

1 WALLINGFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

2 REGULAR MEETING

3 Thursday, December 10, 2015 – 7:00 p.m.

4 Town Hall, Basement Conference Room

5 45 South Main Street, Wallingford CT

6 **MINUTES**

7
8 **PRESENT:** Chair Mary Heffernon; Vice-Chair John Lathrop; Commissioners Dianne Saunders; Carl
9 Arsenault; Tom Pietras; Jim Pyskaty; Jeff Borne; Erin O'Hare, Environmental Planner; Mayor William
10 Dickinson Jr.; Eric Hansen, Forester with Ferrucci & Walicki; Claire Rutledge, Entomologist with the CT
11 Agricultural Experiment Station.

12 **NOT PRESENT:** Commissioner Dianne Lendler.

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

14 **EMERALD ASH BORER DISCUSSION**

15 Chair Heffernon introduced Eric Hansen and Clair Rutledge. She said Hansen was hiking and brought the
16 ash borer to the Commission's attention. Ms. Rutledge said the ash borer has been in CT for about five
17 years. Hansen said a few weeks ago, he and his wife were hiking the Pink Trail at Tyler Mill and down near
18 the flat he noticed "blonding". Ms. Rutledge said blonding is not caused by the woodpeckers going after
19 the wood boring insects. She showed samples of a young ash tree which the woodpeckers flecked off with
20 their beaks to find the wood boring insect. She said a tree with blonding especially an ash tree is more
21 than likely the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB).

22 Hansen said the insects hang out under the inner bark and the main portion of the trunk and end up
23 girdling the tree. He said he saw blonding off the trail and saw tiny 1/8 of an inch deep shaped holes. Ms.
24 Rutledge passed around an example of the deep shaped holes. Mr. Hansen said the Ash Borer starts at the
25 top of the tree and before it is noticed, it is probably too late for the tree. He said the Ash Borers were on
26 almost all of the trees near the watercourse but said he didn't see EAB mortality, but it is on its way.

27 Ms. Rutledge said this was first discovered in the Bethany Naugatuck, Cheshire and Prospect area. It was
28 found in Wallingford last year. She said in those four towns, there was 540 acres of EAB mortality in
29 pockets. She said they are hitting the death curve.

30 Commissioner Arsenault said many trees in Sleeping Giant State Park are dead.

31 Commissioner Saunders said she found very few trees with blonding in Tyler Mill along the roads and the
32 perimeter. She said there are 26 hazard trees, all Ash except for one tree. She said some trees were taken
33 down by Public Works in 2013. Ms. Rutledge said the trees once infested, die within nine months.

1 Commissioner Saunders said there are many trees infected west of the Pink Trail on the ridge. She said
2 between the mill race is a tree that is 60 foot tall which is infected. She suggested this tree be taken down
3 so as to not affect the mill race when it dies.

4 Commissioner Saunders said nearly all of the Ash Trees in the Preserve are infected or will be infected,
5 and noted the trees in the flood plain are the most infected. She suggested taking the Ash Trees down in
6 this area first.

7 Ms. Rutledge said the EAB won't kill every ash tree and the cold winter doesn't affect them. She said the
8 EAB got established in the early 90's in Detroit and the majority of the ash trees died with one to five
9 percent of the ash trees left. She said the EAB starts out slowly, but then it explodes with the first half
10 dying the first year and the rest, the next year. She said Ft. Wayne Indiana had 95 percent of the Ash
11 trees die by dropping limbs. Ms. Rutledge said the baby Ash tree is not attractive to the EAB until they get
12 to two centimeters in diameter.

13 She noted that in Michigan, the smaller trees are starting to reestablish. Ms. Rutledge said with the
14 current generation in Connecticut, there will be a big die off. She said the options are to remove, let them
15 fall, or treat them with systemic insecticides. She said it is the same cost to treat the tree as to take down
16 the tree, noting the insecticide application can be spread out over time.

