

1 **APPROVED MINUTES**

2 **WALLINGFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

3 **REGULAR MEETING**

4 **Thursday, April 12, 2018 – 7:00 p.m.**

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 Dianne Saunders; Dianne Lendler; Mike
10 Miller; Carl Arsenault; Jeff Borne; Erin O’Hare, Environmental Planner; Cynthia Kleist Recording Secretary; Public:
11 David Bedell.

12 **NOT PRESENT:** Commissioners Mark Ceneri & Tom Pietras.

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

14 **1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

15 **A. Minutes, Regular Meeting, March 8, 2018, 7:00 p.m.**

16 On page 7, Item “J”, the second sentence, should read “8 to 10 inches in diameter”, not feet.

17 **Motion: A motion by Vice-Chair Lathrop, second by Commissioner Miller to approve the March 8, 2018 Regular**
18 **Meeting Minutes as amended.**

19 **Vote: Unanimous**

20 **2. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT**

21 **A. Property monitoring reports**

22 Chair Heffernon asked the property monitors to give the April reports for their assigned open space properties.

23 Vice-Chair Lathrop said he walked through all of the trails at Bertini Park. He noted there were a couple of big tree
24 sections down on the Blue Trail coming up from Woodhouse Avenue. He said one tree that is down is leaning against
25 another tree and another tree is bent. He said if a person is on the trail, they have to go under the arch. Vice-Chair
26 Lathrop said on the Blue Trail there are two dead trees, which are secure, but must be removed to clear the trail. He
27 showed photos. Vice-Chair Lathrop noted that on the Blue/Green Trail, a tree is down and is lying on the entire trail.
28 He said that on the Yellow Trail that goes up above the parking lot and hooks down the hill towards the pond, there
29 are some trees down. He noted there was no garbage found, but said the ATV’s have come in from West Dayton Hill
30 Rd., which is ongoing. He said because it has been dry, there is nothing torn up or erosion. He said the trails look as if
31 they have been heavily walked upon. Vice-Chair Lathrop said he walked through the low ropes course and noted the
32 cable has not been touched since last year.

1 *Chair Heffernon said she will contact John Gawlak, Parks & Recreation Director, regarding the state of disrepair.*

2 Commissioner Miller reported on Beseck Meadow. He said the only problems he saw two weeks ago were two trees
3 that were down on the access road just past the stream coming up through the meadow beyond the gate and
4 stream. Commissioner Saunders said this is the lessee farmer's responsibility. Commissioner Miller said one of the
5 trees was a 14 or 15 year old ash tree and the other tree where the crown was down across the road and needs to
6 be chainsawed. Commissioner Miller said the bamboo rhizomes are beginning to spread back in the roadway. *Ms.*
7 *O'Hare will contact Public Works Director Henry McCully regarding this bamboo rhizome issue.* Commissioner Miller
8 said the bamboo shoots are coming up. He noted there was no trash or vandalism. He said the ATV use occurred
9 outside our boundary. He noted that all of the field had been mowed.

10 Commissioner Arsenault reported on Cliffside Drive (Beseck Mountain). He noted the Commission's seal or emblem
11 is missing on the sign located there and there is no "National Scenic Trail" signage. He said there was a small amount
12 of mugwort near the sign and the powerline. He noted there was some ATV damage in the access way and in the
13 ridge but it was not as bad as in the past. Commissioner Arsenault said there was some graffiti on the trail and at the
14 party spot. He said there had been a forest fire emanating from the party spot to the Orange Trail and
15 approximately 2 acres were burned. He said there were some rocks starting to erode (Cliffside to the Blue Trail).

16 Commissioner Arsenault said there were a few small trees leaving over the trail. He noted that someone at 51
17 Cliffside Drive made a bridge over the stream from their backyard. He said he didn't see any markings past the
18 bridge. Commissioner Arsenault pointed out the bridge is probably on the resident's property. *Ms. O'Hare* said if
19 the bridge is on the resident's property they need to come in for a wetlands permit and if the bridge is on Town
20 property, the bridge needs to be removed. Commissioner Arsenault noted this bridge is just a footbridge and is a
21 flat bridge and didn't know if it was on Town property. *Ms. O'Hare* said the Engineering Dept. should do a survey to
22 make this determination.

