

1 **APPROVED MINUTES**

2 **WALLINGFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

3 **REGULAR MEETING**

4 **Thursday, March 8, 2018**

5 **Basement Conference Room, Town Hall**

6 **45 South Main Street, Wallingford CT**

7 **MINUTES**

8
9 **PRESENT:** Chair Mary Heffernon; Vice-Chair John Lathrop; Commissioners Mike Miller; Dianne Saunders;
10 Tom Pietras; Carl Arsenault; Erin O'Hare, Environmental Planner.

11 **NOT PRESENT:** Commissioners Jeff Borne, Mark Ceneri, Dianne Lendler.

12 Chair Heffernon called the Meeting to order at 7:06 p.m.

13 **1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

14 **A. Minutes, Regular Meeting Feb. 8, 2018**

15 On page 4, under "E" -"Marcus Cooke Park", the dead tree was cut down; page 8, third line down, should
16 be spelled Alan not Allen; page 3, line 8, should read that Commissioner Saunders, not Ms. O'Hare will
17 make contact with the owner regarding the illegal tire dump.

18 **Motion: A motion by Vice-Chair Lathrop second by Commissioner Miller to approve the**
19 **Regular Meeting Minutes of February 8, 2018 as amended. The vote was unanimous.**

20 **2. BYLAWS – possible revision**

21 Chair Heffernon said the By-law revisions have been completed and this item should have been removed
22 from the agenda.

23 **3. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT**

24 **A. Tyler Mill Preserve**

25 1. Kiosk & replacement signage

26 Commissioner Saunders said she has not heard from Public Works Director John Gawlak regarding the
27 current status of the kiosk and replacement signage.

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

29 Commissioner Saunders spoke about storm damage. She said the Stewards cleared a lot of storm damage
30 from the last storm, but noted there was more damage from the recent storm. She passed around a photo
31 of chainsaw tree work done on the closed section of the Purple Trailhead by Commissioner Arsenault.

1 Commissioner Saunders said Commissioner Arsenault removed the canopy from the diseased hickory tree.
2 Commissioner Saunders said new trees are down on the Blue Trail near moss rock and another tangle of
3 cedar trees on the old road which can be cut with hand tools, and a new tree downed on the Pink
4 Trailhead at the Maltby Lane end, leaving the Mustard Trail to be done. She also pointed out there were a
5 few dead sapling spurs along the Maltby gate. Commissioner Saunders said there are also five trees of
6 various sizes down in Bertini Park. *The Trails Committee will plan to do tree cutting.*

7 Commissioner Saunders also spoke about a dog rescue.

8 3. Tyler Mill Preserve Management Planning Committee

9 a. Feb. 21 meeting-report

10 Commissioner Saunders said the Request for Proposal (RFP) for Phase 1 was discussed and gave a brief
11 synopsis of everything decided so far. She said there will be another meeting scheduled for March 14.

12 b. Mar. 14, 9.a.m. – next meeting

13 c. Feedback & priority issues within 2-year timeframe

14 Commissioner Saunders said the Management Planning Committee asked members to provide feedback
15 and priority issues for the next two years. She said Commissioners Borne and Ceneri emailed their
16 responses. Chair Heffernon said her concern was how to do a crossing on the Pink Trail area.
17 Commissioner Saunders said the issue is whether there should be a crossing.

18 She said there are two phases, with Phase 1 uses the Town budget, which will involve a scientist
19 collaborating with the Water and Sewer Divisions, Parks & Recreation, Public Works and the Conservation
20 Commission and the Mayor and noted this is why the RFP will be sent out. Commissioner Saunders noted
21 this Phase must begin by July 1 and completed by December so that grant funding can be applied for by
22 January. Commissioner Saunders explained the following year would involve another RFP for the writing of
23 the Management Plan.

24 Commissioner Arsenault pointed out Commissioner Borne's comments regarding what type of habitat to
25 create. Commissioner Saunders said this is what the expert would be able to tell us and would be in the
26 finished project.

27 Chair Heffernon pointed out Commissioner Saunders email regarding a bear siting at the Tyler Mill
28 Northford Road entryway. Commissioner Saunders suggested putting some information about the bear
29 siting in the kiosks. *Commissioner Arsenault will get laminated bear notices from DEEP.*

30 Commissioner Saunders noted the Ag Science students at Lyman Hall High School will be getting involved
31 with the kiosks, i.e., posting early successional and water resources flyers and will also go to Ferguson
32 Woods and trim forsythia at the N. Branford Rd. entrance in April. She said the students will also post
33 small placards at the Mehrhoff sites to educate people about plants. Chair Heffernon suggested
34 Commissioner Saunders purchase some native plantings using up the rest of the money from the \$1,000
35 grant that the students could plant. *Commissioner Saunders will follow-up.*

1 Ms. O'Hare said the proposed use of the \$6,000 in next year's budget is for the facilitator for the Tyler Mill
2 Preserve project. Ms. O'Hare said she will be meeting with Mayor Dickinson on Friday, March 9 to discuss
3 this and it was reviewed.

