

1 **APPROVED MINUTES**

2 WALLINGFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

3 REGULAR MEETING

4 Thursday, December 14, 2017 – 7:00 p.m.

5 Basement Conference Room, Town Hall

6 45 South Main Street, Wallingford, CT

7 **MINUTES**

8
9 **PRESENT:** Vice-Chair John Lathrop, Acting as Chair; Commissioners Dianne Saunders; Dianne Lendler;
10 Jeff Borne; Mark Ceneri; Tom Pietras; Erin O’Hare, Environmental Planner;. Cynthia Kleist, Recording
11 Secretary; Public: Mike Miller

12 **NOT PRESENT:** Chair Mary Heffernon; Commissioners Carl Arsenault and Jim Pyskaty.

13 Acting-Chair Lathrop called the Meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

14 **1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

15 **A. Minutes,** Regular Meeting, November 9, 2017

16 **Commissioner Ceneri made a motion to approve the November 9, 2017 Conservation**
17 **Commission Minutes as presented. Commissioner Borne seconded the motion.**

18 **Vote: Unanimous**

19 **2. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT**

20 **A. Tyler Mill Preserve**

21 1. Kiosk & replacement signage

22 Commissioner Saunders said the Contractor completed most of the work, noting the roof has been installed
23 on the kiosk but the plexi-glass doors or the sign was not installed the last time she checked.
24 Commissioner Saunders said she is waiting for the doors so the displays can be put back in.

25 Ms. O’Hare said the correction strips are ready and need to be picked up and installed but noted the
26 weather for proper sign installation has to be above 45 degrees. She reported the sign which was run over
27 by a pickup truck was damaged and disposed of by Public Works. She said a new sign has been ordered
28 but has to be advertised because the cost is over \$300. She said quotes requests were sent out.

29 *Ms. O’Hare will pick up the corrections strips and Commissioner Lendler will install them.*

30 2. Stewards of Tyler Mill – report, D. Saunders & D. Lendler

1 Commissioner Saunders went over her report. She noted the past month was busy cleaning up storm
2 damage and said the Red Trail and Purple Trails were done. She said the Pink Trail needs to be redone but
3 is passable and was less of an emergency than the Red and Purple Trails.

4 Commissioner Saunders said one of the footbridges was washed downstream in the storm and ended up
5 on rocks in a tributary. She said four Stewards took the footbridge apart, and reinstalled it back into place.
6 She passed around a photo. Commissioner Saunders noted that Sigrid Mandle is the newest Steward.
7 Commissioner Saunders also said that the hunting season is progressing well. She pointed out the No
8 Hunting signage keeps being removed near the Barrett property. Commissioner Saunders said she
9 reinstalled the No Hunting sign and secured it with 25 screws. She also mentioned a load of woodchips
10 under the base of the kiosk was installed because the base was full of mud from being freshly dug during
11 installation.

12 *Commissioner Saunders will forward Mayor Dickinson the correct list of Stewards as requested by*
13 *Ms. O'Hare.*

14 3. Tyler Mill Road repair work

15 Ms. O'Hare said she contacted Public Works regarding a giant puddle by the new kiosk. She said she
16 contacted Public Works on Friday and the puddle was paved over by Monday.

- 17 4. Tyler Mill Preserve Management Planning Committee
18 a. November 9 meeting – report
19 b. November 29 meeting – report

20 Commissioner Saunders said everyone has been reading the reports and summarizing. She said she found
21 out about potential funding from the New Haven Foundation which has the Quinnipiac Fund. She said the
22 Fund, which was closed, is now accepting applications in December. Vice-Chair Lathrop spoke about the
23 timeline with the funding and the budget which was discussed at the Management Planning Committee
24 Meeting.

25 Ms. O'Hare mentioned that Comptroller Jim Bowes suggested creating a new line item for the Management
26 Plan work for the upcoming budget which is due by February. He suggested getting three ballpark quotes
27 before presenting the budget to the Town Council. Ms. O'Hare spoke about inviting Parks & Recreation
28 Director John Gawlak to the January 3 Tyler Mill Management Planning Committee to discuss this issue.