23 On Wisk Key Wind Rd., Commissioner Arsenault said someone cleaned up the brush and debris and chipped all the
24 bamboo. He said the bamboo is now getting back in and getting around the cement blocks. He said there is a
25 marked trail on Town property to private property which goes to the Tilcon plant. He said someone has cut trees to
26 make this trail and has marked the trail but didn't believe the trail was heavily used. Commissioner Arsenault also
27 noted there was no ATV use observed near the houses where the person had cut the firewood. He said behind
28 these houses trees that had bittersweet on Town property were cut.

29 *Ms. O'Hare* suggested installing a sign in the middle of the woods in that area which would read "No ATV Use". *Chair*
30 *Heffernon* asked if this area could be blocked off.

31 *Ms. O'Hare will ask Public Works Director Henry McCully about both.*

32 Commissioner Arsenault said the best thing to do would be to install a guardrail around the entire property.

33 Commissioner Saunders reported on the Cooke Road property. She said there is a long field which has a Farmland
34 Lease field in the middle. She said the entire north and west sections of the property comprise of wooded areas and
35 swamp. She said there are not trails there but there are access lanes people use to walk and ride horses. She said
36 there are no boundary markers and no one is encroaching in the thick wooded swamp. The only evidence of
37 trespass and vandalism is in the north access lane is where area residents are dumping debris (brush).

1 Commissioner Saunders reported that on “Daisy Lane”, the old historic farm lane is obscured at the entrance on
2 Town property She said the property is half Town-owned and half private. She said there is a vernal pool just off of
3 Town property which is sterile; there was no evidence of eggs and is all algae. Commissioner Saunders said she
4 found evidence of a neighbor’s organic farm. She said there were tiny pink flags in the woods past the Town’s border
5 in the triangle piece. She said the neighbor told her they are taking care of invasives in that area.

6 Commissioner Saunders said she found a 10 by 10 patch of knotweed near a vernal pool and on the edge of the
7 access lane, not in the wetland . Commissioner Saunders said she will ask the property owner if she (Commissioner
8 Saunders) can take care of it. She noted the area is very dry and shaded. Commissioner Saunders said she believed
9 there was significant encroachment at the historic boundary. She showed the boundary on Google Earth. She said
10 the neighbor is pushing all his brush from his property onto here. She said this person also allows illegal hunting on
11 his property.

12 Commissioner Saunders said there are two stands of phragmites that are of considerable size and beautiful willows.
13 She said the swamp is bone dry. Commissioner Saunders noted that on the reporting forms, if a Commissioner
14 doesn’t have trails on their monitored property, the form doesn’t pertain. She gave Chair Heffernon a copy of the
15 changes she made on the form.

16 **B. Tyler Mill Preserve**

17 1. Kiosk & replacement signage

18 Commissioner Saunders said she met with Parks & Recreation Director John Gawlak and the kiosk Contractor. She
19 said the major problems were narrowed down to three items: the door will be changed to the right side so the map
20 will fix in the kiosk; all the kiosks will have the same locks and brackets and will be on rafters and on the collar ties
21 as suggested by the Building Official. She said the Contractor will also stain the kiosk. Commissioner Saunders said
22 she isn’t sure the foam board is compatible with the stain and it may be painted over soon.

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

24 Commissioner Saunders said the Stewards have been doing a lot of trail clearing. She passed around photos.
25 Commissioner Saunders mentioned that Commissioner Arsenault did a good job on the tree hazards and showed a
26 video of a hazardous tree being taken down. She said there was damage on every trail and noted that 16 of 21 trails
27 needed chainsaw work.

28 Commissioner Saunders said two sugar maples on the bridge were taken down for hazard because they were
29 beginning to rot. She noted a possible new Steward, who is a mountain biker.