4 d.Lone wolf tree on Interpretive Trail – report, D. Saunders

5 Commissioner Saunders said there was no new information. She said she hasn't gotten someone to look
6 at the tree and emailed Claire Rutledge twice but hasn't gotten any response. Commissioner Saunders said
7 she went online with the DEEP and was contacted by a representative who stated he couldn't recommend
8 someone who could look at the tree. *Commissioner Saunders will email Eric Hansen to obtain a quote.*

9 **B. Fresh Meadows**

10 1. CT Recreational Trails Program Project

11 c. Proposed Celebration event (possible June 2, 10 a.m. rain date June 3).

12 Ms. O'Hare said Mayor Dickinson indicated to her he may not be able to attend this proposed celebration
13 event. Ms. O'Hare asked the Commission if the proposed celebration event should go ahead as scheduled
14 even if the Mayor cannot attend. She said she contacted Laura Gianotti to ask if she could attend but has
15 not heard from her noting she is in charge for the Recreational Trails Program for the State and may not
16 be able to attend because June 2 is Trails Day statewide. Commissioner Saunders suggested someone
17 from the Town Council attend if Mayor Dickinson cannot attend.

18 b. Rules & Regulation sign

19 Ms. O'Hare said John Gawlak, Public Works Director, needs to install the Rules & Regulations sign in the
20 Fresh Meadows parking lot. *Ms. O'Hare will follow-up.*

21 a. Completion status

22 Ms. O'Hare said \$171,000 was received from DEEP. She said the vendor will remove the stones. She said
23 she has a punch list and noted there were three holes possibly dug by a dog in the path. Ms. O'Hare said
24 there should also be plantings that should also be installed which needs to be done by the June 2 grand
25 opening. Ms. O'Hare said Randolph Steinen, retired State geologist, will come down next week to speak
26 about the erratic boulder for the information signage which Ms. O'Hare said she will write up.

27 Ms. O'Hare the Engineering Dept. about the need to repair an unsafe cross slope on the new trail.
28 Commissioner Saunders said she found the current ADA guidelines on line for handicap trails. She said she
29 is hoping the Engineering Consultant followed these guidelines when the trail was constructed.

30 **C.Ferguson Woods - cottontails**

31 Chair Heffernon said there was nothing to report.

32 **D.Lufbery Park-** alteration activity remediation

33 Chair Heffernon she has not gone out to the site and had nothing to report.

1 **E. Marcus Cooke Park** – tree removal

2 Chair Heffernon said this item should be removed from the agenda because the tree has been removed.

3 **F. Property monitoring** – reporting, April 12

4 Commissioner Saunders said she re-typed the report with Chair Heffernon's suggestions.

5 *Vice-Chair Lathrop, Commissioners Miller, Arsenault and Saunder's April monitoring reports will be*
6 *presented at the next meeting.*

7 **G. Other properties** – nothing to report.

8 **4. FARMLAND LEASE PROPERTIES PROGRAM**

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

10 Commissioner Saunders said Field 4A & 19A have not been mowed, nor have the invasives been trimmed
11 by the Lessee

12 **B. Field 6D, off Cooke Rd.** – property boundary markers

13 Commissioner Saunders there is no new information. Ms. O'Hare said she has not conferred with Public
14 Works have not about installing the boundary marker posts as of yet.

15 **C. Field 8B, Northford Rd.** – field edge maintenance

16 Commissioner Saunders said the Lessee has not done the field edge maintenance on Field 8B.

17 **D. Field 18A, 995 East Center St./Tamarac Swamp Rd.** – proposed Request for
18 Qualifications

19 Ms. O'Hare said the Law Dept. extended the lease but noted there is nothing new to report.

20 **E. Mowing of three areas**

21 Ms. O'Hare said the three areas involve Fields 7E & 7F, Field 4C, (Whirlwind Hill Road) and the field on
22 1250 Whirlwind Hill Road. She said currently, no mowing has taken place.

23 **F. Farmland Committee**

24 Commissioner Saunders said there have been no recent meetings, but reported that the gate on Field 12A,
25 on Tamarac Swamp Rd., at the bus circle, was vandalized. She said the barbed wire gate was cut straight
26 down and this was reported to the Police. Commissioner Saunders said the barbed wire gate was replaced
27 the following day with a regular gate with posts by the lessee. She said the new sign between Fields 1C &
28 1D on North Branford Road, was vandalized. She said she informed the Traffic Maintenance Division of the
29 Police Dept. which is in charge of replacing the signage.