29 *Commissioner Saunders is working on the outline scope for the consultant work for the January 3, 2018*
30 *Management Planning Committee meeting.*

- 31 c. January 3, 9:00 a.m. – next meeting

32 5. Chipmunk Study – status

33 Ms. O'Hare said the permit for Professor Dennis Richardson will end in December. She said she wrote him
34 a letter about renewing the study permit. Ms. O'Hare said she also requested a report by Prof. Richardson
35 regarding the chipmunk study and for him to make a presentation to the Commission. She said she has not
36 as of yet received a response.

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B. Beseck Meadow

- 1. Town signage relocation

Ms. O'Hare said Henry McCully, Public Works Director, has not as of yet relocated the sign.

- 2. Bamboo letter

Ms. O'Hare said the bamboo letter has not been written.

C. Ferguson Woods – cottontails

Acting-Chair Lathrop reported that Chair Heffernon was contacted by a neighbor who resides near Ferguson Woods who stated he might have New England cottontails on his property. Vice-Chair Lathrop said the man has a scat kit and will try to use this to identify the rabbits.

D. Fresh Meadows

- 1. CT Recreational Trails Program Project – construction status

Ms. O'Hare said the trails are installed and the project is completed except for signage and benches etc. She noted she went to the site with the Assistant Town Engineer, Tiffany Shipman and Joan Stave, ADA Coordinator last week regarding an issue with one part of the trail involving the first 30 ft. from parking lot to the pond being too steep. She said this issue has not been resolved.

- 2. Proposed plantings

Ms. O'Hare said the Contractor planted the required several native plantings on Dec.5. She suggested using available funds to purchase native cedar trees to be planted in Fresh Meadows in the spring.

- 3. Rules & Regulation sign

Ms. O'Hare said the Rules & Regulation sign which was destroyed over a year ago has still needs to be replaced by the Parks & Recreation Department.

E. Lufbery Park

- 1. Alteration activity remediation

Acting-Chair Lathrop said Chair Heffernon had spoken to the Frisbee Golf people regarding the signage being screwed too deeply into the trees and the chains being wrapped too tightly around the trees. He reported the issue is still unresolved. Commissioner Saunders noted she was at Lufbery Park a few weeks ago and said there were many people playing Frisbee Golf.

- 2. Request – insect pest study

Ms. O'Hare said she received a call from a person a few weeks ago who had asked John Gawlak, Parks & Recreation Director, for a permit regarding the USDA insect pest study. She said the person doing the study will put up five collection boxes at Lufbery Park which she said collect all types of insects. Ms. O'Hare

1 said the collection boxes would then be shipped down to the Carnegie Natural Museum for identification
2 and to look for possible new invasive species.

3 **F. Marcus Cooke – trail tree removal marking**

4 Acting-Chair Lathrop said he, Chair Heffernon and Commissioner Arsenault had gone to Marcus Cooke Park
5 to trim trees and clear trails and noted there was one large widowmaker tree over the trail which was
6 mixed in with live trees. He said Chair Heffernon asked Public Works for permission to remove the
7 widowmaker tree but has not heard back.

8 Acting-Chair Lathrop took the agenda in the following order:

9 **4. B. Quinnipiac University, "Big Event", April 7 – proposed projects**

10 Vice-Chair Lathrop noted that when he, Chair Heffernon and Commissioner Arsenault were at Marcus
11 Cooke Park, they noticed most of the blazing on the trails had completely worn off. He suggested the
12 Quinnipiac Students could reblaze those trails as part of the "Big Event".

13 *Commissioners will come up with ideas.*

14 **G. 13 Mansion Road open space – report, staff**

15 Ms. O'Hare said this report was a Mayoral referral sent to all Town Departments. She said Mansion Road is
16 Town Property but is not designated as open space. She said Chair Heffernon suggested she write a letter
17 to Mayor Dickinson asking why this property wasn't sent to the Conservation Commission. Ms. O'Hare went
18 over her report to the Mayor noting the property on Mansion Road is 3.4 acres. She passed around photos.
19 Ms. O'Hare said the Mayor asked the Town Departments if this property should be retained by the Town.

