

1 **WALLINGFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

2 **REGULAR MEETING**

3 **Thursday, February 14, 2013**

4 **Town Hall Basement Conference Room**

5 **45 South Main Street**

6 **Wallingford, CT**

7 **MINUTES**

8
9 **PRESENT:** Chairman Jeff Borne; Vice-Chair Mary Heffernon; Commissioners Dianne Saunders;
10 Dianne Lendler; Ken Ryan; Carl Arsenault; Erin O'Hare, Environmental and Natural Resources
11 Planne.

12 **NOT PRESENT:**John Lathrop; Tom Pietras; Jim Pyskaty.

13 Chairman Borne called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m. and took the agenda in the following
14 order.

15 **1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

16 A. **Minutes**, January 10, 2103

17 On page 3, line 37, Commissioner Saunders said the word should be "corduroy" not
18 "quarterway."

19 On line 39, it should read "cedar logs and pressure treated planking."

20 The date on the top should be January 10, 2013 not 2012.

21 **MOTION: A motion by Vice-Chair Heffernon second by Commissioner Lendler to**
22 **approve the January 10, 2013 Meeting Minutes as amended. The motion passed**
23 **unanimously.**

24 **2. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT**

25 **A. Tyler Mill Preserve**

26 1. DEP Recreational Trails Grant Program – parking lots, entranceways, and kiosk – status

27 Ms. O'Hare reported the main entrance parking lot survey has been completed. She said the
28 Engineering Department has to turn the survey into a schematic drawing. Ms. O'Hare said
29 completion of the kiosks is delayed due to snow. She requested partial payment to the
30 contractor. She said because of the delay, the contractor does not want to put out the monies
31 to construct the plexiglass frames for the backs of the kiosks as the ground is frozen, "Call
32 Before You Dig" cannot be contacted. Ms. O'Hare also noted that Mayor Dickinson wanted the
33 Maltby Lane kiosk located behind the cyclone fencing, but every time Public Works tried to dig a
34 hole to install the kiosk, they hit road asphalt which is under the dirt. She said Public Works will
35 try to use a jackhammer, but they might hit the stone wall underneath, so they want permission

1 to place the kiosk in the parking lot on Maltby Lane. The Commission agreed the kiosk should
2 not be placed in the parking lot because of the risk of it being damaged by vehicles. The
3 Commission agreed to issue a partial payment to the contractor for the two kiosks already
4 constructed with the stipulation that the kiosk on Northford Road be repaired as soon as
5 possible.

6 **MOTION: A motion by Vice-Chair Heffernon second by Commissioner Saunders to**
7 **pay the kiosk contractor a \$1,000 partial payment for the two kiosks already**
8 **constructed with the stipulation that the contractor is to repair the kiosk on**
9 **Northford Road as soon as possible. The motion passed unanimously.**

10 Ms. O'Hare passed around a copy of the sign to be installed in the kiosks. She said she received
11 quotes on signs in different color choices. She said she sent out quotes on January 28 to four
12 local sign manufacturers and received one quote back as of Thursday's meeting.

13 The Commission reviewed the Tyler Mill Preserve Trail Map completed for installation in the
14 kiosks. Port-a-potty locations at Vietnam Veterans Park are included on the map. She said she
15 prefers the sign to be stretched out on one side of the kiosks with the map on the other side
16 under the plexiglass. In the space next to the map, notices can be placed along with information
17 regarding invasive plants.

18 3. Parks Facilities Code

19 Commissioner Saunders suggested changing one word on the proposed regulation sign from
20 "sunset" to "dusk" to comply with the Town Ordinance. After discussion, "Sunset" was the
21 preferred term. *Commissioner Saunders will draft a letter to the Ordinance Committee to*
22 *request the word in the ordinance be changed from "dusk" to "sunset" and send the draft*
23 *letter to Chairman Borne for his approval prior to submission*

24 2. ATV & mountain bike use issue – Feb. 4 meeting – report.

