

1 **Wallingford Conservation Commission**

2 **REGULAR MEETING**

3 **Thursday, November 12, 2015 – 7:00 p.m.**

4 **Town Hall, Basement Conference Room**

5 **45 South Main Street, Wallingford, Connecticut**

6 **MINUTES**

7 **PRESENT:** Chair Mary Heffernon; Vice-Chair John Lathrop; Commissioners Tom Pietras; Jim Pyskaty;
8 Dianne Lendler; Carl Arsenault; Erin O'Hare Environmental and Natural Resources Planner; Tom Grace,
9 member of the public.

10 **NOT PRESENT:** Jeff Borne.

11 Chair Heffernon called the Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

12 Mr. Grace said he met Commissioner Saunders at Tyler Mill Preserve and expressed an interest in
13 volunteering. He said a big problem at Tyler Mill is multiflora rose which he said he would be interested in
14 eradicating.

15 **1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

16 **A. Minutes, Regular Meeting, October 18, 2015**

17 On page 4, line 25, purple loosestrife was not "eradicated" it was "cut".

18 Page 3, line 9, should say "Ms. O'Hare will have Henry McCully mow the area.

19 Page 3, line 18, notice to pesticide buyer's sign was seen by Commissioner Saunders.

20 Page 3, line 29, should be The Army "Corps" of Engineers not "Corp".

21 **Motion: A motion by Commissioner Pyskaty second by Vice-Chair Lathrop to approve the**
22 **Regular Meeting Minutes of October 18, 2015 as amended. The motion passed unanimously.**

23 **2. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT**

24 **A. Tyler Mill Preserve**

25 1. Stewards of Tyler Mill, D. Saunders

26 Commissioner Saunders said the plants came from Choate Rosemary Hall and were planted by the Vo-Ag
27 students from Lyman Hall High and the Stewards of Tyler Mill. Commissioner Saunders passed around her
28 report and photos of the plants and the students who participated in the planting.

29 She said the plants were grown at the Kohler Environmental Center. She said the students started the
30 seeds in March, and noted it is unusual to get full plants from plugs in the first year. She said precautions
31 were taken, by staking the plants with little buckets so as not to be stepped on.

1 Commissioner Saunders said the kiosks, guardrails, and trail posts were cleaned with the Jomax mix and
2 stained. She said there is only one guardrail posts and 3 kiosks left to stain. She said the drainage installed
3 by Dept. Of Public Works at the Northford Road entrance to Tyler Mill is working well except for the big
4 puddle near the kiosk. She noted that dumping increased in October and early November.

5 Commissioner Saunders spoke about the large amount of oak and hickory leaves in the parking lot which
6 had covered the wheel stops. She said she used a leaf blower to remove them. She said the trail maps in
7 the kiosks at the intersection of Tyler Mill Road and Tamarac Swamp Road are holding up, but noted the
8 map doesn't show the triangle which goes around the berm. Commissioner Lendler suggested erecting a
9 "no parking" sign.

10 She noted the QRWA contacted her and nominated the Stewards of Tyler Mill for the Annual Conservation
11 Award. She said the QRWA's Annual Meeting is scheduled for December 9, 2015 at 6:30 p.m.

12 2. Restoration of portions of Green Trail & White Trail, D. Saunders

13 Commissioner Saunders said there is nothing to report until the fence is put back up.

14 3. Main entranceway area

15 a. Proposed painting of kiosk, guardrails and posts, D. Saunders

16 Discussed above.

17 b. Pavement repair

18 Ms. O'Hare said Public Works will patch the puddled areas when they have time and excess paving
19 material. *Ms. O'Hare will write a memo to Public Works asking them to repave the entire area.*

20

21 c. Drainage "leak-offs"

22 Ms. O'Hare said Public Works contacted her and told her three drainage leak offs were installed at the
23 bridge.

24 d. Garden Club tree

25 Chair Heffernon said the Garden Club's donation of a northern red oak tree has been planted at the newer
26 parking area to the entranceway to Tyler Mill Preserve by a few Conservation Commission members and
27 Garden Club staff.

28 d. DEEP Permit Hunting Area map change & harvest summary

29 Ms. O'Hare said there is no provision at the eastern soccer field on Woodhouse Avenue for hunting
30 signage. She said there should be signage and said she contacted the DEEP which suggested the Town
31 erect the Town-worded hunting signage and said there has never been an incident in that area . She asked
32 the Commission if they want hunting signage at the edge of the soccer field near the Gold Trail. She went

1 over the harvest data and noted that small game is everything, including ducks, squirrels and coyotes, not
2 just pheasants and said there were 97 hunting permits purchased this year.