20 Ms. O'Hare said the property should be retained by the Town because it is not good for development, has
21 a ravine and a lot of wetlands. She said she has not as of yet received a response by the Mayor as to why
22 this property wasn't sent to the Conservation Commission and why the property is not on the Open Space
23 list, and how a property is designated.

24 **H. Property stewardship – D. Lendler**

25 Commissioner Lendler noted that several months ago, a decision was made that different open space areas
26 under the purview of the Conservation Commission, be assigned to Commission members who, four times
27 a year, survey the areas and submit a brief report. Commissioner Lendler went over the assignment list:
28 Ferguson Woods – Chair Heffernon; Fresh Meadows, Commissioners Borne and Arsenault; Beseck
29 Meadows – Commissioner Saunders; Bertini Park – Vice-Chair Lathrop; Marcus Cooke Park - Commissioner
30 Ceneri; Cooke Road property surrounding Field 5A – Commissioner Saunders; Whirlwind Hill & Scard Road,
31 Fields 4D &4C and Whirlwind Hill Rd once mowed by Termini – Commissioner Lender; Beseck Mountain &
32 Cliffside Trail – Commissioner Arsenault; Doolittle Park- Ms. O'Hare.

33 Commissioner Lendler noted she was supposed to get a list of the all the Town open space properties. Ms.
34 O'Hare said this list was emailed. Commissioner Saunders said Lufbery Park was omitted from the
35 stewardship list. Commissioner Lendler said she met with Commissioner Saunders and drew up a property

1 monitoring checklist which she distributed. Commissioner Lendler suggested calling the monitors
2 “Guardians of the Open Space” instead of Stewards.

3 Commissioner Saunders said someone should be a central clearing person, pointing out that with the
4 Stewards of Tyler Mill, everyone consults with her. Mike Miller said he would like to be considered as a
5 property guardian and would like to be assigned to Beseck Meadows. Commissioner Saunders suggested
6 certain months of the year, January & June, be set aside to check the properties.

7 Ms. O'Hare suggested reports should be made at the next Conservation Commission meeting and
8 suggested a notebook be kept. Commissioner Saunders suggested having this item kept on the agenda.
9 Vice-Chair Lathrop said the reports should be brought back to the Commission on a quarterly basis.
10 Commissioner Saunders said something critical like vandalism could be reported before the Commission
11 meeting. Commissioner Lendler went over the property monitoring checklist and said the guardians should
12 be called monitors. Ms. O'Hare suggested also adding positive items to the checklist like wildlife sitings.

13 **I. Mowing**

14 Ms. O'Hare said the Commission wanted Public Works to mow Fields 7E & 7F. Commissioner Saunders said
15 she hasn't seen movement on the Town property behind 1245 Whirlwind Hill Road, and as of a week ago,
16 Field 4C was not touched. Commissioner Lendler said she believed Termini was mowing around the
17 perimeter of the property. Commissioner Saunders said Public Works mowed the edges of Tamarac Swamp
18 Road edges.

19 **J. Other properties**

20 Ms. O'Hare said Public Works Director Henry McCully asked her to find out from the Commission, areas in
21 Town where snow could be dumped after plowing. The Commission discussed possible sites.

22 **3.FARMLAND LEASE PROPERTIES PROGRAM**

23 **A. Field 1C & 1D, No. Branford Rd. – signage**

24 Ms. O'Hare said Henry McCully, Public Works Director, informed her the second sign will not be installed
25 and the Police Dept. informed her one sign is sufficient.

26 **B. Field 4A, Whirlwind Hill Rd. & 19 A, Scard Rd – maintenance**

27 Ms. O'Hare said she verbally warned the lessee, Triangle A Ranch, about mowing non-compliance on Field
28 4A and Field 19A. She said she will write a letter.

29 **C. Field 6D, off Cooke Rd. – property boundary**

30 Ms. O'Hare said she sent a letter to the Engineering Dept. three months ago regarding the property
31 boundary. She said she didn't know if the boundary marking was done.