25 Commissioner Saunders reported on the February 4th meeting that she, Ms. O'Hare and Vice-
26 Chair Heffernon attended. Commissioner Saunders handed out copies of the Town ordinance
27 which John Gawlak, Parks & Recreation Director, spoke about at the Feb. 4th meeting and is
28 currently in force. She said Mr. Gawlak said that vehicle traps to possibly block ATV access
29 cannot legally be set up. She said the fine for violating the ordinance is only \$90. Commissioner
30 Saunders also spoke about the mountain bikers riding at night and clearing trails. Chairman
31 Borne said that he and Vice-Chair Heffernon attended a similar discussion by the CFPA and the
32 State's Conservation Officer acknowledged that the penalties for violations are weak, but the
33 penalties could be stacked up against the violators. ATVs can be impounded by the Police.

34 Vice-Chair Heffernon passed around a cartoon from a local newspaper focusing on the ATV-
35 mountain bike use issue. Chairman Borne suggested the Commission consider proposing a
36 stronger Town ordinance and possibly gating off Tyler Mill Preserve at the intersection of
37 Tamarac Swamp Road and Tyler Mill Road. Ms. O'Hare suggested asking the Mayor for
38 permission to do a "sting" operation and suggested the Commission write a letter to the Mayor.
39 Commissioner Saunders suggested the Mayor speak to the Police requesting warnings be put in
40 writing, not verbal and computerized so as to be able to keep a record of violations. The
41 Chairman indicated reporting to the Police should be continued.

1 Vice-Chair Heffernon reminded the Commission that the Open Space User's Group meeting will
2 take place on February 28 at 5:30 p.m. and requested the Mayor's attendance. *Ms. O'Hare will*
3 *contact the Mayor regarding this meeting."*

- 4 2. Parks Facilities Code – Discussed under Item 2 (A) (2).
- 5 3. Stewards of Tyler Mill – proposals, D. Saunders & D. Lendler

6 Commissioner Saunders distributed the annual Stewards of Tyler Mill report. Commissioner
7 Lendler spoke about the potluck dinner on January 26th which took place at her home which 14
8 Stewards had attended. She said the Stewards discussed what they had accomplished over the
9 past year, and they signed up for work assignments for the upcoming year. Commissioner
10 Lendler said she read a poem from 1940 about Tyler Mill which had been published in the
11 Record-Journal, and an historical analysis of the poem was done by Shirley Hall.

12 Commissioner Saunders highlighted upcoming project for this year by the Stewards which
13 include vernal pool monitoring, the log check dams which will be done on a Sunday in March
14 which will be overseen by Commissioner Pietras, the proposed boardwalk for the Gold Trail and
15 the replacing of the corduroy on the Green Trail with a small footbridge. She said the original
16 footbridge which was damaged was taken down in November. Commissioner Saunders spoke
17 about constructing two or three footbridges on the Red Trail and one footbridge on the White
18 Trail. She distributed a map of where the footbridges would be located. She spoke about
19 working on the berms that Public Works had installed last fall, one on Maltby Lane and one on
20 Tyler Mill Road. She said they may plant nursegrass on the berm and plug it with myrtle. She
21 said two Stewards signed up for the Emerald Ash borer project. Commissioner Saunders said
22 there will be training on how to spot wasp colonies. She said Bill Austin is about two-thirds
23 completed designing the plan for plantings at the bridge site. Plantings will be reviewed by
24 Anthony Zemba and Todd Mervosch. She said the plant inventory is still being done. She
25 suggested the Trails Committee go over the location for the footbridges.

26 **B. Fresh Meadow Swamp at Cheshire Road**

27 1. Improvements

28 Ms. O'Hare said \$6,000 in the FY 12-13 budget has been allocated to Fresh Meadow Swamp at
29 Cheshire Road. She recommends that another \$6,000 be allocated in the budget for the next
30 fiscal year. She said the Town did not receive the \$91,000 grant monies, but if it had received
31 the funding, then the \$6,000 could have been used at Tyler Mill Preserve.