30 Ms. O'Hare reported that Lessee Nelson Ceccarelli passed away on January 20. Chair Heffernon said she
31 sent condolences on behalf of the Commission.

1 **5. PUBLIC OUTREACH**

2 **A. Quinnipiac University, "Big Event", April 7**

3 Chair Heffernon noted the "Big Event" will take place on April 7 at 10 a.m. She said the Quinnipiac
4 University students will re-blaze the trails at Marcus Cooke Park. Chair Heffernon said the Commission
5 needs to clearly mark the trail with tape for the students.

6 **B. CT Trails Day, June 2 & 3, Fresh Meadows**

7 Chair Heffernon said Trails Day is June 2 with the rain date being June 3. She said the CFPA website has a
8 list of towns participating in CT Trails Day. Commissioner Saunders suggested having a flyer and
9 distributing them to the Senior Center, Gaylord/Ashlar Village, the Rec. Dept. and Masonicare. *Chair*
10 *Heffernon will make up the flyer. Commissioner Miller will distribute the flyers at Ashlar Village.*

11 **C. Possible programs**

12 Ms. O'Hare spoke about a DEEP program on bears at the Durham Library. Commissioner Miller said there
13 will be a bobcat talk at the CFPA headquarters on March 13, which he said he will attend.

14 **6. OTHER TOPICS**

15 Chair Heffernon said she sent the Annual Report to Mayor Dickinson and Town Council members. She said
16 she received a few positive responses. She read over the response by Councilor Zandri who thanked the
17 Commission for doing the "heavy lifting" year after year at Tyler Mill and Spruce Glen. Chair Heffernon
18 also read the positive response by Councilor Shortell who offered to sponsor an agenda item for the
19 Commission to have the opportunity to be put onto the Council agenda to present updates. Chair
20 Heffernon said she is planning to attend the Council meeting in May to discuss the Commission activities.

21 Chair Heffernon spoke about the kickoff for the "No Child Left Inside Great Park Pursuit Program"
22 sponsored by the DEEP on May 12 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. She said the kickoff will be at Wharton Brook
23 State Park and noted she received an email from the person in charge asking the Commission to attend
24 and speak. Chair Heffernon said there would be Commission representation that day with trail maps.

25 Chair Heffernon noted the meeting regarding the Conservation Commission budget with Mayor Dickinson
26 will take place on March 9 at 11:30 a.m. Ms. O'Hare will attend the meeting.

27 **7. REPORTS & CORRESPONDENCE**

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

29 Ms. O'Hare said the March 7 Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Commission Meeting to discuss this
30 application was canceled because of the snow storm. She said Monday March 19 is the new make-up date
31 for the IWWC meeting and this item will be on the agenda. Ms. O'Hare went over the map of the proposed
32 tree cutting and went over her Environmental Planner's Report in which she states she suggests 20 ft. back
33 from the lake for no clearing activities and all work done before either bird nesting season or after it is
34 over; Contractors not to leave ruts and the Environmental Planner is to be notified two weeks before the

1 start of the project, and erosion control measures are to be in place. Commissioner Saunders spoke about
2 treating the trees of heaven on the site. She recommended the trees be treated right after they are cut
3 and will provide the chemical information to John Gawlak.

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

7 Ms. O'Hare said she is leaving this item on the agenda for further discussion noting the deadline is Oct. 19,
8 2018.

9 **C. Letter to Commission** from Lee. D. Hoffman, Esq. Pullman & Comley, LLC., received 1/17/18
10 regarding filing by Wallingford Renewable Energy, LLC, with CT Siting Council re: Request for Declaratory
11 Ruling relative to location and construction of three solar photovoltaic systems on three contiguous
12 parcels: Two landfill site and two Material Innovative & Recycling Authority parcels. Comment deadline
13 Feb.12 – extended.

14 Ms. O'Hare said this is an extensive project covering 158 acres with 475 solar panels. She said she is
15 concerned about the MIRA property which was taken over by the State because of contamination from the
16 landfill. Ms. O'Hare said this proposal is being done under a grant sponsored by the DEEP. She said
17 Wallingford Renewable Energy, LLC, received a grant to install solar photovoltaic system on three
18 contiguous parcels. Ms. O'Hare noted clearcutting will take place to the edge of the Quinnipiac River State
19 Park. She said there are a lot of wetland systems where the clearcutting will take place. Ms. O'Hare noted
20 this project is not under local IWWC or local Planning & Zoning Commission jurisdiction.

