

1 **WALLINGFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

2 **REGULAR MEETING**

3 Thursday, May 12, 2016 – 7:00 p.m.

4 Basement Conference Room, Town Hall

5 45 South Main Street, Wallingford, Connecticut

6 **MINUTES**

7
8 **PRESENT:** Chair Mary Heffernon; Vice-Chair John Lathrop; Commissioners Dianne Saunders; Jeff Borne;
9 Mark Ceneri; Carl Arsenault; Tom Pietras, arrived at 7:20 p.m.; Erin O'Hare, Environmental and Natural
10 Resources Planner; Sonya Wulff, Steward of Tyler Mill.

11 **NOT PRESENT:** Commissioners Jim Pyskaty; Dianne Lender.

12 **1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

13 **A. Minutes, Regular Meeting, April 14, 2016**

14 On page 2, bottom, regarding Marcus Cooke Park, Vice-Chair Lathrop and Commissioner Arsenault visited
15 the site.

16 Page 4, under "Public Outreach", Eric Hansen will lead the hike with Commissioner Saunders on CT. Trails
17 Day.

18 Page 4, line 2, should be "Police Bike Patrol."

19 **MOTION: A Motion by Vice-Chair Lathrop second by Commissioner Borne to approve the April**
20 **14, 2016 Meeting Minutes as amended.**

21 Vote: Unanimous.

22 **2. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT**

23 **A. Tyler Mill Preserve**

24 1. Habitat survey – status

25 Ms. O'Hare discussed Michael Klemens turtle study. She said he was about a third of the way done on the
26 work and has found all the target species and the study is going well. Ms. O'Hare said she expects the
27 report to be completed by June 30.

28 2. Stewards of Tyler Mill – spring trails condition check – report, D. Saunders

29 Commissioner Saunders submitted the Stewards Report and said there is still more trail damage from
30 storm thrown trees and worked on the Pink Trail and saw damage on the Blue Trail and are watching
31 vernal pool of egg masses. She said the Students from Ag Science trimmed back everything they planted

1 last year. Regarding invasives, Commissioner Saunders said the Stewards are working a lot on garlic
2 mustard. She said the Red Trail South can't be done until after June because of the listed species.
3 Commissioner Saunders spoke about the cutting of saplings and young trees because of vandalism at Tyler
4 Mill. Commissioner Saunders showed a garlic mustard plant that was four days old. Commissioner
5 Saunders said trail maps are needed for the kiosks. She said a bid was sent out. The Commission thought
6 numbered maps were a good idea.

7 Chair Heffernon spoke about the trail conditions and asked Commissioner Saunders to ask the Stewards to
8 make sure the numbers are on the trails. She suggested doing this every spring and to double check for
9 re-blazing.

10 3. Yellow Trail footbridge – update

11 Chair Heffernon said the Weeblos would rebuild the footbridge on Sunday May 22 at 9 a.m.

12 **B. Fresh Meadows**

13 1. CT Recreational Trails grant award

14 Ms. O'Hare said the letter was received stating the Town was chosen by the State to receive the CT
15 Recreational Trails grant award. She said the contract letter hasn't yet arrived but is expected within the
16 next few weeks. She said the terms of the grant state the work must be completed in two years.
17 Commissioner Borne suggested prioritizing the Butterfly Meadow with some of the grant money as one
18 option in lieu of a chemical treatment.

19 2. Selective mowing of Canada thistle and mugwort

20 Ms. O'Hare said the mugwort and thistle must be eradicated. She spoke about weed whacking having to be
21 done several times this summer. She asked Todd Mervosh for an eradication by weed whacking quote.
22 Ms. O'Hare said it would cost approximately \$2,000 for 13 acres, which is \$600 a day for three people four
23 times a season.

24 Commissioner Saunders suggesting mowing this area as a meadow once a year to control the Canadian
25 thistle and mugwort. Commissioner Cenari spoke about possibly having Eagle Scouts doing the weed
26 whacking. Ms. O'Hare suggested having a high school student do an internship weed whacking or from the
27 Vocational Science program. Commissioner Saunders suggested having a plan and suggested doing the
28 Butterfly Meadow around the pond.

29 **Motion: A motion by Commissioner Arsenaault second by Commissioner Borne to have Ms.**
30 **O'Hare explore having a contractor or others selectively cut the Canada Thistle and the**
31 **mugwort before June 30 . The motion passed unanimously.**

32 **C. Doolittle Park** - possible funding for riparian corridor earthwork

33 Chair Heffernon said it would cost \$20,000 to \$25,000 to cut the banks around the riparian corridor and
34 sources for funding are being explored.

