

WALLINGFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

REGULAR MEETING

Thursday, May 9, 2013

7 p.m.

Town Hall Basement Room

45 South Main Street

Wallingford, Connecticut

MINUTES

PRESENT: Chairman Jeff Borne; Vice-Chair Mary Heffernon; Commissioners Dianne Saunders; Carl Arsenault; Ken Ryan; John Lathrop; Jim Pyskaty; Erin O'Hare, Environmental and Natural Resources Planner.

NOT PRESENT: Commissioners Dianne Lendler and Tom Pietras.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Minutes, April 11, 2013

Page 2, line 8, should read "proposing language."

Page 2, line 19, "and will" is repeated twice.

Page 3, line 8, should read "as a parking area for hunting."

Page 4, line 2, there is no April 30th deadline.

Page 5, line 13, should read "Dianne Lendler was going to contact the resident"

Page 4, the MOTION should read "Fresh Meadows."

MOTION: A motion by Commissioner Lathrop second by Commissioner Ryan to approve the May 9, 2013 Meeting Minutes as amended. The motion passed unanimously.

2. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

A. Tyler Mill Preserve

1. DEP Recreational Trails Grant Program – parking lots, entranceways, and kiosks.

Ms. O'Hare said Rob Baltramaitis, Assistant Town Engineer, has put in six hours on his parking lot schematic and has approximately 7 to 10 hours remaining to come up with the schematic which was requested by the Commission. The location of extraneous pipes which were on maps submitted by Water and Sewer Divisions General Manager Roger Dann will be included in the parking lot schematic which is forthcoming. She said the rest of the headwalls will also be surveyed. Ms. O'Hare said the plexiglass and plywood frame and a brochure box have been installed at the kiosk located at the end of Vietnam Veterans' Memorial Park. Ms. O'Hare said Public Works will assist with work on the other two kiosks.

Ms. O'Hare said a sub-committee which will focus on parking lots was formed at the last Open Space Users Group meeting. She said she will not call a meeting of the sub-committee until the parking lot schematic is completed.

Chairman Borne requested that Ms. O'Hare bring Mr. Baltramaitis up-to-date regarding the solution of the erosion problem on Field 7A by Commissioners Saunders and Pietras.

2. Proposed footbridges

Commissioner Saunders said there has been little activity. She said the replacing of the Corduroy Trail with the Green Trail will begin in May. She said the Cub Scouts will be assisting with the work at the end of June. She said work on the Red Trail will begin when the wildflowers bloom. *She will provide Ms. O'Hare with footbridge dimensions for the wetlands application. Vice-Chair Heffernon will provide Ms. O'Hare with photos of area and location map. Ms. O'Hare will assist in application completion for Chairman Borne to submit.*

3. Signage – revised language – M. Heffernon

Vice-Chair Heffernon passed around drawings of various yellow yield signage regarding horses. She said the signage contained symbols. She said the signage should have words not images because of confusion. She said she has found this type of signage on every multi-use trail. Vice-Chair Heffernon noted that she was not setting up a meeting with the mountain bikers to discuss the signage issue proved to be unsuccessful. The Commission agreed the language on the signage should read, "Caution – Yield to Horses."

4. DEEP Permit Hunting Area mapping – review

Ms. O'Hare passed around the DEEP Permit Hunting area map which shows a parking area at the intersection of Woodhouse Avenue and East Dayton Hill Road which should not be there. Commissioner Saunders noted that the parking symbol for Field 11A looks as if it is located on the field and should be located near the road. The Commission recommended removing this parking symbol on the map altogether.

Chairman Borne requested that Ms. O'Hare contact Rich Vanski Superintendent, Sewer Division, to inquire if they would install telephone poles to define the parking area at Field 2A off North Branford Road or install a fence.

5. Restoration concept - report, D. Saunders & D. Lendler

Commissioner Saunders said this is a long-range project so there is no report at this time. She said she wants to make sure, by consulting with the Audubon Society, that we are not going into an area where there are endangered species. Chairman Borne would like Audubon to look at areas selected by Jerry Matuskiewicz.

Ms. O'Hare spoke about a DEEP brochure: "The Clear Cut Advantage" on-hand at the Town Clerk's office for distribution to the public that presents advantages to wildlife of shelter wood harvest restoration projects. *Ms. O'Hare will obtain more brochure copies from DEEP.*

6. Pink Trail crossing – D. Lendler

Vice-Chair Heffernon said the Trails Committee discussed this item. She said the idea was discussed of possibly stringing a railing from one side to the other and installing stepping stones at the crossing. She said it would make it easier to cross the trail if there were something to hold onto. Commissioner Saunders said Commissioner Lendler went out to the Pink Trail with a hiker and made a report. Vice-Chair Heffernon said she discussed these ideas with Commissioner Lendler.