3 **B. Fresh Meadows – mowing**

4 Commissioner Psykaty said it appears the entire left side of Fresh Meadows was mowed. He said the north
5 side, the golf course side, was not mowed. *Ms. O'Hare will follow up with Public Works on finishing the*
6 *mowing.*

7 **C. Marcus Cooke Park**

8 Chair Heffernon said Commissioner Arsenault was in the area two years ago and noticed the trails were
9 neglected. She said she spoke with John Gawlak, Parks and Recreation Director, who agreed it would be
10 beneficial to take a look at the trails the Girl Scouts had created and refurbish them. She said there is an
11 initiative from Midstate Medical Center to do a walkable initiative and part of this is to have trail maps
12 available to people. She suggested the Trails Committee meet and conduct a site visit. *Ms. O'Hare will get*
13 *Chair Heffernon the topo-map.*

14 **D. Beseck Mountain – dumping, staff**

15 Ms. O'Hare said there were no updates.

16 **E. Beseck Meadow – mowing**

17 Commissioner Arsenault said he went to the site a few weeks ago and reported that most of the Meadow
18 was mowed. He said in order to do a second mowing, which is advised, a purchase order must be
19 submitted by the farmer. Commissioner Arsenault said the farmer also asked about using the top 10 acres
20 for a hayfield. He said the farmer would not till the area but would use a bulldozer to push the rest of the
21 autumn olive back. Commissioner Arsenault said he told the farmer this would have to go to bid.
22 Commissioner Arsenault said the farmer wanted to do the areas that were set aside in August.
23 Commissioner Saunders recommended a Steward be put in charge of that land. The Commission agreed to
24 have the Farmland Lease Committee look at different lease options.

25 *The Farmland Lease Committee will follow-up.*

26 **F. Doolittle Park – riparian corridor project**

27 Chair Heffernon thanked Commissioners Arsenault and Saunders who spent many hours eradicating weeds
28 at Wharton Brook. She said Parks & Recreation finished the mowing. Chair Heffernon said the next step is
29 to figure out how to get the stream side restoration project completed by possibly applying for a grant.

30 **G. Neal property – clean up, map & status**

31 Nothing to report.

32 **H. Deer hunting issues – M. Heffernon**

1 Commissioner Saunders said there was an issue with a resident noticing a jeep parked on Scard Road by
2 the open space sign which turned out to be a hunter. Commissioner Saunders said the hunter is not
3 supposed to go through Field 19A with an ATV. She said she told the hunter he can't have an ATV on
4 Town property and suggested he obtain a deer cart and not to use Field 19A. Commissioner Saunders said
5 someone is walking through the gate at Field 19A. She spoke about poachers and said there must be a
6 way to deal with this. Commissioner Saunders asked how these issues should be handled when they come
7 up between Conservation Commission meetings.

8 Chair Heffernon showed the letter Helen Stowe wrote about the Community Garden and a Certificate of
9 Appreciation regarding Zachary Blum when he did the trail work at Fresh Meadows and passed around a
10 photo and an article which appeared in the newspaper.

11 Commissioner Saunders asked the Commission if a tulip tree was a good choice to plant by the Tyler Mill
12 Preserve entrance's new parking lot.

13 Chair Heffernon showed photos of a wedding in October at Tyler Mill Preserve.

14 **3. PROPERTY ACQUISITION/PRESERVATION**

15 **A. 75 Tyler Mill Road property – status**

16 No updates.

17 **B. Other property – M. Heffernon**

18 No updates

19 **4. FARMLAND LEASE PROPERTIES PROGRAM**

20 **A. Lease field conditions (36 fields) and consideration of certain lease**

21 **Requirements**

22 Chair Heffernon said someone called the Mayor's Office from New Milford interested in speaking with the
23 Conservation Commission. Saunders said the lessee has one year left on Fields 7E and 7F which he mows
24 once a year. She said if the Commission came up with a plan, the lessee would pay for killing off the
25 weeds and for replanting. She also spoke about a man interested in using some in Fields 7E and Field 7F
26 for a research station on mugwort. She told the man to bring a proposal for the December meeting if the
27 Commission was interested. *The Commission agreed to have the man meet with Ms. O'Hare to come up*
28 *with a proposal.*

29 **B Field 5A – conservation & mowing**

30 Ms. OHare said she went to the site with Commissioner Saunders and Sam Saulis and Nelson Cecarelli,
31 lessee, and requested the Water Division stake the area which was done. Commissioner Saunders said the
32 conservation mowing was done. Ms. O'Hare said she met with the Farmland Lease Committee and half of
33 the listed items were completed.

1 **C. Field 9B - fencing & signage**

2 Discussed above.

3 Commissioner Saunders spoke about possible use of the white barn and noted there is a shortage of
4 buildings in the State for farmers.

