is not subject to permitting regarding application of herbicides as it is not an active public water supply. She submitted tonight additional mapping of proposed eradication areas.

Mary Heffernon indicated she has not received a response from Tilcon relative to loosestrife eradication and that the State has some sort of funding for beetle eradication efforts.

2. Annual program expenditure

Not taken up.

3. PROPERTY DISPOSITION

Ms. O'Hare noted that Don Roe had indicated to her that there were no new items to discuss.

4. GRASSLAND BIRD HABITAT ENHANCEMENT/RESTORATION INITIATIVE

Dianne Saunders reported the only bird siting to report is the occurrence of nesting bobolinks in Field 18A like last summer.

5. OPEN SPACE PLAN, 1999

Dianne Saunders indicated a preliminary meeting of the Committee will be held Thursday July 16, 4:00 p.m. with Erin O'Hare in the Conference Room.

6. PUBLIC OUTREACH PROGRAMS

A. Family Day, September 12, 12:00-4:00 p.m.

Mary Heffernon looked for volunteers to come and assist her with the Commission table at the event. Ken Ryan and Dianne Saunders volunteered to assist.

B. Speaker Event

Dianne Saunders reported on her work developing a proposed speaker event. She would like John Burns, New England Wild Flower Society, to be primary speaker augmented with booths of interest: Mary Mushinsky, on riparian buffers; organic lawncare, Laura Simon on wildlife control, etc. Dianne will obtain available dates for late September/early October from the Senior Center. Advertising would have to be intensive. Tom Pietras suggested notice to the schools and Ms. O'Hare offered to do a TV spot. It was agreed an enticing title was very critical to turnout.

7. CORRESPONDENCE/REPORTS

A. MacKenzie Reservoir dredging project

Not taken up.

D. French Alliance Weekend

Not taken up.

E. Quinnipiac River boat launch proposal

WALLINGFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION, July 9, 2009

Not taken up.

F. Revised open space property maps

Not Taken up.

G. "Consider the Quinnipiac" photographic exhibit

Not taken up.

H. "The Habitat" - CACIWC newsletter

The newsletter was distributed. As we were short, Carl and Scott will be forwarded a copy soon.

8. NEXT MEETING - August 13, 2009

9. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Borne adjourned the meeting at 10:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Erin O'Hare

Acting Recording Secretary