17 Ms. Rutledge asked about the street tree ash situation in the Town but Commissioner Borne said he didn't
18 believe there were a lot of ash trees.

19 Mr. Hansen said when the trees are heavily bloned, one has less than a year to salvage the trees before
20 they fall apart. He suggested the Commission come up with a plan to take down the dead or dying trees.

21 Mayor Dickinson said taking the lumber out has an impact on the forest and creates an opportunity for the
22 vehicles to enter. He said ash trees grow in pockets and are also scattered, and recommended the
23 Commission focus on areas where these trees grow in pockets. He said it wouldn't make sense to look for
24 these trees all over the woods.

25 Commissioner Borne asked if an inventory should be done and if there is time to do the inventory.

26 Mr. Hansen said an inventory would take approximately two months to complete.

27 Commissioner Pietras said we will be silent witnesses to this EAB infestation over the next several years,
28 but the forest will adapt. Ms. Rutledge said the focus should be on hazard trees which could fall in the
29 road or on cars.

30 Ms. O'Hare spoke about the "America the Beautiful" Grant up to \$12,000 which could be used for the EAB.
31 Ms. Rutledge said Bethany was looking at spending \$1 million to take down dead ash trees just in the
32 urban areas, not in the forest. She passed around wasp plugs which are used to kill the EAB larvae which
33 she said are being released in Prospect and Sleeping Giant State Park.

34 Mr. Hansen said the best thing for the Commission to do is to conduct an inventory, but pointed out
35 specifically for ash it is probably too late. He suggested triaging a specific area to see what Ash trees are
36 affected.

1 Commissioner Borne suggested conducting a harvest to get rid of the affected Ash trees. Mr. Hansen said
2 the harvest of trees could be used as a wildlife habitat.

3 Mayor Dickinson said in order to make the harvest work, there must be a lot of trees to take down. He said
4 if there was an inventory or a particular area to be salvaged with treatment; this would be a good
5 experiment to preserve. He said it would be impossible to save every tree and noted the amount of trees
6 which can be taken down to make it financially worthwhile has to be determined.

7 Commissioner Borne suggested updating the inventory to assist the Commission in identifying what the
8 objectives will be. Commissioner Saunders suggested doing the Comprehensive Management Plan.

9 Vice-Chair Lathrop suggested looking at trails and hazard areas. Mr. Hansen said New York state has
10 adopted "SLAM" (Slow Ash Mortality), which ensures the spread is as slow as possible in an attempt to find
11 trees which have a natural resistance and to develop bio controls He said he doesn't recommend cutting
12 down all the ash trees as it would exacerbate and speed up the spread of Ash Borers which are strong
13 fliers. He left information with Chair Heffernon.

14 Ms. Rutledge told the Commission about the Emerald Ash Borer website and EAB University which
15 conducts a series of ongoing Webinars online.

16 Commissioner Arsenault left the Meeting at 8: 29 p.m. as did Mr. Hansen and Ms. Rutledge.

17 **1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

18 **A. Minutes, Regular Meeting, Nov. 12, 2015**

19 On Page 1, Commissioner Saunders was present. On line 26 the last word should be "Ag Science" not
20 VoAg.

21 On page 2, line 27, Garden Club tree Southwest Conservation District reps were on site.

22 **A motion by Vice-Chair Lathrop second by Commissioner Pyskaty to approve the Nov.12, 2015** 23 **Regular Meeting Minutes as amended. The motion passed unanimously.**

24 The Commission continued their discussion on the Emerald Ash Borer problem. The giant red ash tree on
25 Field 18A was discussed.

26 *Commissioner Saunders will give a list to Steve Palermo regarding ash trees which need to be cut or*
27 *inoculated in Town.*

28 *Chair Heffernon, Vice-Chair Lathrop, will examine the ash trees at the mill race after the holidays.*
29 *Commissioner Saunders will put tape on them beforehand.*

30 **1. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT**

31 **A. Tyler Mill Preserve**

32 **1. Management**

33 Commissioner Saunders said all the electric poles were removed from the school bus circle on Tamarac
34 Swamp Road to the Barrett House. She said seven were procured and transported to North Branford Road

1 at the berm. She said two of the farmers will use these poles to block the entrances to their fields from
2 intruders.