B. Fresh Meadows

1. Improvements

Ms. O'Hare said there is \$6,000 remaining in this fiscal year's budget to spend on Fresh Meadows. She said work has to be conducted in the fiscal year before June 30. She said she is writing a bid proposal to an engineering firm so a base survey of the three proposed ADA-accessible trail at Fresh Meadows can be completed this fiscal year and/or the next. Commissioner Ryan suggested moving the trail 40 foot into the field in the steepest area instead of having it abut the roadway to reduce the trails slope. Commissioner Saunders suggested having the engineer factor in the impact of snowplowing on the trail if it were placed close to the road.

C. 1250 Whirlwind Hill Road property

2. Report, D. Saunders

Commissioner Saunders said she and Commissioner Lendler hiked the property which is approximately 1 ½ acres, and took photos that she passed around. She said last years heavy snow pushed a lot of the brush down. She said there was a lot of multi-flora and mugwort at the top of the property. She said most of the property is grass with goldenrod, with the wooded swamp located in the rear of the property. Commissioner Saunders said there are a stand of unidentified sapling trees located on the north side of the property. She noted it would be difficult for a machine to work on the property and that there is a lot of restoration work needed. She said it is worth arresting the growth before it gets out of hand and suggested mowing the laneways.

Ms. O'Hare said the Water Division did not want to maintain the property and said Mayor Dickinson suggested the Conservation Commission should decide if it wishes to oversee the property. Commissioner Saunders said abutting neighbors are expressing interest in having the property mowed. She suggested having the property brush hogged annually. The Commission

recommended keeping the property as a field by mowing annually beginning in the Fall. Commissioner Saunders nixed the idea of installing a trail on the property because of the abundance of wildlife on the edge of the reservoir and the small size of the property.

Ms. O'Hare will contact Mayor Dickinson and Water and Sewer Division General Manager Roger Dann stating the Conservation Commission is interested in managing the property for an early successional field habitat with waterfront for wildlife.

Vice-Chair Heffernon said the QRWA, (Quinnipiac River Watershed Association), requested she facilitate a training session May 17, with employees of Public Works and Water Department employees. She said DEEP trainers will work with them one morning on buffer zones and waters edge management. She said this program has already been implemented in Southington.

D. Invasive Species Eradication

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

Commissioner Saunders passed around the program report. She said Japanese knotweed at the Northford Road entrance, along Tyler Mill Road and two islands, needs immediate treatment. She said the Stewards found two new incursions between the field on Maltby Lane and the bridge . She said the knotweed was hand-pulled at the bridge but not on Maltby Lane.

Commissioner Saunders said the garlic mustard infestation is problematic this year. She said the garlic was deadheaded by Stewards from the 100-foot stretch of bloodroot and dutchman's breeches at the Green Trail entrance, (south section). There has been a new incursion of goutweed at the bridge parking area and needs to be treated with more effective measures. Ongoing clearing was completed on: the Pink Trail south. Clearing is continuing on the Red Trail north (western side). She said Senate Bill 1016 concerning the running bamboo, continues its way through the State Legislature. Commissioner Saunders added that she attended the CFPA invasive plant workshop on May 4.

E. Volunteer Work Program

1. Report

Commissioner Ryan reported that the Boy Scout who had inquired about constructing a boardwalk on the Gold Trail has another project. He said he could reach out to other Scout Troops in Town to work on the proposed Gold Trail out at the soccer field. Ms. O'Hare indicated a revised footbridge design will require a revised wetland permit. Vice-Chair Heffernon mentioned that she and Commissioner Ryan took Eagle Scout John Cerrotti's mother and uncle to the vernal pool Eagle Scout project he had worked on.

2. Survey form, D. Lendler

Commissioner Saunders reported that Commissioner Lendler had determined the survey form was originally sent out by the Stewards of Tyler Mill.

F. Boundary Marking Program

Ms. O'Hare presented the most up-to-date map depicting boundary markings as completed as of April 24, 2013. Commissioner Saunders said the State paints a ring around the tree using

them as boundary markers so the area does not have to be re-surveyed in the event of an issue. Commissioner Arsenault says the State uses yellow which makes the line more visible. He said this has to be re-done every five years. Commissioner Saunders said a Steward could do this work if the Town was could not do it.

Ms. O'Hare asked the Commission if it recommended yellow stripes be marked on the trees to be designated as boundaries. Commissioner Saunders suggested spraying pink marks on the base of the trees and having some of the Stewards of Tyler Mill Preserve do the work. Vice-chair Heffernon suggested green dots be painted on the base of the trees on the Green Trail to mark those trees with interpretive signs. Commissioner Arsenault suggested Ms. O'Hare consult the Engineering Department to see if this was a viable idea and also whether the pink streamers could be removed from some of the new boundary marker installations.

Ms. O'Hare will do as requested above and will request that Lufbury Park and the northern and southern border of Beseck Mountain be posted.

3. PUBLIC OUTREACH

A. CT Trails Day, June 1 & 2

Vice-Chair Heffernon said the Land Trust is sponsoring the CT Trails Day hike this year.