30 3. Tyler Mill Preserve Management Planning Committee

31 a. March 14 – report

32 Commissioner Saunders said the Planning Committee did not meet on March 14. She said she spoke with Mark
33 Klemens and sent him an email asking him if we can still do the process where at least we come to a decision, and if
34 it does happen, decide on the scope this Tyler Mill Preserve Management Plan will take, then we would be in a
35 position for a grant.

1 Commissioner Saunders said if it is decided that this is not happening, we should try to get a consensus from Mr.
2 Klemens, of the most important issues at Tyler Mill, which would be part of the \$6,000 grant. She said there could be
3 workshop meetings with Dept. heads and Mayor Dickinson. Commissioner Saunders said she is waiting for Mr.
4 Klemens to answer the email.

5 b. Other

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

7 Commissioner Saunders said Eric Hansen put her in touch with Jim Dean, of White Oak Tree & Landscaping of North
8 Haven. She said she spoke with Mr. Dean and noted the price to treat the lone wolf tree by bark injection which
9 would be done in the spring. She said this treatment would kill the larvae and the adult ash borer would be \$400
10 And would have to be repeated every two years. Commissioner Saunders said she sent photos of the lone wolf tree
11 to White Oak Tree & Landscaping. The Commissioners agreed to spend the \$400.

12 Chair Heffernon noted that the CT Botanical Society is sponsoring an Emerald Ash Borer workshop on April 28, from
13 9 a.m. to noon. Commissioner Saunders said she will attend this workshop.

14 **Motion: A motion by Commissioner Miller second by Commissioner Lendler to spend \$400 to treat the Lone Wolf**
15 **Tree.**

16 **Vote: Unanimous**

17 **C. Fresh Meadows**

18 1. CT Recreational Trails Program Project

19 a. Completion status

20 Ms. O'Hare said Chair Heffernon was at the site this weekend and saw the timber rails being installed along the
21 parking lot and the bottom of where the trail goes on Cheshire Rd. Commissioner Saunders said the bushes were put
22 in and showed photos. Ms. O'Hare said she wrote a memo on Thursday noting the need to address the two most
23 important areas of the trail which don't meet ADA requirements. She said she will be meeting with Town Engineer
24 Rob Baltramaitis. She said she hopes these corrections can be done by June 2.

25 Ms. O'Hare showed on the map where the problem areas were near the pond. She said the problem is the cross
26 slope which must be brought down. She said the old parking lot on Cheshire Road to the pond is very steep and is
27 not good for people in wheelchairs. Ms. O'Hare noted this is supposed to be an ADA trail, so it must be a slope of no
28 more than 5% and exceeds 5 percent. Ms. O'Hare said the trail will either be taken up or left alone. She suggested
29 wooden rails be put across to step the trail and install wheelchair signage to use the other approach

30 Chair Heffernon noted that when she goes out to this site to look at the stone dust trail at the Butterfly Meadow,
31 two months from now no one will know it is there, i.e., (the field will grow high).

32 b. Rules & Regulation sign

1 Ms. O’Hare said she wrote a memo to John Gawlak, Parks & Recreation Director, asking him to install the
2 replacement Rules & Regulations signage by June 2.

3 Ms. O’Hare met with Randolph Steinen, former State Geologist with DEEP. She noted that she, Chair Heffernon,
4 Commissioner Saunders and another DEEP representative met at the erratic boulder. She said Mr. Steinen will
5 write up a two page report for the Town. Ms. O’Hare said she will take the report and put it in a description sign. She
6 said the erratic boulder might be the second largest in the State. Ms. O’Hare said Mr. Steinen will double check this
7 information. Commissioner Lendler suggested putting this information in the library. The Commission also spoke
8 about possibly using a portable power washer to eliminate graffiti on the erratic boulder.

9 Chair Heffernon said Diane Blais , District Conservationist from the Natural Resource Conservation Service and
10 possibly Kim Stoner from the CT Agricultural Station, will come out April 17 and look at the Butterfly Meadow and
11 give advice on the pollinator habitat. Chair Heffernon suggested planting sunflowers in this area.

12 Commissioner Saunders spoke about the Girl Scout footbridge, noting the bottom of the bridge is in good shape, but
13 noted the bridge is missing one tread on one end. She suggested installing one piece of decking and installing a
14 better railing. The Commission agreed to do this project.