21 Ms. O'Hare submitted comments on the proposal to the Law Department as requested.

22 **D. Fertilizer plant proposal, 155 East Street**

23 Chair Heffernon said this item is on the March 19th IWWC meeting agenda. Ms. O'Hare discussed a letter
24 she received questioning why there would be a fertilizer plant on the Quinnipiac River after the clean-up
25 efforts on the River. Ms. O'Hare said she pushed the Applicant, under IWWC, to come up with a spill plan,
26 which she said the Applicant did but have not as yet handed in. She said she requested that signs be put
27 up on the buildings that state that if any fertilizer spills, this must be reported to the DEEP. Ms. O'Hare
28 said she learned that some of the fertilizer contains pesticides. The t Applicant will install two water quality
29 basins and direct runoff to these basins. She said the Applicant will also be required to provide a flood
30 contingency report.

31 *Chair Heffernon asked Commission members to attend the March 19th IWWC meeting.*

32 **E. CT Land Conservation Council** – Conference, Wesleyan University, March 17

33 Chair Heffernon noted the conference and encouraged Commission members to attend.

34 **F. CT Farmland Trust – Advocate Regional Meeting, Thurs., March 29, 2018** (location not
35 provided on notice)

1 Ms. O'Hare spoke about the letter she received noting the accreditation by the Land Trust Accreditation
2 Commission of the CT Farmland Trust. She said the regional meeting will discuss farmland conservation
3 and funding sources for farmland owners.

4 **G. CCM – General Assembly Public Hearings Notice – CT Legislature –Environment Committee**
5 Hearings to be held 2/23/18, received 2/26/18

6 Ms. O'Hare distributed information from the CT Legislature about the different Environmental Committee
7 Hearings.

8 **H. Letter from Aquarion Water Company, re: Environmental Champion Awards Program,**
9 received 2/16/18

10 **I. CFPA – membership dues**

11 **Motion: Motion by Commissioner Miller seconded by Vice-Chair Lathrop to approve payment**
12 **of the CFPA membership dues. The motion passed unanimously.**

13 **J. Game of Logging chainsaw training**

14 Commissioner Saunders said four people are available but there are no trees to cut. She said the trees
15 need to be live and 8 to 10 inches in diameter and not be pine trees. Commissioner Saunders said she
16 went to Tyler Mill and noted that down near the bridge near the guardrails, there is a red maple bunch,
17 (eight trees), and a birch tree that are the correct size. She said there are also saplings. Commissioner
18 Saunders said across the road there are ash trees that could be felled. She said she also contacted the
19 Land Trust, but received no answer regarding trees to be felled. She said she also contacted local farmers
20 but was told there were no trees to cut.

21 Commissioner Saunders said she also contacted CFPA but was told they could not accommodate the
22 Commission. She also said she contacted Amy Patterson on Wednesday but hasn't heard back.
23 Commissioner Saunders suggested getting a forester to write something stating the habitat would not be
24 hurt to fell these eight trees. Commissioner Arsenault said he would speak to foresters. Commissioner
25 Saunders said she could speak to Peter Picone to possibly cut down eight or nine trees in Sessions Woods.

26 **K. Allnex Environmental program event**

27 Chair Heffernon said three programs are planned which include the raccoon in the house program and
28 Hope Douglas with live birds. Commissioner Saunders suggested the Commission do a program on coyotes
29 and bears.

30 **L. Other public program events**

31 Ms. O'Hare said she will try to attend a backyard bird habitat program on March 28 in Branford sponsored
32 by the Menunkatuck Audubon Society. Ms. O'Hare spoke about a program on amphibians and an
33 Environmental Legislation talk to take place at the Pullman House, Rockfall Foundation in Middletown.

1 Ms. O'Hare said Allnex will present their application regarding the Sandplains at the April 9 Planning &
2 Zoning Meeting. Chair Heffernon said a Conservation Easement will be done on part of this property. Ms.
3 O'Hare said she will comment last on the possibility of having Allnex give permission to have a
4 documentary filmmaker on the property before construction activities to document the sandplains in
5 Wallingford to the Planning & Zoning Commission.

6 Chair Heffernon said she received an email from Town Councilor Gina Morgenstein regarding information
7 on Sustainable Connecticut and Councilor Morgenstein would like the Commission to get involved. She said
8 this is a State program and noted 27 towns have already agreed to participate.

9 **8. NEXT MEETING – April 12, 2018**

10 **9. ADJOURNMENT**

11 Commissioner Arsenault made a motion to adjourn the Meeting at 9:01 p.m. Commissioner Pietras
12 seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

13

14 Respectfully submitted,

15 Cynthia A. Kleist

16 Recording Secretary

17