

**WALLINGFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

**REGULAR MEETING**

**Thursday November 10, 2016 - 7:00 p.m.**

**Town Hall, Basement Conference Room, 45 South Main Street**

**Wallingford, CT**

**MINUTES**

**PRESENT:** Chair Mary Heffernon; Commissioners Dianne Saunders; Carl Arsenault; Tom Pietras; Jeff Borne (arrived at 7:07 p.m.); Erin O'Hare Environmental Planner, (arrived at 7:30 p.m.).

**NOT PRESENT:** Commissioners Mark Ceneri; Dianne Lendler; Jim Pyskaty; Vice-Chair John Lathrop.

Chair Heffernon called the Meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

**1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**A. Minutes, Regular Meeting Oct. 13, 2016**

On page 2, under 3A-3 second paragraph, hypodermic needles were at Maltby Lane entrance not Northford Road. Same sentence should read bag of deer guts.

Page 1, under Mugwort Research, sixth line down, should be Lockwood "Farm" not "Park" and on Page 2, regarding Tyler Mill Preserve Northford Road Bridgework, Chair Heffernon said she spoke to Rob Baltramaitis, she did not send an email.

**Motion: Commissioner Borne made a motion to accept Minutes of Oct. 13, 2016 as amended. Commissioner Arsenault seconded the motion.**

**Vote: Unanimous**

**2. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT**

**A. Tyler Mill Preserve**

1. Restoration of paintball-damaged area

No updates.

Chair Heffernon noted a film crew will be at Tyler Mill for the next three Sundays, Nov. 13, Nov. 20 and Nov. 27. Commissioner Saunders will monitor.

2. Stewards of Tyler Mill – report on emergency number –D. Saunders & D. Lendler

Chair Heffernon said the Stewards checked all the trails and reported that 19 emergency number tags are missing. She noted that one small trail needs to be re-checked because it was done three months ago.

3. Road trimming

Commissioner Saunders said there is less than 100 ft. left to do to remove invasives and multiflora.

4. White Trail – northern part

Chair Heffernon showed the map of the northern portion of the White Trail to the Commission. She said this trail has been cleared twice. She asked the Commission if the trail should be closed. Commissioners Arsenault and Saunders said they would like to see the trail remain open. The rest of the Commission agreed.

5. Habitat survey

Ms. O'Hare said the Commission has to decide if it wants to spend all the \$6,000 in the budget for the habitat survey. Chair Heffernon asked if the Commission was satisfied with the survey work which has already been done by Michael Klemens. Commissioner Pietras suggested a survey of salamanders and frogs be done. Commissioner Saunders said vernal pools should also be surveyed. The Commission would like Mr. Klemens to conduct the vernal pool study.

**Motion: Commissioner Borne made a motion authorizing Ms. O'Hare to pursue the next phase of the Habitat survey to study the vernal pools, frogs and associated herptiles. Commissioner Arsenault seconded the motion. Vote: Unanimous**

*Ms. O'Hare will put together a draft scope and send it to Mr. Klemens and the two other herpetologists, and the Commission.*

**B. Fresh Meadows**

1. CT Recreational Trail Program grant work
  - a. Municipal permits

Ms. O'Hare said the ZBA and Wetland permits were approved and on Thursday, she submitted the Planning & Zoning permit. She said the P&Z is interested in the parking lot. She said she requested an Administrative Approval.

- b. Contract bid

Ms. O'Hare said staff has been is doing other work. She said Town Engineer Rob Baltramaitis will write the contract bid working with Lenard Engineering. She said DEEP sent a letter confirming the grant contract with the Town with an official start date of Oct. 24.

2. Mugwort research project

Chair Heffernon said she believed Jatinder may not be doing the mugwort research project.

**C. Beseck Meadow – second mowing**

Ms. O'Hare said a third quote could not be obtained for the mowing by Henry McCully, Public Works Director.

