

**DRAFT DOCUMENT – SUBJECT TO APPROVAL**

WALLINGFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

REGULAR MEETING

Thursday, October 10, 2013

7:00 p.m.

Town Hall, Basement Conference Room

45 South Main Street

Wallingford, CT

**MINUTES**

**PRESENT:** Vice-Chairperson Mary Heffernon; Commissioners Dianne Saunders; Ken Ryan; Tom Pietras; Erin O'Hare, Environmental and Natural Resources Planner.

**NOT PRESENT:** Chairman Jeffrey Borne; Commissioners Carl Arsenault; John Lathrop; Jim Pyskaty; Dianne Lendler.

DUE TO A LACK OF A QUORUM – NO ACTION WAS TAKEN.

Vice-Chair Heffernon, acting as Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m.

**1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**A. Minutes, Sept. 12, 2013**

Acceptance of Meeting Minutes tabled to the Nov 14 meeting-Lack of Quorum.

**2. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT**

**A. Tyler Mill Preserve**

1. DEP Recreational Trails Grant Program – parking lots, entranceways, and kiosks.
  - a. Required permitting – status

Ms. O'Hare said spoke about the Trails Grant progress report she compiled for Don Roe, Program Planner. She said there was a host of memos going back and forth between the different Town departments for the month of September regarding the required permitting. She said administrative approval was granted for the entryway design at Northford Road by the Inland Wetlands Watercourses Commission, (IWWC). Ms. O'Hare said she also had to apply to Zoning Board of Appeals, (ZBA), for a variance and that application - which shows the greenbelt was submitted on Sept. 13. She said if the variance is approved, the application then submitted to Planning and Zoning for approval. If there is no approval from ZBA, which is scheduled to

discuss this matter at their October 21<sup>th</sup> meeting, then the application cannot move forward to Planning and Zoning Commission which meets on Nov.13. She noted that if everything is approved, Public Works can begin work on November 14 at the earliest.

Ms. O'Hare said a second Parking Lot subcommittee meeting, conducted by John Gawlak, Parks and Recreation Director, took place October 8. She noted the plan was redesigned in response to people's comments.

Commissioner Saunders said that gravel will be installed not processed stone or millings.

Ms. O'Hare also went over the wetlands map of the area and noted that administrative approval can be granted in situations where there is no activity directly affecting the watercourse or the wetlands.

Ms. O'Hare said herself, Rob Baltramaitis, Assistant Town Engineer, Vice-Chair Heffernon, Henry McCully, Public Works Director and Commissioner Saunders did a site visit to the parking lot and discussed the guardrail design which was eventually nixed by Steve Palermo of Public Works because of snow plowing issues. The guardrail design was revised.

b. Maltby Lane kiosk location

Ms. O'Hare said the kiosk has not been installed and that the revised location is in the hayfield close to the concrete blocks.

c. Parking lot Subcommittee meeting-Oct. 8 – discussed above.

2. Footbridges – update, D. Saunders.

Commissioner Saunders said there is nothing new to report. She asked Ms. O'Hare if she checked the source of funding.

Ms. O'Hare said she had not looked into source of funding.

Commissioner Saunders requested Ms. O'Hare obtain a purchase order for the materials.

*Ms. O'Hare will write the purchase order and Commissioner Saunders will send supply a detailed list of all the supplies with a price and the name of a vendor. Ms. O'Hare will investigate funding sources and process the purchase order.*

Acting Chair Heffernon asked if the Commissioners were aware that IWWC had approved the footbridges for the Red Trail.

Commissioner Saunders said the Scouts will construct one, possibly two footbridges.

*Ms. O'Hare will give Commissioner Saunders a copy of Ferrucci & Walicki's 80-foot long original boardwalk design for the crossing on the proposed Gold Trail.*

Commissioner Saunders said the Gold and Red Trail footbridges should be done as soon as possible. She said all the rest of the footbridges would have to be done before March.

Ms. O'Hare noted that if any of the footbridge plans are modified, the plans would have to be re-submitted to IWWC by the November 5<sup>th</sup> application deadline.

3. Forest Edge Habitat Project – D. Saunders
  - a. Draft letter to DEEP

Commissioner Saunders said she began drafting a letter to Peter Picone of the DEEP. She said she went over the (Environmental Review Team), ERT report, which has information on the forest edge habitat, and wants to work this information into her letter. Commissioner Saunders said she is setting a deadline of November 15.

Acting-Chair Heffernon asked Commissioner Saunders if there was a possibility of obtaining a Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) Grant.