5 **D. Farmland Committee**

6 Discussed above.

7 **5.PUBLIC OUTREACH - Nothing to report**

8 **6. OPEN SPACE PLAN UPDATE, J. Borne & staff**

9 Ms. O'Hare said the CT DEEP sent her materials about mapping the critical habitats when requested. She
10 said in 1998 there were 13 critical habitats and now there are 25 critical habitats. She said there is a lot of
11 information to put into Wallingford's open space plan, with the DEEP's emphasis being on protecting and
12 managing these areas whether publically or privately owned.

13 Chair Heffernon said this is why the pamphlet was put out for the private property owners.

14 Ms. O'Hare spoke about the Connecticut Wildlife article about the revision of the endangered species list.
15 She showed photos of our native American bittersweet which she said she found growing on Field 7A and
16 photos of our native phragmite.

17 **7. PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

18 **A. Report on meeting with Town Planner - M. Heffernon, J. Borne & staff**

19 Chair Heffernon spoke about the memorandum handed out regarding recommendations for conservation
20 elements discussed in a recent meeting with Town Planner Kacie Costello, Ms. O'Hare and Jeff Borne.
21 Commissioner Saunders asked about the 25 acres for the small farms which was one element listed in the
22 memo. She said she would be interested in helping people with 10 acres or more. She asked if 10 or 15
23 acre sites would be excluded. She said 10 acres of prime and important farmland soil which can support
24 sustainable agriculture, should be protected noting most farms average 40 acres, with farmers leasing
25 most of the farmland. Chair Heffernon said she didn't have a problem changing the number to 10.

26 Ms. O'Hare explained the acreage figure was taken from the State Plan of Conservation and Development
27 (POCD), guidelines which will appear in the revised Open Space Plan.

28 Commissioner Lendler said she was concerned about lack of involvement among the youth and no
29 planning for children, including education about the environment in the forthcoming POCD.

30 The Commission agreed this is a necessary element to include.

31 **B. (Draft) Land Use Map**

32 Ms. O'Hare passed around the draft land use map.

1 **8. REGULAR MEETING SCHEDULE 2016**

2 **Motion: A motion by Commissioner Pyskaty seconded by Vice-Chair Lathrop to approve the**
3 **Regular Meeting Schedule for 2016. The motion passed unanimously.**

4 **9. OTHER TOPICS**

5 Chair Heffernon spoke about the STEM academy led by Chris Stone, which stands for Science, Technology
6 Engineering and Math for youth. She said Youth & Social Services and SCOW is involved She said STEM is
7 interested in the Choate Boathouse and using it for their central location. She asked if the Commission
8 would support STEM having this building. The Commission reached a consensus to support this initiative.
9 Vice-Chair Lathrop asked if there would be a trail connecting the building. Chair Heffernon said this idea
10 was discussed.

11 Chair Heffernon said she is meeting with the Mayor to discuss replacing Commissioner Ryan. She said the
12 Mayor received four inquiries. Commissioner Saunders said the person should be multi-faceted or even a
13 farmer. Commissioner Lendler wanted to see a younger person and someone who will do more outreach to
14 the schools and is organized and is project oriented.

15 Commissioner Saunders said she had to purchase another quart of stain. *Commissioner Saunders will*
16 *submit her bill for the cost of the stain to Ms. O'Hare.*

17 Commissioner Saunders discussed getting more people for chainsaw training.

18 **10. CORRESPONDENCE/REPORTS**

19 **A. CACIWC – 38th Annual Meeting & Environmental Conference, Villa Capri, Nov. 14,2015 –**
20 **reports. Commissioners Saunders and Pietras will attend.**

21 **B. Sleeping Giant Park Association** – newsletter, "Giant News", Oct. 2015 – distributed.

22 **C. Community Lake Park** - vegetative thinning – discussed.

23 **D. CFPA – Annual Fund appeal**

24 **E. CFPA – Durham Timber harvest program, Sun. Nov. 15**

25 Chair Heffernon said she and Commissioner Saunders will be attending this event. She said this involves
26 field forest and the upcoming timber harvest. She urged the Commission to attend this free event in
27 Durham.

28 **F. CACIWC** - newsletter, "The Habitat", Fall 2015 – distributed.

29 **G. DEEP Open Space & Watershed Acquisition Fund Notice – Feb. 2, 2016 deadline –**
30 **discussed by Ms. O'Hare.**

31 **11. NEXT MEETING – December 10, 2015**

32 **12. ADJOURNMENT**

1 Vice-Chair Lathrop made a motion to adjourn the Meeting at 9:00 p.m. Commissioner Arsenault seconded
2 the motion which passed unanimously.

3

4 Respectfully submitted,

5 Cynthia A. Kleist

6 Recording Secretary

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