**D. 491 Williams Road open space property – planned Eversource easement work – staff**

Ms. O'Hare said Eversource presented their planned easement work to the Town Council on Oct. 24. She said this work involves eight miles of work throughout Town. She said this work will impact Traditions Golf Club, three Town properties, and many residential properties. Ms. O'Hare said besides clearing near the poles, Eversource is also clearing the edges. Ms O'Hare went over the work which will take place at 491 Williams Road.

Chair Heffernon said she attended the meeting with the neighbors on High Hill Road who expressed concern about the trees being cut.

Ms. O'Hare said Eversource will be cutting down a few trees on East Center Street. She said Pond Hill Road School property will also be affected, along with the former Warren Williams farmland lease property and 491 Williams Road. Ms. O'Hare said she received a letter from Mayor Dickinson who along with State Sen. Len Fasano and Rep. Mary Mushinsky asked Eversource to do a 15 year tree cutting plan and to temper their tree cutting. She mentioned Planning & Zoning will be having a workshop on Bee Keeping on Nov. 21 in the Town Council Chambers regarding the creation of early successional habitat that will result from the Eversource clearing. Ms. O'Hare noted it was beneficial for pollinators.

**E. Management for New England cottontails – M. Heffernon**

Chair Heffernon spoke about a resident on Durham Road who has New England cottontails. She said Peter Picone of the CT. Agricultural Experiment Station will visit the site to look at the cottontails. Chair Heffernon said there is grant money available to study this habitat. She said she went to the CFP program and was told there are grants available for the woodcock habitats which she said was the same as the rabbit habitat. Ms. O'Hare noted a recent U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service refuge designation for this habitat all across New England.

**F. Open Space Properties Management Meetings –Not discussed.**

**G. Volunteer work**

Ms. O'Hare said she received a call from a woman from Choate Rosemary Hall regarding the possibility of students who like to kayak, possibly cleaning up the rivers for community service work.

**H. Other properties**

**3. PROPERTY ACQUISITION/PRESERVATION**

**A. Sandplains, Critical Habitat – status**

Ms. O'Hare read the Letter from Mayor Dickinson who met with an Allnex Representative who indicated Allnex at this time has no interest in creating a conservation easement or any other transfer of ownership other than for fair market value.

**B. Other**

Commissioner Borne mentioned an article about two Wallingford residents proposing to make the Trap rock ridges a national natural protected area. *Commissioner Borne will research this further.*

#### **4. FARMLAND LEASE PROPERTIES PROGRAM**

##### **A. Proposed bid leases 2017-2022**

Commissioner Saunders said she is working on the new leases and said she received an answer from UCONN. She said leaving the land fallow should be left in the language of the bid for tillage areas.

##### **B. Farmland Committee**

###### **1. Monitoring reports**

Commissioner Saunders said the monitoring reports were done on Field 1A and Field 1C on North Branford Road; Field 5A on Cooke Road; and Field 7B on Northford Road; Field 2A on North Branford Road; Field 4A 19A on Whirlwind Hill Road and Field 8B on Northford Road, so Cecarelli's field and Triangle A's fields are completed. *Commissioner Saunders will submit Cecarelli's soils test to Ms. O'Hare as soon as possible.*

Commissioner Saunders said she made a master list of the fallow years and when the cover crop was established. She said Field 4A and Field 19A were not mowed in the middle. Commissioner Saunders said Field 6C will go out along with Fields 6A and 6B. Commissioner Saunders said Field 6C should be "cut" not "hayed," and the lease for Fields 7E and 7F will say "Do not mow in turtle nesting area."

Ms. O'Hare said a resident told her that on Field 5A, on Cooke Hill Road, the geese have eaten the cover crop. Commissioner Saunders said that area was planted late so it was not a goose issue.

Ms. O'Hare said on Field 1A on North Branford Road, a resident suggested a sign be installed 50 ft. in stating that no motorized vehicles be allowed past that point.