Commissioner Saunders said municipalities are usually not awarded this grant, unless there are additional monies.

Ms. O'Hare relayed information regarding a grant for the Community Forest Program. She said towns can apply for this.

Acting-Chair Heffernon said there is a grant for rabbit habitats. Commissioner Saunders said there is a forestation grant, but noted that a forestation plan is needed. She spoke about a readily available 14-acre DEEP plan was implemented by the Town of Burlington at Sessions Woods. Commissioner Saunders said she would try to visit this site as soon as possible.

- b. Other – Not taken up.

## **B. Fresh Meadows**

1. Improvements (FY 12-13)

Ms. O'Hare said she put on the map all of the improvements that were not treated by the vendor, TruGreen. Ms. O'Hare said she was informed by TruGreen that the treatments were completed, but she has not been out to the site to see if the improvements were done.

2. Improvements (FY 13-14)

Ms. O'Hare said the Commission used \$6,000 in the Conservation Commission budget for professional services and \$6,600 in the Open Space Resources Management Fund on the vendor, Lenard Engineering to work on the engineering survey base mapping. She said there was a three-week delay because of a hold up in the Engineering Department but vendor should not be penalized.

### 3. Mowing

Ms. O'Hare said Fresh Meadows is usually mowed in October.

Commissioner Saunders spoke about the winterberry not being mowed. *Ms. O'Hare will write a memo to Henry McCully, Public Works Director requesting that Fresh Meadows be mowed.*

Ms. O'Hare spoke about the resurgence of goldenrod and the cottonwoods at Fresh Meadows because of the lack of mowing. She and Commissioner Saunders said Fresh Meadows should also be mowed in June if not more often to suppress goldenrod.

#### **C. Ferguson Woods – signage**

Ms. O'Hare said the signage was not installed.

Acting-Chair Heffernon said she would like to see a "No Motorized Vehicles" sign installed. Ms. O'Hare spoke about installing the "No Motorized Vehicles" sign near the name sign at Dibble Edge Road and at the concrete blocks off of North Branford Road entrance to Ferguson Woods.

*Acting-Chair Heffernon will speak to John Gawlak, Parks & Recreation Director, on Friday about contacting the Police Department regarding the signage on the gates that Public Works is supposed to fix on Woodhouse Avenue and she will also request that the Police install the two Ferguson Woods signs.*

Commissioner Saunders suggested that a "No Motorized Vehicles" sign be installed in the middle of Dibble Edge Road between the private properties and Town Property.

#### **D. 1250 Whirlwind Hill Road – mowing, status**

Ms. O'Hare indicated the recommended mowing was advised to take place in October and asked the Commission if they wanted to spend money on the mowing.

Commissioner Saunders suggested authorizing the Mowing Committee to write a letter to Henry McCully, Public Works Director asking his Department to do the mowing. Commissioner Saunders said this area needs to be mowed or invasives will take over the area.

Ms. O'Hare said the Yale undergraduate student plans on presenting her findings to the Commission in December.

Commissioner Saunders recommended having the Yale student present her findings at a Special Meeting right before the regular December Commission Meeting.

The Commission discussed the possibility of using "Rent-A-Goat" to keep the grass maintained at 1250 Whirlwind Hill Road if no one is available to mow.

*Commissioner Ryan will investigate the possibility of using "Rent-A-Goat" at 1250 Whirlwind Road.*

#### **E. Invasive Species Eradication**

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

Commissioner Saunders discussed her "Invasive Species Update" report dated October 10, 2013. She said regarding the bridge site Red Black-dot loop area at Tyler Mill Preserve, there is continuing control of invasives and promoting growth of native species. She said one work party was conducted in September and a native honeysuckle was relocated. She said the Stewards of Tyler Mill will be trimming native herbaceous plants in October, to promote spring growth.

##### 2. Eradication – Tyler Mill Preserve main entranceway – status.

Commissioner Saunders noted that she will be meeting with Contractor, All Habitat Services, to discuss areas that were not sprayed. She said the sprayer did not get close to the incursion. Commissioner Saunders said Japanese knotweed at the Northford Road entrance to Tyler Mill was partially re-treated but still has skips. This area should be easy to treat, and is an important first impression to the Preserve. She said most important, is control for the stream flow for the trout stream and said it did not appear that the islands or the two spots along Tamarac Swamp Road were treated. She said a small incursion near the fishing bridge, likely brought in by vehicles, was removed by the Stewards

Ms. O'Hare indicated she has contacted the vendor several times and will meet them out there this time.

