

WALLINGFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

REGULAR MEETING

Thursday, October 9, 2014 – 7:00 p.m.

Town Hall, Basement Conference Room

45 South Main Street, Wallingford CT

MINUTES

PRESENT: Chair Mary Heffernon; Commissioners Dianne Lendler; Jeffrey Borne; Dianne Saunders; Carl Arsenault; Ken Ryan; Jim Pyskaty; Erin O'Hare, Environmental and Natural Resources Planner; Jude Boucher, Univ. of Connecticut Co-operative Extension System, Tolland County Extension Office; Jeffrey Blum; Zachary Blum, Eagle Scout Candidate; Glenn Whitehouse, Boy Scouts of America; Riley Knebes, Joshua Howard, Michael Small, Brian Platte, Univ. of New Haven Environmental Science Students; Eric Vo, Record-Journal.

NOT PRESENT: Vice-Chair John Lathrop; Commissioner Tom Pietras.

Chair Heffernon called the Meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. and took the agenda in the following order:

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Minutes, Special Meeting, September 18, 2014 at 7: p.m.

The Commission discussed the Commission's response to the land owner's letter on the top of Page three of the Minutes. Chair Heffernon said the sentence should read: "The Commission responded to the land owner's letter."

Ms. O'Hare said page 2 should say "quote" instead of "purchase order."

MOTION: A motion by Commissioner Saunders second by Commissioner Borne to approve the Special Meeting Minutes of Sept. 18, 2014 as amended. The motion passed unanimously

4. FARMLAND LEASE PROPERTIES PROGRAM

A. Field 5A & Field 7A

Commissioner Saunders said in the most recent bid cycle, a change was made prohibiting the use of pesticides containing surfactants in all fields, not just near the Town's water supply areas as was the case in the past. She said the stipulation prohibiting glyphosates with surfactant was also included in the last two vegetable fields because one field has a ravine with a stream and the other field has two ponds. Commissioner Saunders noted that surfactants stick to amphibians skin when they move through the grasses into the water. She said the farmer who bid on these two fields practices deep zone tillage which doesn't allow the fields to be plowed and has to have a cover crop in the winter and then be able to eliminate the cover crop in the spring using the glyphosate. Commissioner Saunders said the farmer

requested on the exception page of the bid, to be allowed to use a glyphosate with surfactant or some other generic product with surfactant.

The Commission discussed this issue and took comments from Mr. Boucher, from UCONN who was invited by Commissioner Saunders and an expert on deep zone tillage. Ms. O'Hare had also done research on this issue. Mr. Boucher said he encouraged the expansion of the exemption and the use of plow and harrow on Field 7A, the first year to prevent erosion. He spoke about the use of glyphosate with surfactant versus the use of Rodeo. Mr. Boucher indicated Field 7A has low ph and should be limed. He said Rodeo is not labeled for agricultural use and a buffer is needed around the wetlands if glyphosate is used as it binds to the soil particles and its use in conventional tillage is not advised. He said the glyphosate is the safest to use in this situation. Regarding Field 7A, Mr. Boucher advised applying the glyphosate, then plowing, then re-applying the glyphosate to get the remaining weeds before the croppoes in. The Commission contacted the farmer, Nelson Ccarelli, by phone, who agreed to a re-bid.

MOTION: A motion by Commissioner Saunders second by Commissioner Arsenault to rebid Fields 5A & 7A as deep zone tillage and remove the prohibition of glyphosate with surfactant in the crop areas and to allow for the plowing for the sake of re-establishing Field 7A but not for annual crop growth. The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Saunders will re-write the bid and will give this re-written bid to Ms. O'Hare to review and give the re-written bid back to Commissioner Saunders to go over prior to submission to the Law Dept. and Purchasing Dept.

Ms. O'Hare will have this item removed from next week's Town Council agenda.

B. Farmland Committee

Commissioner Saunders said the assessment visits will begin soon.

C. Property Issues – Nothing to report.

2. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

A. Tyler Mill Preserve

1. Remaining Planned Improvements

Ms. O'Hare said she is still waiting for the "parking area for horse trailers" sign and the repaving of the front area spots.

Chair Heffernon said she is waiting for the free municipal graffiti removal kit to arrive and said she will try it out on the rocks which were spray painted with graffiti.

2. Gold Trail –planned improvements – update, D. Saunders

Commissioner Saunders said she will pick up the oak on Friday. Chair Heffernon said the Kohler Enviromental Center Students will help with the footbridges and will begin work on Oct. 19. Commissioner

Saunders said Brian Saulis will do the second cut on the oak. She said will pick up the cedar logs at Commissioner Lendler's house. She said the stringers will be laid this weekend and noted she has the screws but needs to purchase the bolts.

4. Emergency trail markers

Chair Heffernon said the emergency trail markers have all been installed and the Engineering Dept. has the GPS co-ordinates and will put them on the maps.

