

WALLINGFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

REGULAR MEETING

**Thursday, May 11, 2017 – 7:00 p.m.
Basement Conference Room, Town Hall,
45 South Main Street, Wallingford, CT**

MINUTES

PRESENT: Vice Chair John Lathrop, Dianne Saunders, Dianne Lendler, Mark Ceneri,
Tom Pietras, Carl Arsenault, Jim Pyskaty, Erin O’Hare, Environmental Planner

NOT PRESENT: Chair Mary Heffernon, Jeff Borne

Vice Chair John Lathrop, acting as Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Minutes, Regular Meeting, April 13, 2017

The following corrections were requested to the Minutes as presented:

- o Commissioner Dianne Saunders was present,
- o page 2, add there was a consensus of the Commission to award Field 20A to 3 B Ranch
- o page 3, under #6, Habitat management, regarding application to the In Lieu Fee Program, the proposed habitat management plan work would not be eligible because the grant focus is on actual restoration of wetlands not planning,
- o Under F. Other Properties, “M. Saunders” should be, “M. Heffernon”,
- o #6a., CT Trails Day, should be “Commissioners Ceneri and Lendler are leading the hike”.

Acting Chair Lathrop called for approval of the Minutes, as amended.

MOTION: by Mark Ceneri, second, by Jim Pyskaty

VOTE: Unanimous

2. TREE DEDICATION – for Ken Ryan, Fresh Meadows open space property parking area, Cheshire Road, June 4, 4:00 p.m.

Acting Chair Lathrop indicated the Town will mow the grass around the tree for the event planned for June 4. He asked for refreshments. Commissioner Lendler suggested a toast with cider or sparkling water. *Commissioner Saunders will speak about tupelo trees and Commissioner Lendler will purchase a book suggested by Commissioner Ceneri.* More arrangements will be handled via email.

3. VANDALISM ON OPEN SPACE PROPERTIES

Acting Chair Lathrop said Chair Heffernon had indicated John Gawlak, Director, Parks and Recreation, told her a group of women had committed the tree cutting and trail making at Lufbery Park. Ms. O'Hare indicated the Chair had more recently informed her that the damage may have been conducted by other parties and that there was a new concrete pad recently installed in the woods there by someone. *It was agreed the Commission will meet May 28, 9 a.m. at Lufbery Park to observe the trespass damage.*

Commissioner Saunders reported on the recent destruction of the entrance kiosk and the port-o-let at Tyler Mill Preserve involving a dual-wheeled truck and damage to a second port-o-let at Vietnam Veterans' Memorial Park.

Ms. O'Hare indicated that Mr. Gawlak had reported the issue involving drug deal transactions being conducted at the Preserve's Maltby Lane parking lot (complaint reported at the recent Open Space Users Group Meeting) to Chief Wright. Commissioner Saunders suggested a surveillance camera tied to the Police Station. She reported four vehicles together after hours at the end of Vietnam Veterans Memorial Park and had reported it to the Police. Commissioner Ceneri stated fines would be more effective than the warnings police issue, for example, for after-hours use. *The Commission agreed to have Ms. O'Hare request Mr. Gawlak set up a meeting to pursue the surveillance recommendation.*

Commissioner Saunders reported an entire patch of "ramps" (wild onions) were removed at the Preserve, open space boundary markers were observed folded over in the vicinity of the Town boundary by Field 6D off Cooke Road, and there has been tree cutting vandalism in the vicinity of Ferguson Woods open space property with five trees recently cut located on top of the ridge on the Town land.

4. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

A. Tyler Mill Preserve

1. Restoration of paintball-damaged area – Commissioner Saunders reported the restoration of the area damaged by unpermitted paintball activities is complete.
2. Emergency numbers - Acting Chair Lathrop reported that the missing emergency numbers have now all been replaced and marker #44 just needs to be relocated.
3. Stewards of Tyler Mill - Commissioner Saunders reported the Stewards have been busy removing invasive plants and downed trees (which were stressed further by all the rain). *She will make a list of "hazard trees" for Henry McCully, Public Works Director, to approve for cutting.* Where garlic mustard plants have been removed, wildflowers are observed to be rejuvenated. Collected garlic mustard is stockpiled on Filed 7E, off Northford Road, under tarps to kill it. The invasive flower, *Cardamine impatiens* is a big problem spreading in the floodplain. Trail trimming continues. The restoration site is doing well. Dogs off leash is a problem and recently a dog was bitten by another dog. The posted "No Hunting" signs continue to be removed. Observation of spent shell casings and reports of shooting from Wheatfield Road into the Preserve were reported to her. On Anderson Road, the gate across the access lane to the hay fields is down and she informed the lessee.
4. Habitat survey – status - Ms. O'Hare reported Michael Klemens' field work is completed, she read his email that briefly summarizes the results, and the report will be submitted in June.

