

1 **Wallingford Conservation Commission**

2 **REGULAR MEETING**

3 **Thursday, February 11, 2016 – 7:00 p.m.**

4 **Town Hall, Basement Conference Room**

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

6 **MINUTES**

7
8 **PRESENT:** Chair Mary Heffernon; Vice Chairman John Lathrop; Commissioners Dianne Saunders; Jim
9 Pyskaty; Jeff Borne; Tom Pietras; Carl Arsenault; Erin O'Hare, Environmental Planner

10 **NOT PRESENT:** Dianne Lendler

11 Chair Heffernon called the Meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

12 **1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

13 **A. Minutes, Regular Meeting, Jan.14, 2016**

14 On page 2, item A.3 should be "Sam" Saulys not Brian Saulys

15 On page 2 line 32 should be between the road and the barn.

16 On page 1, under 1.A-Commissioner Arsenault seconded the Minutes not Chair Heffernon.

17 **Motion by Vice-Chair Lathrop second by Commissioner Pyskaty to approve the Jan.14, 2016**
18 **Meeting Minutes as amended.**

19 **Vote: unanimous**

20 Chair Heffernon took the agenda in the following order and skipped to Item #6 Plan of Conservation and
21 Development.

22 **6. PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

23 **A. Steering Committee report, M. Heffernon**

24 Chair Heffernon said the POCD draft came out. She distributed copies of the pertinent sections of the Plan
25 Implementation Goals and Strategies " (pages 5, 11-15), and the "Recommended Strategies for
26 Conservation Commission (2 pages). She said a Plan Implementation Committee will be formed to look at
27 the various areas and the strategic plan and the Conservation Commission will have one appointee. She
28 noted the Conservation Commission background items were on page 11, i.e., Stewardship and agriculture.

29 On page 14, Chair Heffernon said there was a list of things to do, including but not limited to adopting a
30 "fee in lieu" of open space provision in land use regulations to enable financial contributions to a Land

1 Conservation Fund for open space acquisitions in place of open space dedications in development;
2 developing soft trails around Fresh Meadows; enforce state statutes restricting planting of invasive species
3 including bamboo; complete the open space plan; identify maintenance priorities; continue to operate the
4 farmland lease program; identify an appropriate area on the west side of Town for a second Community
5 Garden.

6 Chair Heffernon said the farmland lease program was ranked a high priority along with coordinating
7 between conservation land holders/managers and Town Departments to set maintenance proprieties ad
8 responsibilities. She noted identifying a site for the second Community Garden, working with schools to
9 promote and expand farm-to-school food service programming al coordinating educational sessions on
10 land management and pursuing acquisitions of open and agricultural lands all received medium priority.
11 Enforcing state statutes restricting planning of invasive species such as bamboo and developing soft trails
12 around Fresh Meadows received low priority. She noted a public hearing on the Plan of Conservation and
13 Development will take place in the near future and recommended everyone from the Commission attend.

14 She said the Commission will not be submitting comment, but individual Commissioners may. Ms. O'Hare
15 indicated Departmental heads will be afforded a chance to comment on the draft. Ms. O'Hare noted that in
16 two places, "Compete Open Space Plan" should be revised to "Update Open Space Plan".

17

18 **2. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT**

19 **A. Tyler Mill Preserve**

- 20 1. Possible management plan/revisit Audubon report

21 Chair Heffernon went over possible management plan options with the Commission and showed a map
22 with Audubon's habitat categories drawn on it. Commissioner Saunders said the Audubon Report is a forest
23 bird habitat assessment and doesn't include other management issues. She recommended an overall
24 management plan which includes the wetlands, the plants, the floodplain, the reptiles, and the biodiversity
25 database, it should be done over the four seasons, and said the Audubon report should be used as a base.
26 She stressed the "big picture" – flyways, connectivity, and the mosaic of habitats. Commissioner Saunders
27 noted that QRWA is interested in implementing a grant to get the management report completed.