3 2. Stewards of Tyler Mill, D. Saunders

4 Commissioner Saunders said the Stewards received the QRWA Environmental Award. She said the
5 Stewards received a \$100 Gift Card. She said the Stewards are finishing up planting a few plants and
6 working on invasives.

7 3. Kiosk maps, D. Saunders

8 Commissioner Saunders said she hasn't had time to put in additional maps but the ones installed are
9 holding up.

10 4. Hunting signage – by soccer field, staff

11 Ms. O'Hare said the hunting sign by the Gold Trail was installed. She said Public Works installed it at the
12 edge of the parking lot on the north parking lot where the gravel ends.

13 5. Painting of kiosk and re-blazing, D. Saunders

14 Chair Heffernon said the posts and kiosks staining are complete. Vice-Chair Heffernon said the farm field
15 fence has been installed at the entrance to Tyler Mill at Vietnam Veterans Memorial Park.

16 Chair Heffernon took the agenda in the following order.

17 **A. Other properties**

18 Chair Heffernon discussed the sign installed on the farmer's field stating "Agricultural Fields-No
19 Trespassing". Commissioner Saunders said people are bringing their dogs on Field 11A and Field 11B at
20 Tyler Mill to train. She said there have been 40 dogs in the past week. She said these are agricultural lease
21 fields. She said she will ask the Police to enforce the leash laws. Mayor Dickinson said more signs need to
22 be installed. The Commission agreed to have signs installed on the agricultural fields where trespassing is
23 a problem including Fields 11A, 11B, and 7H.

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

25 Chair Heffernon noted the Community Police have been driving through the Preserve every shift change.

26 **B. Fresh Meadows**

27 1. Mowing

28 Ms. O'Hare said one third of Fresh Meadows is mowed. She presented the mowing plan by Anthony
29 Zemba, Environmental Specialist, which she said was detailed but is not being followed. She said she
30 would like to have the mowing on a three-year cycle. She distributed photos of the mowing and said she
31 was concerned that cattails were mowed which has opened up the pond and said it is now exposed to the
32 road. Ms. O'Hare spoke about the possibility there is American Phragmites at Fresh Meadows which is
33 native.

1 *She will have it identified.*

2 2. Pond

3 Ms. O'Hare said the water in the pond is very low. She said she didn't have time to look into the pumping
4 of groundwater by the pond at the golf course which she said could possibly be affecting it.

5 Commissioner Borne said he missed having Commissioner Ken Ryan, who recently passed away, at the
6 meetings. Chair Heffernon said she and Commissioner Saunders talked about planting a native tree in his
7 honor on the Galko property. Mayor Dickinson suggested creating an orchard. Chair Heffernon asked the
8 Commission to consider these options.

9 **C. Marcus Cooke Park – trails system**

10 Chair Heffernon said there is no progress

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

12 No updates.

13 **E. Beseck Meadow – ERT management plan proposal, staff**

14 Ms. O'Hare said she wanted an Environmental Review Team for Beseck Meadow. She said the State of CT
15 constantly mentions Beseck Meadow in the State Plan of Conservation and Development. She said Jay
16 Brown, the farmer, wants to bid on 10 acres of it for a hay field. The Commission agreed to initiate the
17 ERT request.

18 **A motion by Commissioner Borne second by Commissioner Pyskaty to have Ms. O'Hare**
19 **request the ERT to conduct a review and report on Beseck Meadow. The motion passed**
20 **unanimously.**

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

22 Ms. O'Hare said Roman Mrozinski, Executive Director, Southwest Conservation District, is applying for
23 funding from the New Haven Community Fund Grant to do regrading and planting.