*Ms. O'Hare will pursue the sign installation.*

###### **2. Draft lease for Beseck Meadow bid proposal**

*Ms. O'Hare will ask the Engineering Department to make map.*

##### **C. Field 2A – signage relative to permitted uses**

Chair Heffernon said she received a complaint regarding Field 2A on North Branford Road. She said the person wanted to know why the sign was near the entrance and noted the person said the sign made it appear as if people could not access the open space. Commissioner Borne said there have been problems with people driving through this field. Commissioner Saunders said this is also hunting property.

Ms. O'Hare noted the State required public access and the leases indicate the public can use the perimeter of the property.

##### **C. Field 18A, 995 East Center Street – planned Eversource easement work – staff**

Discussed above.

## 5. PUBLIC OUTREACH

**A. Celebrate Open Space Day**, Hike the New England Scenic Trail in Tri-Mountain State Park – Oct. 22 –report, M. Ceneri

Chair Heffernon said three people from the public attended the hike. She said Commissioner Ceneri did a good job leading the hike.

*She will ask CT Forest and Park Association (CFPA) to install signage on Howd Road regarding the National Scenic Trail access point.*

## 6. POCD IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE – discussion

Chair Heffernon said she sent all the pages of the POCD to the Commission and we need to prioritize action now.

## 7. OPEN SPACE PLAN UPDATE

Ms. O'Hare spoke about the Tyler Mill map problem. She said SCRCOG made errors on that map and on the Ferguson Woods map. She and the Chair will be meeting with SCRCOG staff to resolve the matter.

## 8. OTHER TOPICS

### A. 2017 Regular Meeting Schedule

Ms. O'Hare went over the 2017 Meeting Schedule.

**Motion by Commissioner Borne second by Commissioner Arsenault to approve the Conservation Commission Meeting Schedule for 2017. The meetings take place the second Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m. in the Town Hall Basement Conference Room.**

**Vote: Unanimous**

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

Chair Heffernon said George Simpson's daughter, whose father was a local farmer and donated the land where the Wallingford Fire Dept. Station 7 is now located, was interested in putting a memorial on the property, possibly a tree. Chair Heffernon said the decision was made to plant a sugar maple tree behind the Fire Station. She asked Commissioners Borne and Arsenault to go with her to the site to decide where to plant the tree.

### C. Community Garden – tree cutting

Tree cutting was discussed.

## 9. CORRESPONDENCE/REPORTS

**A. DEEP – CT Recreational Trails Grant Program – 2017-18 Grant Round – application**  
deadline Dec. 15, 2016

**B. DEEP – Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Grant Program – application**  
deadline Feb 2, 2016

**C. DEEP –Urban Green and Community Gardens Grant Program – application** deadline Feb.  
2, 2016

**D. SCRCOG – Email** re: Trail maps survey, received 10/27/16

Ms. O'Hare said SCRCOG is putting out a trails map survey in the region and want help. She said the ideas have to be submitted by Nov. 11. She said the survey will go out prior to Thanksgiving.

**D. CACIWC 39<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting & Environmental Conference**, Sheraton Hartford South  
Hotel, 100 Capitol Blvd, Rocky Hill, CT, Sat. Nov. 12, 2016, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

*Ms. O'Hare and Commissioner Saunders will attend and report back.*

**F. CACIWC newsletter, *The Habitat***, Fall 2016 – distributed to the Commission.

## **10. NEXT MEETING – December 8, 2016**

Commissioner Saunders said CT Botanical Society Newsletter for Fall, featured an article about the student who did work for the Conservation Commission on the garlic mustard. She spoke about the native grass on roadsides study featured in a CIPIWG article. She said Eversource could use this information for their early successional habitat.

## **11. ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion by Commissioner Borne seconded by Commissioner Arsenault to adjourn the Meeting at 9:30 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted

Cynthia A. Kleist

Recording Secretary