Chair Heffernon asked about the kiosk at Vietnam Veterans Memorial Park where a new parking lot is being installed.

Ms. O'Hare said she spoke to Steve Palermo, Foreman of the Public Works Department about it. Commissioner Lendler suggested removing the kiosk. Ms. O'Hare said she will ask Steve Palermo where the kiosk will be stored.

Commissioner Lendler paint and blaze the new Lilac Trail sign and existing blazes.

3. Stewards of Tyler Mill – Les Mehrhoff Biodiversity Grant project & Vo-Ag students-D. Saunders.

Commissioner Saunders said they are in the home stretch and the seeding was done in the spring and spoke about what plants came up as a result of the seeding: deer tongue, well-behaved goldenrod, tickseed and a lot of milkweed. She said most of the plants and shrubs are planted thanks to the Vo-Ag students who were on-site four times to plant and also did soil testing. Commissioner Saunders said the Stewards are watering from the pump in the river but had to tailor their work because of field conditions. She said work was done on the mugwort this past weekend and will work on it again with the Vo-Ag students and said the birds and butterflies are utilizing the new plants by the bridge. She said box elder was planted today and will do the south side of the new parking lot between the rocks and the woods on Friday with plants and then soil test. She presented an invoice to Ms. O'Hare.

5. Trail maps – production

Chair Heffernon said the Parks & Recreation Dept. is paying to have 1,000 maps printed for the Commission.

C.Fresh Meadows

1. Eagle Scout Project-Zachary Blum

Zachary gave an update on his project to the Commission. He said the two trails were installed as well as the kiosk and picnic tables. He said he is waiting for the information to put into the kiosk and has information on nine animals. He said all that is needed is to install a map of the area in the other side of the kiosk.

Chair Heffernon asked Ms. O'Hare of a map of Fresh Meadows to put into the kiosk. Ms. O'Hare suggested waiting so Zachary's trail could be put onto the map. Chair Heffernon suggested that Zachary pencil in his

trail onto the map which will be laminated. She suggested having the entire area on Zachary's map including Zachary's trail. Commissioner Saunders suggested taking the wetland markers off of the map.

The Commission will work on optimizing the size of the map.

Chair Heffernon will write John Thompson, Sr. Engineer.

Zachary asked about the possibility of chaining the garbage can across the lot to the kiosk or putting another garbage can across the parking lot.

Ms. O'Hare will ask Parks & Recreation to use another garbage can.

6. Discussion re: security cameras

Commissioner Saunders said she and another Steward purchased two cameras to try them out on private property. She said the cameras cost \$150 apiece. Chair Heffernon said the Commission would have to go through Parks & Recreation and get the Mayor's permission for their use. Commissioner Lendler said the cameras could cause privacy issue problems and suggested a video surveillance sign be erected instead. Commissioner Saunders spoke about dumping.

The Commission agreed to pursue the idea of security cameras but first speak to the proper authorities about this-(Mayor Dickinson and John Gawlak, Parks & Recreation Director).

7. Discussion re: speed limit signs

Commissioner Saunders spoke about speeding vehicles on Sunday on Tyler Mill Road and Tamarac Swamp Road within the Preserve, and suggested speed limit signs be installed. Commissioner Lendler said the signs at the beginning of the entrances to Tyler Mill would be a good idea.

Chair Heffernon will contact the Traffic Dept. of the Wallingford Police Dept. for suggestions.

8. Discussion re: reblazing trails

Chair Heffernon said some of the trail blazes look good but some are faded. She suggested waiting until spring to paint. Commissioner Saunders said bollards will be painted red by Parks & Recreation.

The Commission agreed to paint the trail blazes in the spring.

9. Yale postdoctoral associate research proposal

Ms. O'Hare said Lauren Smith sent in a proposal for permission to start work in the spring. Ms. O'Hare said Ms. Smith will study spiders and insects and how the garlic mustard plant changes this dynamic. Ms. O'Hare passed around the proposal to the Commission.

The Commission gave their approval. *Ms. O'Hare will write the letter to the applicant informing her of the Commission's approval to begin her project in the spring.*

10. MANAGEMENT

a. Rabbitat

Commissioner Saunders spoke about the visit she, Brian Saulis and Commissioner Borne's made to the 110 acre Nutmeg Beagle Club rabbitat in Middlefield on Powder Hill Road. She said there is a field trial scheduled for Nov. 8 & 9. Commissioner Saunders spoke about the early successional habitat and how it is maintained there by hand.

b. Other

Chair Heffernon said she is waiting for the report back from the CT. Audubon Society and is thinking about doing a small enclosure for the deer.

B. 1250 Whirlwind Hill Road property-mowing

Commissioner Arsenault said he will be meeting with the bidder on Friday regarding the mowing.