32 Ms. O'Hare spoke about the tree damage done by the "Brontosaurus machine when mowing
33 was done. Commissioner Ryan said the damage was not that excessive but now pruning should
34 be done both for aesthetics and tree health. *Ms. O'Hare will write a memo to Public Works*
35 *requesting the pruning of the trees damaged by the "Brontosaurus "machine.*

36 Ms. O'Hare indicated the cost to construct the stone dust trail will be over \$12,000 in materials.
37 Chairman Borne suggested adding additional stone to the parking lot or making fence
38 improvements. The Commission agreed with Vice-Chair Heffernon's suggestion of constructing
39 part of the ADA stone dust trail with the \$6,000 budget. Commissioner Lendler asked if Gaylord
40 Hospital would be interested in helping plan the proposed ADA trail. Commissioner Saunders
41 said Gaylord had trails on their property. Commissioner Ryan asked how about the length of the
42 trails to be built and the cost. Ms. O'Hare said the \$12,000 trail would go from the parking lot to

1 the pond; the \$25,000 trail would go from the former Cuneo driveway to a small parking lot
2 which will be constructed in the future to the east of the erratic boulder.

3 *Ms. O'Hare will contact Public Works Director Henry McCully to work with the Commission*
4 *regarding ADA trails.*

5 *Vice-Chair Heffernon will contact Gaylord Hospital's Trail Committee for input.*

6 2. Mowing issues

7 Ms. O'Hare said Public Works mowed the entire property in a few days but she expressed
8 concern that the mowing was extreme and this was not good from an ecological standpoint.
9 Chairman Borne suggested for the upcoming year, to give the Public Works Director instructions
10 on the map specifying what exactly is to be mowed and the rationale behind it.

11 3. DEEP Recreation Trails Grant application – (March 29) – status

12 Commissioner Saunders spoke about her attendance at the CFPA training seminar where she
13 was told the Town could re-apply for the DEEP Recreational Trails Grant but make the proposed
14 plan in phases to have a better chance of being funded. Ms. O'Hare said a meeting took place
15 between herself, Vice-Chair Heffernon, Parks and Recreation Director John Gawlak and Program
16 Planner Don Roe, to re-visit this grant application. She said the Town wants to re-apply and
17 asked the DEEP why the Town was denied the first time. Ms. O'Hare said they were told that
18 the Committee that makes the decision favors multi-use, i.e. hiking, biking and horseback
19 riding. The grant application will address ADA trail use, other uses and property improvements.

20 **C. Invasive Species Eradication**

21 1. Long-term invasive species management program – update, D. Saunders.

22 Commissioner Saunders distributed the written report. She said at the Tyler Mill Preserve bridge
23 site, the Stewards conducted two work parties in January, and cleared another 2,000 feet
24 of rose branches and roots. She said an "invasive sandwich fence" was made from the dead
25 cedar trees on the bottom to keep the fence off the ground. She said the planting plan is
26 coming along nicely and the first 300 yards of the purple trail was eradicated. Commissioner
27 Saunders said when the log check dams are completed west of Field 7A, work will begin on
28 bittersweet eradication on the live trees on the western edge of Field 7A.

29 **D. Volunteer Work Program – report, K. Ryan – No Report.**

30 **3. PUBLIC OUTREACH**

31 **A. CT Trails Day, June 1 & 2, 2013**

32 Vice-Chair Heffernon said the Land Trust will host the CT Trails Day on Saturday, June 1 at
33 Orchard Glen. She suggested swapping back and forth every other year in hosting the Trails
34 Day with the Land Trust. Chairman Borne said he is leading a walk on Saturday, June 1 in
35 Middletown.

