

**Conservation Commission
Town of Wallingford
August 18, 2010
MINUTES**

The Special Meeting of the Wallingford Conservation Commission was held on, Wednesday, August 18, 2010, in the Basement Conference Room of the Town Hall Municipal Building, 45 South Main Street, Wallingford, Connecticut.

Seated from the Commission were Chairman Jeffrey Borne, Vice Chairperson Mary Heffernon, Carl Arsenault, Tom Pietras, James Pyskaty, Dianne Saunders, and Diane Lendler.

Town staff people present were Erin O'Hare, Environmental Planner, and Recording Secretary Sonja Vining.

Absent: John Lathrop, Kenneth Ryan

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

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A. May 13, 2010 – Regular Meeting

The following changes were made to the Minutes of May 13, 2010:

- Carl Arsenault should be listed as absent.
- Page 2 – 4. Sport gun policy – delete the last sentence.
- Page 2 – e. Monitoring – last sentence to read “Most of the leases come up for re-bid in 2010 so the Committee has begun groundwork to prepare bid and lease language and improving the field maps.”
- Page 3 – B.2. Lessee suggestions re: Fields 1A, 1C, 5A, 7E, and 7F – W. Dellacamera – section to read as follows:

“Ms. Saunders indicated Mr. Dellacamera was not coming and she would review several issues Cecarelli Farms has presented to her recently relative to the five fields they lease. She distributed and discussed a written report from the Farmland Lease Committee dated July 8, 2010. Ms. O'Hare indicated she had not received the report prior to this meeting.

There was a lengthy discussion.

Ms. Saunders indicated the Committee advocates a similar proposal for the other Fields, 5A, 7E, and 7F, leased to Cecarelli Farms. Mr. Pietras felt the Committee should revisit its recommendation regarding Fields 5A, 7E and 7F.

MOTION: Ken Ryan to amend the lease for Fields 1A and 1C to include 1B with the restrictions as stated in Items 1.a through 1.g of the Farmland Lease Committee memorandum, dated July 8, 2010, with attached map.

SECOND: John Lathrop

Ms. O'Hare expressed her reservations about the Commission taking action to approve a proposal that staff has not had an opportunity to review and which poses several questions. Acting Chairperson Heffernon commented that all members should respect the Law Dept.'s recent request that requests from the Commission are to be funneled through the staff.

VOTE: Unanimous”

- Page 5 – 5.d. Field 7A – “Ms. Saunders” should read “Mr. Pietras”
- Page 5 – C.1. Concept Walking Path Plan – Anthony Zemba should be spelled, “Anthony Zemba”
- Page 8 – 7.2. CFPA Annual Meeting – add to the end of the paragraph, “and the Public Library.”

MOTION: Ms. Heffernon to approve the Minutes of the July 8, 2010 Regular Meeting as corrected.

SECOND: Mr. Pyskaty

VOTE: Unanimous

2. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT:

A. Tyler Mill Preserve

1. Ravine restoration (west of Field 7A) - status

Ms. O’Hare reported that she has spoken to Rob Baltramaitis, Engineering Department, who indicated that he was going to schedule a site walk and include a couple of the IWWC members, but has not yet done so. The CC has been waiting for the Engineering Department to address this issue. It was determined that Ms. O’Hare and Mr. Pietras would contact the Engineering Department again to schedule a site walk with Rob Baltramaitis.

2. DEP Recreational Trails Grant work – status

Nothing new to report.

3. Entranceway – invasive plant eradication – status

Chairman Borne stated that he visited the area and the invasives seem to have thinned. The area will continue to be monitored.

4. Sport gun incident and policy – report, J. Gawlak

Ms. O’Hare read from a memorandum regarding “Miscellaneous Projects”, from John Gawlak, Director, Parks & Recreation Department, addressed to Ms. O’Hare dated August 18, 2010, that the matter is to be addressed at the Parks & Recreation Commission’s September meeting.

5. Signage re: hunting

Ms. Saunders reported that Don Roe is working with the DEP to review the signage language issue.

B. Farmland Lease Properties Program

1. Field 2A & 2C – North Branford Road stormwater drainage – report, staff

Ms. O’Hare reported that the Public Works Department has installed 340 feet of perforated pipe in the road along the front of Fields 1B for infiltration of flows.

The Commission expressed concern with stockpiling that is taking place in the front of Field 2A as well as actually in the Field itself. This staging of material can bring in and leave invasive species once the material has been removed. The Commission would like the Public Works Department to notify the Commission and/or the Environmental Planner when the staging of materials is going to take place in one of the farm Fields. When material is brought in Ms. Saunders would like Public Works to disclose where the material came from because in some instances nothing will grow in the material that is brought in.

It was determined that Ms. O’Hare would send a memo to the Henry McCully, Public Works Department, expressing the concerns of the Commission and asking that when there is encroachment into Farmland Lease land, it try to be sensitive to the farmers needs when stockpiling material.

In regard to Field 2C, Ms. O'Hare reported that she received a revised design from Rob Baltramaitis, Engineering Department, which entails a riprap level spreader to be located on the edge of the field. Lessee Jim Cooke met with Ms. O'Hare, Ms. Saunders, Rob Baltramaitis and Public Works, and he is fine with the plan. Public Works indicated that the work would be done from the road which means less impact to the field.

Ms. Saunders reported that she was made aware of a plant that is appearing in many fields and is becoming a problem. Field 2C exhibits the problem. Ms. Saunders did some research and found that it is Smooth Bedstraw and is considered an invasive species for farming purposes. She will notify Jim Cooke of her findings.