5. Discussion of night mountain biking proposal (Nov. – Feb.) – Ms. O’Hare relayed the information from John Gawlak, Director, Parks and Recreation, that the activity being discussed would be a group permitted activity from November through February at night. The Commission discussed night use of the Preserve at length and there were a number of questions and concerns. The Commission request further information from Mr. Gawlak regarding the parameters of a possible permit proposal and the numbers of possible participants so that the matter can be discussed further at the June meeting. *Ms. O’Hare was directed to advise Mr. Gawlak and obtain more information.*

B. Doolittle Park – streambank restoration

The CT Wetland In Lieu Fee grant application was not pursued due to the fact that the proposal did not meet the grant parameters as follows: proposal area is not a natural or wildlife area, and not a true wetlands restoration as the area being restored was filled in years past.

C. Fresh Meadows

1. Bluebird Project - Chair Heffernon has obtained two new boxes and has ordered two more kits from DEEP for next year.

2. CT Recreational Trails Program Project - status

Ms. O’Hare reported that the construction bid will be going out shortly after some refinements to the plans to be provided by Lenard Engineering. The Mayor approved use of Opens Space Management Funds to cover the \$4,800 additional work needed. The bid results will determine the match amount required to complete the full project. She indicated that Chair Heffernon had spoken again with Rob Baltramaitis, Town Engineer, who indicated he would revisit the idea of substituting stone aggregate material for the stone dust material specified for the project.

3. Other Properties – (not taken up)

5. OPEN SPACE USERS GROUP MEETING – April 25

Commissioners Saunders, Lendler, and Arsenault and Ms. O’Hare had attended and reported on the highlights of the meeting where the number one topic was trespass and unpermitted activities on Town land and other reported issues with Town land. There was good attendance by residents. Snow plowing of the older parking lot at the Tyler Mill Preserve entrance off North ford Road was requested by several folks. Commissioner Ceneri suggested that the Town could be requested to plow it after all the other plowing was completed.

6. FARMLAND LEASE PROPERTIES PROGRAM

A. **Bid awards** – Ms. O’Hare reported all the bids were awarded and a few leases remain to be signed by lessees.

B. **Field 1C & 1D – R.O.W. issue** - Commissioner Saunders presented an issue on Field 1C and 1D with the field road that has a Right-Of-Way held by the Wallingford Rod and Gun Club wherein members are driving vehicles beyond the access way and across the field perhaps to avoid muddy conditions of the fields. In addition, there is a corner of the field that used for parking perhaps for hunting and how this area came to be used is not clear. It is not a designated parking area on the DEEP Permit Area maps. Someone also mowed a larger area in the rear on Town land. It was determined that a meeting should be

held between the Town, the Commission and the Gun Club to resolve these issues. *Ms. O'Hare will advise the Mayor.*

C. Lease revision proposals - Commissioner Saunders, as Chair of the Farmland Committee, and Ms. O'Hare jointly expressed their dismay at the recent bid results in that they fear that attentive stewardship of the fields as exhibited over the years by the local farmer lessees may be eventually lost as a result of the bid process as currently designed which favors non-local farmers as they substantially out bid the local farmers. *They will request a meeting with the Mayor and the Chair to review the matter.*

D. Farmland Committee

See "C", above. Commissioner Saunders reported someone erected bluebirds boxes on Field 1C and on Field 2A.

7. PUBLIC OUTREACH

A. CT Trails Day, Tyler Mill Preserve hike, June 3, 2017, 8:00-10:00 a.m. - Commissioners Cenerai and Lendler, hike leaders, discussed logistics of the event. *Commissioner Saunders will inquire about borrowing the Senior Center minibus to shuttle hikers back to their vehicles at the terminus of the trail hike.*

B. Vehicle idling – Ms. O'Hare reported that Chair Heffernon is working with Eloise Hazelwood, Director, Health Department on this initiative which may involve high school students.

8. OTHER TOPICS

Commissioners Saunders submitted to Ms. O'Hare documentation of supply expenses for reimbursement. Commissioner Saunders reported the Stewards wish to build a little footbridge on the Blue Trail near the Woodhouse road guardrail using oak lumber left over from a trail project and requested a vote to do so.

MOTION: by Mark Ceneri, second by Commissioner Saunders

VOTE: Unanimous

9. REPORTS & CORRESPONDENCE

A. George Simpson memorial tree - Ms. O'Hare reported that the memorial tree for George Simpson is scheduled for planting at the new Fire Station on May 22.

B. CT Butterfly Association –Newsletter, Spring 2017

C. CT Butterfly Association – Spring Meeting- May 19, 7:00 p.m.

10. NEXT MEETING – June 8, 2017, 2016

11. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION to adjourn: by Mark Ceneri, second by Carl Arsenault.

VOTE: Unanimous

Acting Chair Lathrop adjourned the meeting at 9:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Erin O'Hare
Acting Recording Secretary