32 **D. Field 8B, Northford Rd. – bale removal & field edge maintenance**

1 Ms. O'Hare said this is the same lessee as with Fields 4A and 19A. Commissioner Saunders said the bales
2 were removed. *Commissioner Saunders will contact the lessee regarding meeting in the field relative to*
3 *uncompleted field edge maintenance.*

4 **E. Field 18A, 995C East Center St./Tamarac Swamp Rd. – proposed Request for**
5 **Qualification**

6 Ms. O'Hare said the Farmland Lease Committee met on this issue, but are waiting for a letter from the
7 Dept. of Public Health regarding the leasing Field 18A. She said the lease is up on Dec. 30 and noted that
8 Corporation Counsel Janis Small said the lease can be extended.

9 **F. Farmland Committee – monitoring report**

10 Commissioner Saunders said she has to complete the report on Bozzutos lease area. She said she has not
11 heard back from Commissioners Arsenault and Pyskaty regarding their reports.

12 **4. PUBLIC OUTREACH**

13 **A. Vehicle idling initiative - Letter to Editor, Meriden Record-Journal**

14 Acting-Chair Lathrop said that Chair Heffernon saw her Letter to the Editor regarding the vehicle idling
15 initiative in the Meriden Record-Journal.

16 **B. Quinnipiac University, "Big Event", April 7 – proposed projects**

17 This was also discussed earlier in the agenda. Acting-Chair Lathrop pointed out there has been great
18 success with the Quinnipiac University students in the past. He suggested having the students go to
19 Marcus Cooke Park and reblaze the four trails which he said are in bad shape. Commissioner Lendler said
20 that the Yellow Trail head near the footbridge in Vietnam Veterans Memorial Park needs to be redone but
21 noted this would be a bigger job for the students than reblazing trails. Vice-Chair Lathrop asked the
22 Commission to come up with ideas for the "Big Event".

23 **5. ELECTION OF OFFICERS – Tabled to the January meeting.**

24 **6. DISCUSSION**

25 **A. Occurrence of coyotes, fishers, bobcats**

26 Acting-Chair Lathrop noted it has been mentioned there are too many coyotes in Wallingford. Mark Miller
27 said he has seen coyotes, fishers and bobcats from time to time and noted that he recently saw a bobcat
28 and added that coyotes are a common occurrence. Vice-Chair Lathrop said a friend on Ridge Road in
29 Hamden has had families of bobcats in his yard. Commissioner Saunders said neighbors at 40 Northford Rd
30 saw an injured female bobcat in the road. She said she has seen coyotes at Tyler Mill at dusk and dawn.
31 Commissioner Ceneri said he has heard coyotes from time to time as did Commissioner Lendler.

32 **B. Sunflower (agricultural)**

1 Acting-Chair Lathrop said a person approached Mayor Dickinson with an idea to add a sunflower field for
2 birds and wildlife. He said the Mayor was enthusiastic about this idea about having a field on both sides or
3 one side of town. Commissioner Saunders suggested having a strip of sunflowers along the side of a trail.

4 **7. OTHER TOPICS**

5 Ms. O'Hare reported that Donald DuBois, forester, came in to her office on November 15 to submit a
6 Notification of Timber Harvest at Blue Hills Orchards. A wetlands permit was not required. Ms. O'Hare
7 passed around an image to the Commission. Ms. O'Hare said Mr. DuBois wants to be put on the
8 Management Plan. She said Mr. DuBois spoke about an environmental quality incentive grant.

9 Ms. O'Hare, responding to a report of tree clearing on Christian Street, spoke about Choate Rosemary Hall
10 installing 30 geothermal wells near the new auditorium next to the I.M. Pei building.

11 Ms. O'Hare spoke about the sandplains near Allnex. She said three weeks ago, a developer came with a
12 plan regarding the sandplains which will involve clearing 25 acres, and will extract sand down to 15 ft. to
13 develop an industrial park. Ms. O'Hare said this plan will be presented to the Planning & Zoning
14 Commission. Ms. O'Hare said there are nine State-listed species on this property. Ms. O'Hare proposed this
15 area be on the Federal or National preserve as a symbol. She suggested a documentary or film to
16 document the last remnants of the original 15-mile long sand plains.