28 Commissioner Saunders suggested public workshops be set up in April with the surveys beginning in June.

29 **Motion: By Vice-Chair Lathrop to conduct a seminar for public information followed by**
30 **inventory surveys over four seasons followed by the development of a management plan.**
31 **Seconded by Commissioner Borne with Chair Heffernon abstaining.**

32 **Vote-6 ayes-Chair Heffernon abstaining.**

33 **Motion: by Commissioner Pietras second by Commissioner Pyskaty to spend from the budget**
34 **not to exceed \$1,000 to have Dr. Michael Klemens conduct a workshop on the importance of**
35 **habitats at the Tyler Mill Preserve.**

36 *Commissioner Saunders will book Dr. Klemens for a Saturday in April at the Library.*

1 **Vote: 6 ayes with Chair Heffernon abstaining.**

2 2. Stewards of Tyler Mill – report, D. Saunders

3 Commissioner Saunders said the edge habitat and planting projects stopped for the winter and the bridge
4 site was partially cut, ½ of goldenrod. She said the new Steward completed his training and was approved
5 by John Gawlak. Commissioner Saunders said litter and dumping increased after the holidays before the
6 onset of snow and then decreased. She noted the puddles were improved somewhat and said the annual
7 Stewards of Tyler Mill pot-luck supper gathering is scheduled for mid-February.

8 3. Permit Required hunting signage

9 Ms. O'Hare said some of the hunting signage was down. She said the "Permit Required" hunting signs from
10 the DEEP are being re-installed. Commissioner Saunders said the "No Hunting" signage will have to be
11 ordered.

12 **B. Fresh Meadows – cottonwoods**

13 Nothing to report.

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

15 Chair Heffernon said this is delayed because of the snow.

16 **D. Beseck Meadow**

17 1. ERT management plan proposal, staff

18 Ms. O'Hare said she will submit the proposal in the near future.

19 2. Second cutting

20 Ms. O'Hare distributed a map of where the farmer proposed to lease, hay and to re-cut. *The Farmland*
21 *Lease Committee will consider the lease proposal (which will be re-bid).*

22 3. Lease proposal

23 Discussed above.

24 **E. Mohawk Lane Open Space property**

25 Ms. O'Hare brought the Commission up to date on the erosion issue and discussed the ravine on Mohawk
26 Lane open space property and the drainage problem from the Ashlar Village property.

27 **F. Other properties**

28 Chair Heffernon discussed modification of a privately held open space for a proposed subdivision to create
29 lots.

30 Chair Heffernon said Mary Mushinsky asked the Commission to look at the property next to Wal-Mart which
31 is for sale.

1 Chair Heffernon spoke about the Allnex Property. Vice-Chair Lathrop said there were State-listed
2 wildflowers moved from the track area up on to the hill relative to the railroad improvement project. He
3 said the plants are doing well. He said he would email a copy of the report to interested Commissioners.

4 **G. Volunteer Projects**

5 1. Community service hours, M. Heffernon

6 Chair Heffernon spoke about a person who needs to do 200 community service hours and expressed
7 interest in doing trail work. Commissioner Saunders suggested the person pick up trash on the side of the
8 road and cut autumn olive at Beseck Meadow. It was agreed it would be problematic to track the hours.

9 2. High School community service update, M. Heffernon

10 Chair Heffernon said the Commission is on the list for high school community service.

11 3. Quinnipiac University project

12 Vice-Chair Lathrop spoke about the "Big Event" at Quinnipiac University. He said there is information on
13 the University's Facebook page stating the Big Event is scheduled for April 9th.

14 **3. PROPERTY ACQUISITION/PRESERVATION**

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

16 Ms. O'Hare said she was informed the residence on the property will be demolished by late winter.

17 **B. Other**

18 **4. FARMLAND LEASE PROPERTIES PROGRAM**

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

20 No update

21 **B. State of CT Community Farmland Preservation Program - staff**

22 Ms. O'Hare said this was pursued and the State had sent a packet but then the Program was dropped. The
23 Town would have to pursue a registration process.

24 *Ms. O'Hare will revisit this issue.*

25 **C. Field 4A – required mowing**

26 Commissioner Saunders said the middle of the field still has to be mowed. *Commissioner Saunders will*
27 *contact the lessee in the spring.*

28 **D. Field 18A – proposed change**

29 No updates. Ms. O'Hare said the next step is for her to meet with the Farmland Lease Committee
30 regarding the proposal.