15 *Commissioner Saunders will oversee this project.*

16 c. Promotion for CT Trails Day & Opening Celebration event, June 2, 10:00 a.m. (rain date June 3).

17 *Chair Heffernon said she will make flyers to hang around the Town, including the Library and Town Hall.*

18 C. **Marcus Cooke Park** - Big Event – April 7 – report

19 Chair Heffernon said the Big Even went well. She said there were six Commissioners in attendance and 15 students
20 and one psychology professor and all the work was done.

21 E. **Other properties** – Nothing to report.

22 **3. FARMLAND LEASE PROPERTIES PROGRAM**

23 A. **Field 18A, 995C East Center St./Tamarac Swamp Rd.** – proposed Request for Qualifications – Nothing to
24 report.

25 B. **Mowing of three areas** – Nothing to report.

26 C. **Farmland Committee**

27 Commissioner Saunders said the new sign is up on Field 1C on North Branford Rd. She reported that two vehicles
28 were parked near the sign training their dogs in the field in Ceccarelli’s field in the meadow part, near the vernal
29 pools, and near the Rod & Gun Club. Commissioner Saunders suggested sending a letter to the Rod & Gun Club
30 regarding this issue. *Ms. O’Hare will write the letter.*

31 **4. PROPOSED BUDGET FY 18-19**

32 A. **Town Council Public Budget Hearing**, April 9 – report

1 Chair Heffernon reported that Comptroller Jim Bowes said there were no questions for the Conservation
2 Commission.

3 **B. Town Council Hearing re: Commission budget proposal, April 26, 6:30 p.m.**

4 *Commissioner Saunders said she will write up something from the QRWA Report and the ERT to present to the Town*
5 *Council regarding the Commission budget proposal.*

6 **5. OPEN SPACE USERS GROUP MEETING, Parks & Recreation Dept., 6 Fairfield Avenue, April 25, 5:30 pm. –**
7 Proposed agenda items

8 Commissioner Saunders spoke about horses and bikes ruining the Orange Ridge. *Ms. O’Hare will contact John*
9 *Gawlak, Parks & Recreation Director regarding this issue.*

10 Chair Heffernon suggested, as part of proposed Users Group Meeting agenda items, discussing the ADA Trail in
11 general and for the June 2 CT Trails Day event. Commissioner Lendler suggested it should be made more evident
12 how important the Conservation Commission is. She said the Commission doesn’t promote themselves. Ms. O’Hare
13 suggesting putting the Big Event on the agenda and the progress report on the Tyler Mill Preserve Management
14 Plan.

15 **6. OTHER TOPICS**

16 Chair Heffernon said she was contacted regarding the kick-off event for “No Child Left Inside – Great Park Pursuit”
17 May 12, at Wharton Brook State Park. She said she will attend with trail maps. Chair Heffernon said she was asked to
18 lead a hike on the property. Chair Heffernon said this is sponsored by DEEP. Chair Heffernon will lead the hike at 11
19 a.m.

20 Commissioner Saunders spoke about “Casting with a Cop” fishing event and a “meet and greet” Saturday, April 28 at
21 Wharton Brook. She said the event is free and fishing poles will be provided.

22 **7. REPORTS & CORRESPONDENCE**

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

24 Ms. O’Hare said the Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Commission (IWWC) Special Meeting site walk is scheduled for
25 April 24 at 5:30 p.m. She noted the Parks & Recreation Dept. had withdrawn their application last month and re-
26 applied last week.

27 **B. Presentation to Town Council - M. Heffernon**

28 Chair Heffernon said she sent the Annual Report to the Council and to the Mayor. She said she was asked by
29 Councilor Shortell to come to the Town Council to speak about the Commission. She said she hopes to attend in
30 June and asked the Commission to attend.