17 Commissioner Borne suggested writing a letter questioning the environmental commitment of Allnex. Ms.
18 O'Hare said she had proposed to the Mayor, the idea of installing a plaque on the sandplains. She asked
19 the Commission for ideas. Commissioner Borne said it might be important to point out that George
20 Washington went through the sandplains.

21 Commissioner Saunders spoke about a film discussing ocean trash will be shown at the Choate Rosemary
22 Hall Melon Arts Center at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, December 15, 2017.

23 Acting-Chair Lathrop reported that Commissioner Jim Pyskaty has decided to resign after years of service
24 to the Commission. The Commission signed a card.

25 **8. REPORTS & CORRESPONDENCE**

26 **A. Open Space & Watershed Land Acquisition Grant Program** – application deadline 2/2/18
27 – Possible property acquisition – not discussed.

28 **B. Community Lake** – Parks & Recreation Dept. – IWWC application – proposed tree cutting

29 Acting-Chair Lathrop reported that he, Chair Heffernon, Commissioner Arsenault and David Gelo went to
30 Community Lake and tied yellow ribbons around native maple and larger trees, some bushes and little
31 saplings they wanted to save from the proposed tree cutting by the Parks & Recreation Dept. He said the
32 proposal is for the Town to clear from where has been cleared from last year to a split rail fence along the
33 pond to open up the view to the lake. He said the Town also is planning to install a few picnic tables along
34 the walkway in order to view the lake.

1 He said while they were at the site, a couple sat down at the one picnic table in the clearing to view the
2 open water. Acting-Chair Lathrop said Ms. O'Hare was concerned about the extent of the clearing. He said
3 the Town should be urged not to perform a follow-up mowing. Ms. O'Hare said the wetlands application
4 was tabled because a trail wasn't included in the original application along with no drawing of the proposed
5 plan. She said David Gelo and John Gawlak will meet with her next Wednesday and go over the map of the
6 proposed clearing area.

7 **C. CT Association of Conservation and Inland Wetland Commissions, Inc., (CACIWC) –**
8 Conference, Nov. 18 – reports – to be reported on at the January 2018 meeting.

9 **D. North American Wetlands Conservation Act Small Grants Program –** matching grant
10 program for projects involving restoration/enhancement and/or establishment of wetlands and associated
11 upland habitats for the benefit of all wetlands-associated migratory birds; deadline 10/19/18

12 **E. Cottontail occurrence –** status report – discussed above.

13 **F. CACIWC newsletter, *The Habitat*, Fall 2017 –** distributed.

14 **G. CT Land Conservation Council –** annual membership

15 Ms. O'Hare said the Land Conservation Council annual membership is \$100.

16 **Motion: Motion made by Commissioner Borne second by Commissioner Ceneri to pay the \$100**
17 **annual CT Land Conservation Council annual membership. The vote was unanimous.**

18 **H. Mayor memorandum** re: 2018 General Assembly Session legislative proposals, received
19 11/15/17

20 Ms. O'Hare said this memorandum involves creating new bills. Commissioner Saunders recommended
21 possible local legislation banning glass bottles in parks.

22 **I. CFPA –** monthly gift appeal - not taken up.

23 **J. QRWA letter** to Commission re: annual accomplishments, received 11/14/17

24 Ms. O'Hare said the \$40 was sent to the QRWA. She passed around a letter about what the QRWA's annual
25 accomplishments.

26 **K. U.S. EPA News Release** re: CT DEEP wetlands award (\$97,000), received 12/17/17

27 Ms. O'Hare said this wetland awards of \$97,000 are for the entire State. She said one program involves
28 mapping and the title restoration of tidal wetlands.

29 **9. NEXT MEETING –** Jan. 11, 2018

30 **10. ADJOURNMENT**

31 **Commissioner Borne made a motion to adjourn the Meeting at 9:20 p.m. Commissioner Ceneri**
32 **seconded the motion which passed unanimously.**

- 1 Respectfully submitted,
- 2 Cynthia A. Kleist
- 3 Recording Secretary