36 **B. Celebrate Open Space Day – To be re-visited in the Spring.**

37 **C. The Mindset Project, Wallingford 100 -21st Century Innovation**

1 Vice-Chair Heffernon said the Board of Education started this by giving three educators in Town
2 a sabbatical to come up with a plan for the educational system. She said they came up with a
3 plan to have as many people in Town read the book entitled "The Mindset" with the goal of
4 100% graduation for Wallingford's high school students. She said the three educators have
5 been going around town loaning out this book. She said the book is about having an open
6 mindset about how people think about and do things.

7 **D.Parks& Recreation Program Brochure – trails & open space.**

8 Vice-Chair Heffernon said that she and Parks & Recreation Director John Gawlak had a
9 discussion about the section of the brochure that mentions the parks, but does not mention the
10 trails. She passed around a draft she wrote-up highlighting the trails at Tyler Mill Preserve, the
11 hunting safety notice, and Ferguson Woods, to be put into the brochure. This new information
12 will be put into the fall brochure. *Vice-Chair Heffernon will send wording to John Gawlak.*

13 **E. Open Space Users Group Meeting**, Park & Rec Dept., Feb. 28, 5:30 p.m. –
14 agenda items.

15 Commissioner Saunders said there will be the Stewards of Tyler Mill report on the agenda.
16 Chairman Borne suggested the work done the past year by at Tyler Mill Preserve, deer density
17 and consideration of a three-week archery season be added to the agenda.

18 Chairman Borne said there was 100% Commission and Ms. O'Hare turnout two weeks ago at
19 the tour of the Kohler Environmental Center at Choate Rosemary Hall. He said Kohler
20 Environmental Center is interested in reaching out to Wallingford resources. Chairman Borne
21 said he is in the process of drafting a letter indicating the Commission's willingness to work with
22 them. Chairman Borne spoke about an informational sheet that Northeast Utilities put together
23 and indicated this may be something the students at the Choate School may be able to use. He
24 said the informational sheet could show a map of Tyler Mill and trails on one side and facts on
25 the other. *He said he would bring a copy to the next Commission meeting.*

26 Vice-Chair Heffernon said she met with a Choate student is interested in the Quinnipiac River.

27 **F. Conservation Commission Annual Report to the Town Council**

28 Vice-Chair Heffernon said she wrote up the Draft Annual Report which she distributed to the
29 Commission. The Commission will forward her feedback within the next two weeks.

30 **5.BUDGET FY13-14**

31 Chairman Borne suggested the Commission not ask for a budget increase but continue with the
32 ongoing programs. *Ms. O'Hare will submit a budget with a proposal page to be approved by the*
33 *Chairman.*

34 **6. GROUP FACILITATION**

35 **A. Review of Committee functions: Stewards of Tyler Mill – Not Taken Up.**

36 **B. Rules of Engagement**

37 Commissioner Lendler asked if Ms. O'Hare had spoken to Janis Small, Corporation Counsel
38 regarding social meetings of the Commission. Ms. O'Hare said if Commission business is to be

1 discussed it is classified as an official meeting. She is awaiting an official opinion from the
2 Corporation Counsel regarding case law on the matter.

3 Commission Lendler left the meeting at 9:20 p.m.

4 **4. FARMLAND LEASE PROPERTIES PROGRAM**

5 **A. Fields 4B, 7B& 14A**

6 Ms. O'Hare said Field 14A cannot go out to bid until the long-standing encroachment issue is
7 resolved. Commissioner Saunders indicated unless the hay field is mowed it will need to be re-
8 seeded. Ms. O'Hare said the White barn property on Whirlwind Hill Road has not been mowed
9 and proposed folding the mowing into the lease for Field 4B. Commissioner Saunders suggested
10 taking some monies from the Open Space fund to repair the White barn tin roof. *Ms. O'Hare will*
11 *write a memo to the Mayor suggesting the tin roof be repaired.*

12 Ms. O'Hare said it has come to her attention that the hayfield on Field 7B has not been mowed
13 under the one-year lease to the 3B Ranch. The lessee indicated he was unaware of this field.