##### 1. Eradication – Trees of Heaven – status

Commissioner Saunders said in her "Invasive Species Update" report dated October 10, 2013, that Ms. O'Hare had reported the trees of heaven were treated by the contractor on August 30, 2013. *She said the Stewards of Tyler Mill have not made another site visit to ascertain results but will do so.*

Commissioner Saunders said she attended the field training at Aton Forest in Norfolk, on September 21, 2013. She said the emphasis was on recognizing the differences of some native and invasive plants and said the field training was excellent because it reinforced that we need to prioritize, as we do, and to anticipate and react to the plants to control invasives.

#### 4. Road grading in Tyler Mill Preserve

Commissioner Saunders said the entire Tyler Mill Road and Tamarac Swamp Road will be re-graded. She said Public Works brings in approximately 1,000 tons of processed stone. She said Tamarac Swamp Road is badly eroded. She said the road will be re-graded any time and noted that mowing took place Wednesday.

*Ms. O'Hare will write a letter to Steve Palermo to set up a meeting with Commissioner Saunders regarding the roadside grading.*

### **F. Bamboo**

#### 1. Town Council Ordinance Committee Meeting, Sept. 19. re: bamboo – report

Acting-Chair Heffernon along with Commissioner Saunders and Ms. O'Hare had attended the meeting which was reported on in the newspaper.

Commissioner Saunders said the next Town Council Ordinance Committee Meeting regarding bamboo will take place on October 30.

#### 2. Beseck Meadow

Ms. O'Hare talked about an IWWC applicant who is keeps his bamboo under control by constant mowing. She suggested the Town should hire a contractor to mow the bamboo at Beseck Meadow. *The Commission agreed that Ms. O'Hare will ask Corporation Counsel Janis Small to speak with the neighbor whose bamboo is encroaching onto Town property at Beseck Meadow as a first step.*

Commissioner Saunders suggested contacting Wallingford Tree Service to get a price on cutting the bamboo to the ground and then shredding it.

*Ms. O'Hare will do after November 6.*

### **3. FARMLAND LEASE PROPERTIES PROGRAM**

#### **A. Farmland Lease Cycle – 2014-2018**

#### 1. Bid (22 hayfields) – bid opening, Oct. 29

Ms. O'Hare said the bids were advertised today and the bids for Part A and Part B must be received by Oct.29 by 2 p.m. She said only Part A will be opened on October 29; Part B stays sealed until November 14. She said there is a seven-day period for questions prior to the bid opening. The Ranking Committee will meet to evaluate bids, then it goes to the Town Council. Ms. O'Hare said the leases are in place until December 31.

Ms. O'Hare distributed the draft bid document to the Commission and the Purchasing Department's document copy she had proofed.

Acting-Chair Heffernon and Commissioner Saunders questioned why the proof copy of the documents were marked up. Ms. O'Hare said she just changed the numbering of the pages and spent two hours correcting mistakes. Ms. O'Hare said she resented insinuations that she changed the document.

Commissioner Saunders said she would look at the finished version and said she hoped everyone had learned a lesson from this whole process the past three years, that when there is direction from the beginning, this situation won't occur. She said there should have been a meeting three years ago, as she suggested, and thus everyone would have been on the same page. Commissioner Saunders said overall, the role of the Commission in doing a project as this, needs to be defined better, it is all a gray area, we all do a lot of work for nothing because we are volunteers and do the same work over and over.

## 2. Proposed bid document for Field 5A and Field 7A

Commissioner Saunders said she did not get a chance to type up the Committee's report.

Ms. O'Hare suggested Commissioner Saunders use the other bid as a template. *Ms. O'Hare will provide Commissioner Saunders with the template and will then review the report when it is submitted to her.s*

### **B. Farmland Committee**

#### 1. Monitoring reports

Commissioner Saunders submitted the Farmland Lease Property Monitoring Report on Triangle A: Fields 2A & B; Fields 3A, 4A and 19A and Cecarelli: Fields 1A & C, 5A, 7E & F to Ms. O'Hare dated October 10, 2013. She said she is waiting for Commissioner Arsenault and Commissioner Pyskaty's Monitoring Reports. Commissioner Saunders said Cecarelli's fields were good, he did the cover crop and he mowed and had his fallow year for Field 1C and a half on Field 1A. She noted Fields 7E and 7F had another fallow year because it was too wet to plant. Commissioner Saunders said Cecarelli is willing to just mow Fields 7E and 7F and pay the Town, or plant a meadow mix if the Town pays for the mix. She said Cecarelli mowed all the non-crop area in Field 5A which are within the lease area. Commissioner Saunders spoke about the problems in Triangle A. She said Field 3A has never been mowed this year; hay has turned fallow and is lying on the ground; Fields 2A and 2B had equipment problems after the first hay cutting because of the wet ground; Field 4A and Field 19A, which is pasture, has only been partly mowed. She said the fences were fixed when there were problems, but there is no proactive fence fixing. She said she took photos of the fencing. She said nothing has been done on Field 19A and said last week, the Town mowed the edge of Scard Road and tore out the fence.