C. Fresh Meadows

2. Correspondence re: resident letter

Chair Heffernon told the Commission she read them a letter last month written by Patricia Grant to the Mayor and John Gawlak Director, Parks & Recreation Dept., regarding the Fresh Meadow property's butterfly meadow and how Ms. Grant wanted the meadow cut down and returned to mowed grass. Chair Heffernon distributed a response letter she had written to Ms. Grant's letter.

3. Tessa's Trail sign-installation

Chair Heffernon passed around the sign and spoke about putting plywood on the back so the sign wouldn't get bent. *Commissioner Arsenault will put the plywood on the back of the sign and install it.*

D. Doolittle Park – riparian buffer plan

Chair Heffernon said she received an e-mail from State Rep. Mary Mushinsky which said she had noticed that Public Works had stopped mowing to the edge of Wharton Brook. Chair Heffernon said Rep. Mushinsky stated that the neighbors in the area are in support of the buffer and noted that Wilcox Tech students will help plant the buffer. Chair Heffernon spoke about a letter she received from the Southwest Conservation District offering their help and noting the non native plants in the buffer today. Chair Heffernon also showed a photo of the existing area and a sample photo of the proposed riparian buffer. Commissioner Ryan said a plan has to be created and Commissioner Borne suggested that a portion of the buffer should be made more natural and native.

Chair Heffernon suggested talking to Parks & Recreation regarding information the Commission received from the Southwest Conservation District and also talking to Public Works regarding pesticides. She suggested having a meeting with Parks & Recreation and people from the Southwest Conservation District. The Commission was in favor of this Meeting.

Chair Heffernon will explore this idea.

E. Dibble Edge Road property – drainage issue & encroachment – Nothing to report.

F. Invasive Species Eradication

1. Report, D. Saunders

Commissioner Saunders distributed her report to the Commission. She said the Stewards are working on mugwort and Japanese knotweed this month. She said they also removed goldenrod around the boulders at the new parking area at Tyler Mill Preserve and are clearing completely around the boulders and about 10-feet back, and will smother with pine needle mulch. Commissioner Saunders gave an update on running bamboo and said Caryn Rickel has been all over Connecticut with volunteers documenting the bamboo.

Commissioner Saunders submitted an invoice to Ms. O'Hare for the cost of the plants for the Merhrhoff Project .

2. Contracted work (Tyler Mill entranceway area & Trees of Heaven) – status

Commissioner Saunders said the Stewards can clean up the mugwort on the horse side of the Tyler Mill Preserve entranceway and the regular parking lot will also be cleaned up of invasive plants.

<http://www.ryasap.org/restorative-justice/> Commissioner Lendler asked about Public Works repairing the large puddles at the Tyler Mill entranceway which has not as of yet been taken care of.

3. Purple loosestrife – VoAg students

Chair Heffernon said she and the VoAg students went out and dug out purple loosestrife plants which they will overwinter with the intent of planting them in the spring to take care of the beetles. Ms. O'Hare said the VoAg students got biotic report forms from her as part of their work at Ferguson Woods.

Commissioner Saunders added that under "Contracted Work" above she went to a conference where the topic was "How to Work With Your Contractor" and how to submit a bid. *Commissioner Saunders will write a memo.*

G. Other properties

Commissioner Arsenault said the Beseck Meadow property will be mowed soon.

3. PROPERTY ACQUISITION

1. Possible Properties- Not discussed.

5.PUBLIC OUTREACH

A. Property owner outreach – M. Heffernon

Chair Heffernon passed around a draft of the landowners brochure which outlined options for land preservation and stewardship. Chair Heffernon asked for suggestions from the Commission but asked to keep the suggestions simple.

B. Scout Roundtable, Oct. 20.

Chair Heffernon said she and Commissioner Saunders attended this a few years ago. She said Scout Leaders come from all over the area and it is scheduled for Monday, Oct. 20 at Maloney High School from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Chair Heffernon said she would have a table at the Roundtable representing the Commission. She asked for volunteers. Commissioner Saunders expressed interest in attending.

6. OPEN SPACE PLAN UPDATE- report, M. Heffernon & J. Borne

Commissioner Borne said he and Chair Heffernon had a meeting with Town Planner Kacie Costello and told her the Commission was interested in updating the Open Space Plan. He said Ms. Costello expressed interest in working with the Commission and said this was a good opening Meeting. Commissioner Borne said coming out of this Meeting, he would like to see the former Town Plan of Development.

Ms. O'Hare will obtain copies of the existing Plan of Development of 2005 from the Planning Department.

7. OTHER TOPICS

Chair Heffernon spoke about signing up for the CACIWC Conference on November 15 in Wallingford at the Villa Capri.

8. CORRESPONDENCE/REPORTS –Not discussed

9. NEXT MEETING – November 14, 2014

10. ADJOURNMENT

A motion by Commissioner Pyskaty second by Commissioner Borne to adjourn the Meeting at 9:45 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia A. Kleist

Recording Secretary