2. Field 1B – lease amendment – status

The Farmland Lease Properties Committee has sent a proposal regarding Field 1B to Ms. O'Hare to be reviewed.

3. Farmland Lease Properties Committee – report, D. Saunders

Ms. Saunders reviewed the Committee report addressed to the Commission dated 8/18/10, distributed at the meeting. The Committee drafted a proposed lease for a sugarbush located in Tyler Mill.

C. Fresh Meadow Swamp at Cheshire Road

1. Walking Path Concept Plan (phase two) - presentation, A. Zemba

Anthony Zemba, GZA, made a detailed presentation of a revised "Concept Plan for Walking Trails at Fresh Meadow Swamp". He indicated that comments from the Commission as well as Ms. O'Hare have been incorporated in this revised plan. After some discussion Mr. Zemba indicated that if the Commission had any further input he would appreciate if it were filtered through Ms. O'Hare with whom he would continue to work. Chairman Borne suggested that the plan also be reviewed by the Parks & Recreation Dept.

Mr. Zemba distributed copies of the "Walking Trails at Fresh Meadow Swamp Conceptual Site Design/Preliminary Cost Estimate". All costs reflect private rates. There was brief discussion and review of this document with Mr. Zemba. Ms. Saunders suggested adding ADA accessibility by the Ice Pond. Means of addressing goldenrod growth was discussed.

2. Butterfly meadow – report, M. Heffernon

Ms. Heffernon reported that she is not completely satisfied with what has grown in the field this year. She believes that many of the things that were planted did not grow. There were thoughts that perhaps they were planted too late in the season. Ms. Heffernon will continue to monitor the field. She also noted that there is a pile of tree limbs along the road that was possibly dumped there by a neighbor.

D. Mowing

1. Report – M. Heffernon

Ms. Heffernon reviewed the "Wallingford Open Space Mowing Schedule Recommendations" which had been sent out via e-mail to the Mowing Subcommittee. The Commission discussed the different formats presented and agreed on the one that it felt would be the easiest for the Department of Public Works to follow, a calendar format. It was suggested by Mr. Arsenault that the mowing be pushed back from August to October in Fields 16 and 20A, so as to provide insects for migrating birds. Mr. Arsenault suggested that Peter Picone, DEP, take a look at the fields prior to finalizing the mowing schedule. He will notify the Commission of the date so interested members could join in. Ms. Heffernon will make the appropriate modifications to the chart and forward it to Mr. Arsenault who would present it to Henry McCully, Public Works Department.

E. Bertini Park

1. Project Adventure Ropes Course – report, J. Gawlak

Ms. O'Hare read from the memo from John Gawlak, Director, Parks & Recreation Department, dated August 18, 2010, referred to earlier.

F. Lufbery Park

1. Frisbee course – report, J. Gawlak

Ms. O'Hare read from the memo from John Gawlak, Director, Parks & Recreation Department, dated August 18, 2010, referred to earlier.

G. Fireworks Island/Quinnipiac River & Community Lake Park

1. Canoe/kayak river access trails – report, staff

Ms. O'Hare reported that the access trails were approved by the IWWC. A DEP permit is also required before this project can begin.

H. 1250 Whirlwind Hill Road – status

Ms. O'Hare showed the Commission a survey map of the property. There was discussion about who mowed the field. The Commission discussed the possibility of adding this site to the lease properties so there would be regular mowing. The Commission will have future discussions.

I. Invasive Species Eradication

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

Ms. Saunders reported that the volunteers are ready to work come the fall.

J. Volunteer Work Program

1. Report – K. Ryan

Nothing new to report from K. Ryan.

Ms. O'Hare reported that she has been made aware that there are members of the Rod & Gun Club that are required to put in certain hours doing volunteer work. The Commission briefly discussed areas that could possibly be cleared by volunteers.

3. PROPERTY ACQUISITION

A. Reports

Nothing new to report.

4. OPEN SPACE PLAN, 1999 – update, D. Saunders

Nothing new to report.

5. OPEN SPACE MANAGEMENT MEETING – date TBD

A. Proposed agenda items

Ms. O'Hare stated that they are trying to determine the best date to hold the meeting. She gave possible dates of September 9th, September 15th, and September 14th. It was decided that September 9th would be the date that would work best for the Chairman and Ms. Heffernon who attend.

6. PUBLIC OUTREACH

A. Family Day, September 18

Ms. Heffernon indicated that this is a day to encourage families to get outdoors.

B. Fall program/speaker

There was brief discussion about the possibility of scheduling a walk rather than a speaker.

7. CORRESPONDENCE / REPORTS

A. Purple loosestrife project – Tilcon – report, M. Heffernon

Ms. Heffernon presented some before-and-after photos of the Tilcon area where the purple loosestrife project was conducted. She plans to continue the project next year. Beetles were also introduced at the entrance to Beseck Meadow and on the school path on Wharton Brook Drive. Following the release of all the beetles, loosestrife was found on the Linear Trail.

B. CT Butterfly Association Inc. – dues

Ms. O’Hare stated that the dues are \$25.00/year. Commissioners agreed not to renew the membership.

C. Habitat newsletter

The newsletter was provided for any Commissioner who would like a copy.

8. NEXT MEETING – September 9, 2010

9. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Ms. Heffernon to adjourn.

SECOND: Mr. Arsenault

VOTE: Unanimous

The meeting adjourned at approximately 10:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sonja Vining
Recording Secretary