Ms. O'Hare indicated Billy Cellata is repairing the fence.

*Ms. O'Hare will write a memorandum to Henry McCully asking to repair the fence.*

*Ms. O'Hare will follow-up.*

### **C. Property issues**

#### 1. Field 5A, Cooke Rd – mowing of Town R.O.W

Ms. O'Hare said the right-of-way for Field 5A and Field 7A on Cooke Road was mowed and noted that the farmer had wanted to mow the right-of-way and was told he could not due to traffic hazards, etc.

Commissioner Saunders said she believes the Town mowed the right-of-way.

Commissioner Pietras said the mowing occurred within the past two weeks and also believes the Town did the mowing.

#### 2. 1390 Whirlwind Hill Rd- storage of materials by Public Works Dept.

The storage of milling materials by the Public Works Dept. at 1390 Whirlwind Hill Rd. was discussed. It was noted it may be a Conservation Easement area. Ms. O'Hare noted that the new lease area for Field 4B includes most of the stockpile area.

### **D. Mowing quote**

Ms. O'Hare said discussed the properties maintained for wildlife conservation which have not been mowed by Public Works. She said Field 4C has not been mowed in quite some time and the Autumn olive is increasing.

Commissioner Saunders asked Ms. O'Hare to help her draw up a bid-waiver list over the winter for a contractor for mowing and invasives work. *They will do so.*

## **4.PUBLIC OUTREACH**

### **A. Possible October hike** (in conjunction with Wallingford Library)

Acting-Chair Heffernon said she asked Ms. O'Hare to put this item on the agenda because a number of families ask at the Library, when there will be another children's program. She said it would be nice to do an autumn family hike.

Commissioner Saunders said she has a list of several people who would be interested in this. Acting-Chair Heffernon indicated the hike will take place on November 3 at 10 a.m. at the bridge at Tyler Mill Preserve off Tyler Mill Road. *She said she will publicize this hike the children's section of the Library newsletter.*

Vice-Chair Heffernon spoke about the Monarch butterflies and their scarcity.

## 5. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

**A. Farmland Committee** - Not taken up.

## 6. OPEN SPACE PLAN UPDATE – revisions

**A. Revisions:** “Vision Statement”, “Purpose” & “Open Space Defined” – Not taken up.

## 7. CORRESPONDENCE/REPORTS

**A. Quinnipiac River Linear Trail – Phase III** – Town of Wallingford – IWWC public hearing – Nov. 6

Ms. O'Hare showed the Town's application plan to the Commission which came in to the IWWC as a “Significant Impact” which requires a public hearing to take place on November 6. She said this project impacts three acres of wetlands. She said a 126 ft. long bridge will also be constructed spanning the floodplain.

**B. Dog Park Proposal** – Environmental Planner's Report re: site investigation/wetlands

Ms. O'Hare said she wrote a report to John Gawlak, Parks & Recreation Director, about what permits would be required. She said Commissioner Pietras did the soil sampling report.

Commissioner Pietras said there are two potential locations: Garden Road and area near the Dam. He said there is no plan, just the location of potential wetland areas.

**C. “Farming Protected Land Workshops”** – American Farmland Trust – Woodstock , Oct. 10 & New Milford, Oct. 17 – Discussed.

**D. “Connecticut: Connected To Its Forests”**, CT Urban Forest Conference & Forest Forum, Oct. 30, 8 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Ms. O'Hare spoke about the Hartford Farmers market and the Government giving assistance to this program.

Commissioner Saunders spoke about, and showed photographs of an illegal dumper who was caught dumping in the Tamarac Swamp wetlands. She said the person was cited by the Police.

Commissioner Saunders submitted the Steward's of Tyler Mill September 2013 Monthly Report to Ms. O'Hare submitted 10/10/ 13.

## 8. NEXT MEETING – November 14, 2013

## 9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting ended at 9:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia A. Kleist

Recording Secretary