4. FARMLAND LEASE PROPERTIES PROGRAM

A. One-year lease recommendations to Town Council

Chairman Borne said we stepped back from getting the detailed leases completed so that a planting cycle would not be missed and to see if last year's leases could be extended one more year while we wrap up the current leases are being finalized. He said the DEEP approved this and we are now awaiting Town Council approval. He said when this is completed, the details of the upcoming five-year leases will be ironed out.

B. Farmland Lease Cycle – 2013-2017

1. Bid proposal for 21 hayfields – status

Taken up above.

2. Bid proposal for 2 deep zone tillage –use fields – status

Taken up above.

C. Farmland Committee – report

Not taken up.

D. Mowing quote

Ms. O'Hare said in December the request for quotes went out along with the list of fields to be cut. She passed around a price list and stated the contractor stipulated work could only be done in November, December, February and March. *Ms. O'Hare will get additional quotes.*

5. BUDGET

A. FY 12-13 – proposed expenditures

Ms. O'Hare said there is approximately \$1,100 in the office supply account. Commissioner Saunders will present an invoice for \$150 for three conferences and \$8 for spray paint. She asked to be re-imbursed for the purchase of trash bags. The Commission discussed a Steward of Tyler Mill attending a conference without this being brought to the attention of the Commission. The Commission agreed this should be discussed in advance and approved by them.

Commissioner Saunders suggested using some of the monies to purchase materials for a footbridge for the Green Trail. She said work will begin on this trail on May 19. The Commission also agreed to purchase a rope-puller out of the office supply funds.

MOTION: A motion by Commissioner Lathrop second by Commissioner Pyskaty to expend no more than \$150 for materials. The motion passed unanimously.

Vice-Chair Heffernon and Commissioner Saunders will collaborate on supplies.

B. FY 13-14 - Public Budget hearing, 4/10 & Town Council Budget Hearing, 4/29 – report

Chairman Borne said the budget was well-received by the Town Council.

6. GROUP FACILITATIONS

A. Review of Committee functions – Stewards of Tyler Mill

Commissioner Saunders briefly discussed the functions of the 16 Stewards of Tyler Mill. She said she e-mails John Gawlak, Parks and Recreation Director, once a month, listing the projects the Stewards will be working on.

She said the Stewards discuss what their functions are to persons who are interested in becoming Stewards and invite them to participate in hikes and work parties. She said a Steward must be responsive and responsible. She said they concentrate on group dynamics and that every trail has a Steward. Commissioner Saunders said in the original plan, each Steward was supposed to walk their trail every quarter, but most do this more than every three months. They work on dump areas and notify Mr. Gawlak of campsites. *Commissioner Saunders will provide Ms. O'Hare a list of Steward names as requested so the Commission would know who they were.*

Chairman Borne said he received correspondence from Mr. Gawlak regarding his concerns about the Farmland Lease Committee and the Stewards of Tyler Mill issues. Mr. Gawlak follows up with the Police on certain problems. Mr. Gawlak requested an endorsement by the Commission of the Stewards of Tyler Mill projects be sent to his office moving forward. *Chairman Borne will e-mail a copy of letter from Mr. Gawlak to the Commission for its review.*

B. Rules of Engagement – Nothing to Report

7. OPEN SPACE PLAN UPDATE – revisions

A. Revisions: "Vision Statement", "Purpose", & "Open Space Defined – Nothing to Report

8. CORRESPONDENCE/REPORTS

A. Dog Park Proposal – alternate locations, M. Heffernon

Vice-Chair Heffernon said she looked at two alternate locations for the dog park with members of the Park and Recreation Commission. She said one location was at Fresh Meadows near Tessa's Trail and the other was located at Harrison Park near the ball park. She said the dog park proponents approved of the Harrison Park location. She said there will be two fenced areas, one for the larger dogs and one for the smaller dogs and a submarine fence to avoid dogs escaping. She said the group is working on getting their 501 (c)(3). The Commission came to a consensus in favor of the Harrison Park location.

B. Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies – research proposal

Ms. O'Hare distributed the proposal. She said the student, Kathryn Urban Meade, will be studying pollinators and the degree to which human landscape changes affect pollinator plant webs in Connecticut old fields. She said the student has requested four fields in which to perform her studies and the project will run from mid-May to mid-August. Commissioner Saunders suggested the student not work in the bobolink fields. Chairman Borne requested Ms. O'Hare to direct the student to work with Ms. O'Hare in picking out the fields and the Commission should get a copy of the report and acknowledge the Commission for assisting the student in picking out fields for study. *Ms. O'Hare will do so.*

C. Bamboo - Office of Legislative Research report, Jan. 2013. – reported on 2-A-D.

Ms. O'Hare distributed copies of the OLR Report to the Commission on the invasiveness of bamboo and laws in this regard.

D. Sleeping Giant State Park – correspondence –staff – Nothing to Report

The Commission agreed to pay CT Butterfly Association annual membership dues.

9. NEXT MEETING – June 13, 2013

10. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: A motion by Vice-Chair Heffernon second by Commissioner Ryan to adjourn the meeting at 9:51 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia A. Kleist
Recording Secretary