31 **C. Fertilizer Plant, 155 East Street.**

32 Ms. O’Hare said noted the IWWC & the Planning & Zoning Commission approved the application.

1 **D. CT Land Conservation Council – March 17 – reports, M. Heffernon, D. Saunders and staff**

2 Chair Heffernon said she, Commissioner Saunders and Ms. O’ Hare attended this meeting on March 17. Ms. O’Hare
3 said the keynote speaker pointed out that CT now has the climate of New Jersey. She said the keynote speaker from
4 NOAA said bridges and catch basins should be constructed accordingly because of the increase in rain. Ms. O’Hare
5 said solar farms were discussed noting they are all the rage. She said at first people liked the idea but now it is being
6 questioned by the Dept. of Agriculture and the Nature Conservancy. Ms. O’Hare said she attended a discussion
7 about partnering and regional grants, and another presentation by the NRCS, CT Ag, and tips on how to write grants.

8 Commissioner Saunders said she and Chair Heffernon attended the workshop regarding the four top problems of
9 Stewards on properties, i.e, dogs, vandalism, trash and parking. She said dogs and their feces which is unhealthy,
10 and is listed by the EPA as toxic waste, was also discussed. Commissioner Saunders said she attended a workshop
11 about kiosks. She said there was a handout about all different places to purchase signage for kiosks. She said she
12 also went to a workshop about mountain biking. Commissioner Saunders spoke about a trail grooming machine.

13 Chair Heffernon said she also attended the kiosk signage workshop and the trash vandals workshop and also
14 attended a workshop on ticks which she said was very informative. She said she also went to an “Empowering the
15 Board workshop”.

16 **E. Game of Logging chainsaw training – report**

17 Commissioner Saunders said the chainsaw training is scheduled for Saturday, April 21 in Hamden at the Naugatuck
18 State Forest near the Y Camp Laurel. She said 10 people will be taking the training, including Commissioners Pietras
19 and Miller and one ag-science student, four from Sleeping Giant and the instructor has three people attending.

20 **F. Allnex USA, Inc., & sandplain – status**

21 Chair Heffernon noted the sandplain public hearing was pulled and is scheduled to be on the May 14 Planning &
22 Zoning Agenda. Ms. O’Hare said this sandplain issue is moving quickly. Ms. O’Hare spoke about her sandplains
23 comments she submitted to the Planning & Zoning Department. She urged the Commission to make a statement.

24 **G. Program, “Creating Bird Habitat in Your Backyard”, March 28 – staff report**

25 Ms. O’Hare spoke about the CT Audubon program she attended which was intended for everyday people to create
26 bird habitat plots in their backyards.

27 **H. DEEP magazine, Connecticut Wildlife, Jan/Feb. 2018**

28 **I. Landfill solar facility – Siting Council approval – report**

29 Ms. O’Hare said the landfill solar facility proposal was approved 10 days ago by the CT Siting Council. *Ms. O’Hare*
30 *will walk the property with Town officials in early May.*

31 **J. Kestrel boxes**

32 Chair Heffernon said she received a request from the people who own Fat Robin Birding regarding a person who
33 wants to set up kestrel boxes and will maintain them. Commissioner Saunders said this is a huge commitment and

1 will have to be maintained vigorously. She suggested barn owl boxes which could be put in two locations in
2 Wallingford.

3 **K. CCM Legislative Action Center** – notice, received March 12, 2018

4 Ms. O’Hare said the prohibition on invasives is being extended. She went over the notice.

5 **L. CFPA magazine, “Connecticut Woodlands”,** Spring 2018 – Ms. O’Hare spoke about the magazine

6 **M. CT Butterfly Association newsletter,** Spring 2018 – distributed.

7 **N. Rockfall Foundation newsletter,** April 2018 – distributed.

8 **O. CT Farmland Trust,** Charity Golf Invitational, received April 3, 2018 – The flyer was distributed and the
9 event was mentioned by Chair Heffernon.

10 **8. NEXT MEETING** - May 10, 2018

11 **9. ADJOURNMENT**

12 Commissioner Arsenault made a motion to adjourn the Meeting at 10 p.m. Vice-Chair Lathrop seconded the motion
13 which passed unanimously.

14

15 Respectfully submitted,

16 Cynthia A. Kleist

17 Recording Secretary