1 **E. Farmland Committee**

2 No updates.

3 **F. Other**

4 **5. BUDGET**

5 **A. FY 15-16** –professional services natural resource services – discussed earlier.

6 **B. FY 16-17** – proposed budget

7 Discussion on both budgets: Ms. O'Hare said the budget will be the same for this year and the next (using
8 the \$6,000). Commissioner Saunders suggested using some of the monies, \$1,000 for the habitat talk and
9 \$1,000 for the Canadian thistle treatment and \$4,000 for the natural resource surveys at Tyler Mill
10 Preserve. Ms. O'Hare said there is \$2,000 in the open space budget earmarked for invasive control every
11 year. The Commission discussed other areas to utilize the budget monies including the riparian buffer at
12 Doolittle Park and a memorial tree for Commissioner Ken Ryan.

13 Regarding the proposed 16/17 budget, the Commission discussed allocating \$5,000 to the Tyler Mill
14 Preserve plan and \$1,000 for invasive plant work.

15 **C. Mayoral budget meeting**, Mar. 2, 3:30 p.m.

16 **7. OTHER TOPICS**

17 Commissioner Borne asked about additional commissioners.

18 Commissioner Saunders spoke about the report from the student who did the garlic mustard and spider
19 study.

20 Commissioner Borne said he was appointed to the Board of the Sleeping Giant Park Association.

21 **8. CORRESPONDENCE/REPORTS**

22 **A. CT Land Conservation Council – 2016 CT Conservation Conference**, Wesleyan
23 University, Middletown, CT, Saturday, March 19, 2016, 8:30 a.m. to 4:45 p.m.

24 Discussed by Chair Heffernon.

25 **B. Follow-up** re: Notice of Tentative Determination to Approve an Application for Diversion of
26 Water Permit and Intent to Waive Public Hearing – Tilcon Connecticut – Diversion of Water from onsite
27 water collection pond, onsite water supply pond, and open water pond, for various industrial uses; dated
28 12/28/15; received 1/6/16

29 Discussed by Ms. O'Hare. She went over the map of the existing ponds sent to her by Tilcon and indicated
30 there is no new additional pumping proposed.

1 **C. DEEP Notice of Application** – Renewal of Diversion Permit regarding diversion of waters of
2 the State – Traditions Golf Club at Wallingford – 37 Harrison Road, Wallingford – Allen Brook; dated
3 1/8/16; received 1/19/16

4 **D. CFPA** – membership renewal. Commission agreed to renew.

5 **E. Sandplains habitat (State designated Critical Habitat) & development proposal** –
6 follow up, staff- discussed earlier.

7 **F. Parks & Recreation Department Requests**

8 1. Community Lake Park – thinning proposal

9 Ms. O'Hare said there is a 4 p.m. walk to Community Lake scheduled for next week to observe site
10 conditions and tree removal.

11 2. Open space land for potential soccer field

12 Chair Heffernon said John Gawlak, Parks & Recreation Director, wants the Commission to come up with a
13 site for five to 10 acres for a soccer field and parking for 100 cars.

14 **F. Quinnipiac Linear Trail – Phase III project** – update, staff

15 Ms. O'Hare said the bridge and a kiosk were installed. She said there is an issue with a compensatory flood
16 storage basin that was constructed but filled with water.

17 **H. Proposal affecting privately-held preserved open space lands** (Tradition Golf Club,
18 Harrison Road) – discussed earlier.

19 **I. Proposal re: promoting pollinators**, staff

20 Ms. O'Hare spoke about beekeeping regulations to be discussed by Planning & Zoning. She advocated the
21 promotion of pollinators on all Town lands.

22 **9. NEXT MEETING – March 10th meeting canceled. Next Meeting April 9, 2015.**

23 **10. ADJOURNMENT**

24 Vice-Chair Lathrop made a motion to adjourn the Meeting at 10:14 p.m. Commissioner Pyskaty seconded
25 the motion which passed unanimously.

26

27 Respectfully submitted,

28 Cynthia A. Kleist

29 Recording Secretary

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