

WALLINGFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

REGULAR MEETING

Thursday, October 13 2016 – 7:00 p.m.

Town Hall, Basement Conference Room

45 South Main Street

Wallingford, CT

MINUTES

PRESENT: Chair Mary Heffernon; Commissioners Dianne Saunders; Dianne Lendler; Carl Arsenault; Jim Pyskaty; Tom Pietras; Mark Ceneri; Erin O'Hare Environmental Planner; Jatinder Aulakh.

NOT PRESENT: Vice-Chair John Lathrop; Commissioners Dianne Lendler; Jeff Borne.

1. MUGWORT RESEARCH – Jatinder Aulakh, Assistant Weed Scientist, CT Agricultural Experiment Station, Windsor, CT

Chair Heffernon introduced Mr. Aulakh who distributed copies of his report on mugwort. Mr. Aulakh went over his background. He discussed his two studies which included overseeding with Kentucky bluegrass, mowing at 10,15 and 30 day intervals, and adding extra nitrogen before the plant goes dormant to allow native grasses to compete with the mugwort. He said mowing intensities have resulted in inconsistencies and this is the first time someone has tried mowing with adding nitrogen. He pointed out glyphosate is effective against mugwort. He said he also experiments with mugwort removal at Lockwood Park in Hamden. He said in the fall, the plant puts its energy into the rhizomes He said once snow arrives, mugwort goes dormant.

Mr. Aulakh said he collected seed across CT last fall and planted them, and found they have grown and multiplied proving mugwort spreads not by roots alone. Chair Heffernon asked about the mugwort pollen noting that it has become an irritant to some people. Mr. Aulakh said he visited some mugwort sites with Ms. O'Hare in Wallingford last year. Ms. O'Hare said were Field 7E and Field 7F by the Muddy River, the south side of Cheshire Road at Fresh Meadows. He said he wants to replicate his Hamden site study in Wallingford and would need his study plots of $\frac{3}{4}$ of an acre for two to three years.

Ms. O'Hare said the Cheshire Road area has been treated three or four times for mugwort, but it was decided not to apply any further chemical treatment. She noted Public Works mows the Cheshire Road area infrequently. The Commission decided to rope off this area so Mr. Aulakh could conduct his study. He said he could begin his study as soon as possible. *Ms. O'Hare will discuss the mugwort study with Mayor Dickinson for approval.*

MOTION: A motion by Commissioner Arsenault to allow the study of mugwort control at Fresh Meadows. Commissioner Pyskaty seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Minutes, Special Meeting, September 15, 2016.

On page 2, under "2F" third paragraph should be "are a Species of Special Concern"

The following paragraph should be "before plans are drawn."

Page 1, 2A,1 – put "missing numbers on the trails";

Page 2, D Beseck Mountain second line, should be "suggesting that tree stumps be removed."

Page 3, 5B, should be Oct. 4 is open to children.

MOTION: A motion by Commissioner Ceneri to approve the minutes as amended. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Arsenault and passed unanimously.

3. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

A. Tyler Mill Preserve

1. Northford Road bridgework

Commissioner Saunders reiterated her concern for disturbance of sensitive environmental areas in the vicinity of the Northford Road bridge. Chair Heffernon said she sent an email to Rob Baltramaitis, Town Engineer, regarding meeting to discuss preliminary plan for the bridgework.

2. Restoration of paintball – damaged area.

Commissioner Saunders said nothing has been done as of yet because of the warm weather. She said the Stewards will look at this area which was damaged by paintballers to determine what can be done.

3. Stewards of Tyler Mill – report – D. Saunders & D. Lendler

Commissioner Saunders distributed her report. She said the Stewards are working on the roadside with mugwort, barberry, and multiflora rose. She said the restoration plantings at the Northford Road area entrance to Tyler Mill Preserve are doing well. She said they will be trimmed back and the threadleaf goldenrod will be cut back and the seeds will be scattered.

Commissioner Saunders said the garlic mustard on the Green Trail was clear. She said she has found hypodermic needles at the Northford Road entrance to Tyler Mill Preserve and a deer gutsack which she removed. She provided photos of the needles. Commissioner Saunders also spoke about a large electronic item being dumped on the trail, and vandalism to the gate on Field 8B near the Lilac Trail.

B. Fresh Meadows

1. Autumn Olive removal

Commissioner Arsenault said approximately one dozen Autumn olive was removed in the field by the Cuneo property. He said the larger Autumn olives will be girdled.

2. CT Recreational Trails Program grant work

a. Municipal permits

Ms. O'Hare said on August 23, the Town Council approved entering into a contract with the State. She said she put in a wetlands permit application which was approved by the IWWC. She said she will go to the ZBA meeting on Oct. 17 with Chair Heffernon to get the parking lot setback variance approved and then to Planning & Zoning if needed.

b. Contract bid

Ms. O'Hare said the next step is to take everything and make the work Lenard Engineering did, contract bid ready.

Ms. O'Hare spoke about the mowing at Fresh Meadows which resulted in nothing growing back because of the drought. She said she performed a site visit this week.

C. Ferguson Woods – trail work.

Chair Heffernon said five fallen trees on trails were cut and removed.

D. Beseck Meadow – second mowing

Ms. O'Hare said there is no update. She said the third farmer to quote on the work gave her a verbal mowing quote but noted the bid needs to be in writing.

E. Beseck Mountain – status of trail repair

Chair Heffernon said she heard back from Clair Kane, of CT. Forestry Park Association who said the installation of a trail camera was being considered for this area.