14 Commissioner Saunders brought up a possible encroachment on 82 Anderson Road. Ms. O'Hare
15 said it is under review.

16 **B. Farmland Committee – report – Not Taken Up.**

17 **C. Farmland Lease Cycle - 2013-2017**

18 Ms. O'Hare reported she met with the Committee. See 4.A. above concerning leases.

19 **D. Mowing quote – Not Taken Up.**

20 **7. OPEN SPACE PLAN UPDATE - revisions**

21 **A. Revisions: "Vision Statement", "Purpose", & "Open Space Defined" – Not Taken Up.**

22 **8. Correspondence/Reports**

23 **A. Dog Park Proposal – Park & Rec. Dept. – status**

24 Vice-Chair Heffernon said she continues to go to the dog park proposal meetings and that Parks
25 & Recreation Director John Gawlak has told the Dog Park proponents that they need to find
26 alternate sites, possibly at Fresh Meadow Swamp at Cheshire Road or Garden Road. She said
27 the Community Lake site is of concern to Parks & Recreation because of possible parking issues.

28 **B. Proposed Legislation**

29 Chairman Borne spoke about proposed legislation regarding allowing hunting on Sundays.

30 **MOTION: A motion by Commissioner Saunders second by Commissioner Ryan to**
31 **send a letter to Program Planner Don Roe stating the Commission is not in favor of**
32 **allowing hunting on Sundays and is in favor of a proposed ordinance which would**
33 **establish a penalty in excess of \$250 for retrieval of a dirt bike confiscated during a**
34 **violation of a municipal ordinance, and to establish a title system for dirt bike**
35 **ownership so they can be tracked. The motion passed unanimously.**

36 *Ms. O'Hare will forward comments to Done Roe.*

1 Commissioner Saunders spoke about a bill on the invasive bamboo issue.

2 **C. Sleeping Giant State Park - correspondence**

3 Ms. O'Hare said she had previously received a complaint from a woman who volunteers at
4 Sleeping Giant State Park regarding invasive plants growing at the edge of the Park after Public
5 Works did road work on Mansion Road. Vice-Chair Heffernon said she will bring up this issue of
6 invasive plant seeds in composted material at the next Recycling meeting. *Ms. O'Hare will*
7 *discuss the issue with Steve Palermo, Public Works.*

8 **D. CT Critical Habitats – staff**

9 Ms. O'Hare critical habitats are referenced in the State Plan of Conservation and Development
10 but were not defined in the State Plan. She said the Office of Policy and Management (OPM)
11 said it is defined on a website called "CT Environmental Conditions." She said the DEEP gives
12 priority to the conservation of critical habitats and if Wallingford has any, they can be added to
13 the State Plan document.

14 **E. CFPA - membership**

15 **MOTION: A motion by Vice-Chair Heffernon second by Commissioner Ryan to renew**
16 **the CFPA membership for \$50. The motion passed unanimously.**

17 **F. CT Wildlife, DEEP, Winter issue- Not Taken Up.**

18 **G. 2013 CT Land Conservation Conference, Sat., Mar. 23, Wesleyan University,**
19 **Middletown, CT.**

20 Several Commissioners will attend. The cost is \$50 for non-members of CLC.

21 Commissioner Saunders requested monies be spent on haybales for the checkdams. She said
22 Gary Kondracki will sell the bales for \$5 apiece.

23 **MOTION: A motion by Commissioner Saunders second by Vice-Chair Heffernon to**
24 **spend \$50 for 10 haybales at \$5 apiece. The motion passed unanimously.**

25 **9. NEXT MEETING – March 14, 2013**

26 **10. ADJOURNMENT**

27 **MOTION: A motion by Vice-Chair Heffernon second by Commissioner Ryan to**
28 **adjourn the meeting at 9:54 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.**

29

30 Respectfully submitted,

31 Cynthia A. Kleist

32 Recording Secretary

33

34