24 **3. PROPERTY ACQUISITION/PRESERVATION**

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

26 Chair Heffernon said the bid is due back next week, and the Environmental Report came back favorable.

27 **B. Other property, M. Heffernon**

28 Chair Heffernon said she met with Corporation Counsel Janis Small and Mayor Dickinson on Thursday to
29 discuss the property.

30 **4. FARMLAND LEASE PROPERTIES PROGRAM**

1 **A. Lease field conditions (36 fields) and consideration of certain lease**
2 **requirements**

3 Commissioner Saunders said these 36 fields will be worked on in January and February. She spoke about
4 the White Barn and about Fields 7E and 7F near the Muddy River. Ms. O'Hare said she and Jatinder looked
5 at these fields on Tuesday. Commissioner Saunders submitted a report and is researching the cottonwood
6 invasion at Fresh Meadow. Ms. O'Hare said a proposal was written up regarding the mugwort study on
7 Fields 7E and 7F.

8 *Chair Heffernon will circulate copies by email.*

9 **B. Field 2A – signage & required maintenance mowing**

10 No updates. Commissioner Saunders said she received soil reports from Nelson Ceccarelli. She noted that
11 Field 2A is mowed by North Branford Road.

12 **C. Field 4A – required mowing**

13 Commissioner Saunders said Field 4C was mowed by Field 4A was not mowed. Field 4C was mowed by
14 Public Works. Field 4A was not yet mowed by the lessee.

15 **C. Field 9B – fencing & signage**

16 Discussed previously.

17 **E. Farmland Committee**

18 Commissioner Pietras said a section of Field 18A is sitting idle and Coleen Auger has expressed interest in
19 farming this field. *Commissioner Pietras and Ms. O'Hare will meet at Field 18A next week.*

20 Ms. O'Hare reported that cows periodically get through fencing in this vicinity.

21 **F. Other**

22 **5. PUBLIC OUTREACH**

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

24 No updates

25 **7. PLAN OF CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT**

26 **A. Steering Committee – report, M. Heffernon**

27 Chair Heffernon said PZC Consultants Milone & MacBroom have come out with a draft strategic chart
28 which the Steering Committee is looking at to prioritize items.

29 **8. OTHER TOPICS**

30 **9. CORRESPONDENCE/REPORTS**

1 **A. CACIWC – 38th Annual Meeting & Environmental Conference**, Villa Capri, Nov. 14,
2 2015 – reports

3 Commissioner Pietras said the Conference was very well attended. He said he liked the Forest and Insects
4 Seminar.

5 He said the Emerald Ash Borer problem was discussed and noted a lot of ash trees will be lost but will
6 rebound. The Gypsy Moth problem was also discussed. He said a fungus controls the Gypsy Moth by
7 killing the larvae. He said the Gypsy Moth came out strong the past year especially mid-state because of
8 the dry weather and if the weather remains dry, there will be an infestation next year.

9 Commissioner Pietras said the Winter Moth was also discussed and the Southern Pine Beetle which came
10 into Connecticut in 2015 which threatens the hard pines as well. He said the Asian Long Horned Beetle was
11 also discussed.

12 **D. CT Land Conservation Council – 2016 CT Conservation Conference**, Wesleyan
13 University, Middletown, CT, Saturday, March 19, 2016, 8:30 a.m. -4:45 p.m.

14 Discussed.

15 **E. DEEP Open Space and Watershed Acquisition Fund Notice – Feb. 2, 2016**
16 deadline

17 Ms. O'Hare said the deadline is Feb. 2 for the watershed and acquisition fund grant.

18 **10. NEXT MEETING – January 14, 2016**

19 **11. ADJOURNMENT**

20 A motion by Vice-Chair Lathrop seconded by Commissioner Pyskaty to adjourn the meeting at 9:40 p.m.
21 The motion passed unanimously

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23

24 Respectfully submitted,

25

26 Cynthia A. Kleist

27 Recording Secretary

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