F. Other properties

Commissioner Saunders asked about the error with the maps made by the South Central CT Council of Governments. Ms. O'Hare said she wrote a detailed memo to Mayor Dickinson about the inaccuracies, who will discuss this with the South Central CT Council of Governments. *Chair Heffernon will contact the Mayor's office for the status.*

4. PROPERTY ACQUISITION/PRESERVATION

A. Sandplains, Critical Habitat – status

Ms. O'Hare said the Mayor has not yet met with the Allnex representatives. She said the Allnex open house is this Saturday.

B. Other

Chair Heffernon said she met with Mayor, Atty. Janis Small, and the property owner who wanted a conservation easement on his property. She said the Town will hold the conservation easement.

5. FARMLAND LEASE PROPERTIES PROGRAM

A. Proposed bid leases – 2017-2022

Commissioner Saunders said there will be deep zone tillage, hay, pasture and sugarbush leases. Ms. O'Hare said the Conservation Commission must approve the proposed bid leases. Commissioner Saunders said Field 1D has to have the pesticide language added. Ms. O'Hare said the proposed bid fields are: 1A, 1C, 1D, 4A, 19A, 6A, 6B, 6C, 7E 7F, 7G and the Beseck Meadow area. Commissioner Saunders suggested putting on Field 6d for haying. Ms. O'Hare said she will ask the Town Council to put Field 20A into the Farmland Lease Program so the proposed area can be bid for hay.

Motion: A motion by Commissioner Pyskaty seconded by Commissioner Pietras to approve the bid leases as discussed for Fields 1A, 1C, 1D, 4A, 6A, 6B, 6C, 7E and 7G and to add Field 20A into the program for leasing for hay as per proposed lease.

Vote: Unanimous

C. Farmland Committee

1. Monitoring reports

Commissioner Pietras said he did the monitoring reports for the fields on Main Street, Hope Hill Road and Northford Rd. Commissioner Saunders said she did the monitoring reports for North Branford Road and Cooke Road. She will submit all reports next month.

2. Draft lease for Beseck Meadow bid proposal

Commissioner Saunders said she is working on the draft lease for Beseck Meadow and all the fields.

D. Field 18A, 995 C East Center Street – Eversource Work

Ms. O'Hare said she received a letter from Eversource regarding the Vegetation Reclamation Project entailing removing trees within their easement corridor across the town. She said Eversource is cutting every tall growing tree species and leaving low growing species of trees. Ms. O'Hare said Eversource is replacing wooden poles with metal poles. She said Eversource will be at the next Town Council meeting on Oct. 25 to discuss this reclamation project and address the residents' and Mayor's concerns and that the cutting may effect Field 18A. Ms. O'Hare will request the trees to be cut be flagged.

6. PUBLIC OUTREACH

A. Celebrate Open Space Day, Hike the New England Scenic Trail in Tri-Mountain State Park, access off Whirlwind Hill Road, Saturday, Oct. 22, 10 a.m. (rain date, Sun. Oct. 23).

Chair Heffernon said she sent the flyer to the Commission and brought a copy of the flyer. She said the flyer is also on the Town website, and at the Library. Commissioner Ceneri said he hiked through the trail with Chair Heffernon in advance of the Open Space Day and it is a beautiful hike. Chair Heffernon said a shuttle will be provided to the parking area.

B. Natural Resource Conservation Fair, Southwest Conservation District, Oct. 4 & 5 – report, M. Heffernon.

Chair Heffernon spoke about the Fair she attended and noted it was a good day.

7. POCD IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE – report, M. Heffernon

Chair Heffernon said she sent an email about the POCD Implementation Committee Report. Commissioner Saunders pointed out there are several factual errors including with the maps. She said the Open Space Plan should be addressed first and she will get involved with updating the Open Space Plan. *The Commission will peruse the material and think about making a long-range plan for each item therein.*

8. OPEN SPACE PLAN UPDATE – mapping, staff

Ms. O'Hare said upon request, the South Central Regional Council of Governments put together a map of Wallingford's depicting protected areas and protected areas of the surrounding towns for use in Wallingford's Open Space Plan. She said the map had numerous errors which need to be corrected.

9. OTHER TOPICS

A. Commissioner Ryan memorial – date, M.Heffernon

Chair Heffernon spoke about the Ken Ryan memorial tree and said the family is interested in dedicating the tree on June 11, 2017 at 4 p.m.

B. Proposal for George Simpson memorial at Wallingford Fire Department Station 7 North Farms Road, M. Heffernon

Chair Heffernon spoke about a George Simpson memorial on his former property at the new Wallingford Fire Dept. Station.

10. CORRESPONDENCE/REPORTS

A. Eversource Right-Of-Way Vegetation Reclamation Project – report, staff

Discussed above under Item 5c.

B. Southwest Conservation District, Inc. newsletter, *Soil & Water*, Fall 2016 –discussed.

C. Southwest Conservation District, Inc., - flyer, *2015-2016 Annual Report – Project Highlights* – discussed.

D. DEEP – 2016 Junior Pheasant Hunt Events

Ms. O'Hare said this event is to introduce young people to hunting and will take place at Sessions Woods.

E. Community Lake Park – trimming project

Chair Heffernon said she and Commissioner Arsenault tied bows around the trees they wished not to be cut down in the Parks & Recreation Dept. project.

F. ADT letter re: security cameras

Ms. O'Hare talked about the flyer sent to her by ADT.

Chair Heffernon said she will speak to the Ordinance Committee regarding the Dirt Bikes/ATV's. She spoke about the death of Joe Palazzi of the Land Trust Board.

11. NEXT MEETING – November 10, 2016

12. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Pyskaty made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:54 p.m. Commissioner Ceneri seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia A. Kleist

Recording Secretary