35 **D. Marcus Cooke Park** – trails system – status

1 Chair Heffernon said Vice-Chair Lathrop, Commissioner Arsenault and she visited the site. She spoke about
2 the Girl Scout kiosk and to see if the trails needed to be cleared from the microburst. She said the
3 boundary line was found. She said John took a photo of the kiosk and she wrote up a report for John
4 Gawlak, Parks & Recreation Director, and Rob Baltramaitis, Town Engineer, who both visited the site and
5 said the boundary map was correct and the boundary markers will need to be relocated.

6 **E. Beseck Meadow**

7 1. Second cutting

8 The issue of funding for the cutting was discussed and it was determined this needs to be completed as
9 soon as possible. The Farmland Lease Committee will continue to work on this proposal.

10 2. Lease proposal

11 Commissioner Arsenault said the map of the area was made larger.

12 3. Trespass matter

13 Ms. O'Hare said she visited the site with Community Police Sgt. Semselski and saw the reported piles of
14 debris which was spread out on the Town's access road. She said she took photo of tracks going to the
15 site of the trespass. Ms. O'Hare suggested a fence be erected to eliminate the trespass problem.

16 Commissioner Arsenault suggested having the Town send a letter to the trespassers with a copy of the
17 survey map. Ms. O'Hare said she wants the Engineering Dept. to survey the garden.

18 **F. Neal property – tree clean up – report**

19 Chair Heffernon said she, Vice-Chair Lathrop and Commissioner Arsenault went out and cleaned up the
20 tree. She said other debris was also removed by volunteers.

21 **G. Other properties**

22 1. Potential soccer field site – Parks & Recreation request

23 The Commission discussed possible sites. Commissioner Borne said there are no sites on open space land.

24 **3. PROPERTY ACQUISITION/PRESERVATION**

25 **A. 75 Tyler Mill Road property – report**

26 Commissioner Saunders said the huge ash trees were removed.

27 **B. Sandplains –Critical Habitat**

28 Ms. O'Hare summarized her draft "White Paper" on the sandplains which she was asked to do by Chair
29 Heffernon. She passed around a map of the largest undeveloped sandplain remaining in CT. She said if the
30 Commission is interested, letters could be sent to the DEEP Commissioner appealing this sale of the
31 sandplains. Ms. O'Hare said the sandplains are of Statewide significance and the State DEEP wants to
32 purchase the sandplain but noted there is a lack of funding. She said there are endangered and threatened
33 species on the sandplains. Ms. O'Hare said this is a 215 acre property currently owned by Allnex, formerly

1 by Cytec. She said the sandplain contains two critical habitats: sand barren and dry acidic forest and nine
2 State listed species are documented to be living on this site.

3 **Motion: A motion by Commissioner Borne second by Commissioner Ceneri to have**
4 **the Conservation Commission through Chair Heffernon to contact the Trust for Public Land to**
5 **look into this issue and send a copy of Ms. O'Hare's White Paper on the Toelles Road**
6 **sandplains and come back to the Commission with a proposal on how to preserve the**
7 **sandplains.**

8 **Vote: Unanimous**

9 **C. Other**

10 Commissioner Borne read his draft report and distributed photos of a possible property acquisition. It was
11 recommended the Town purchase the property.

12 **MOTION: A motion to recommend this property to the mayor for purchase by the town Cenari**
13 **Lathrop**

14 **4. FARMLAND LEASE PROPERTIES PROGRAM**

15 **A. Lease field conditions (36 fields) and consideration of certain lease requirements-**
16 **status**

17 Nothing new to report.

18 **B. Field 4A –required mowing**

19 Commissioner Saunders said the field has not been mowed.

20 **D. Field 9C – signage**

21 Chair Lathrop said John Gawlak of Public Works has the signs and they will be installed.

22 *Ms. O'Hare will tell lessee to mow when it is dry enough to prevent people from cutting through the field.*

23 **D. Field 18A – proposed change**

24 Ms. O'Hare discussed possible issues with the proposed lease change regarding a requested increase in the
25 pastureland area. O'Hare said she wanted a description from the Commission of what would be mowed
26 and how to access the property off Tamarac Swamp Road.

27 **E. Farmland Committee**

28 Discussed above.

29 **5. PUBLIC OUTREACH**

1 **A. CT Trails Day**, Hike at Tyler Mill Preserve, Sat. June 4, 2016, 10 a.m. – noon, (Rain date, June
2 5, 2016, 10 a.m. –noon)

3 Chair Heffernon said everyone should meet at Woodhouse Avenue. Commissioner Saunders distributed the
4 Trails Day brochure and went over the hiking route.

5 **B. Celebrate Open Space Day – schedule**

6 Not discussed.

7 **C. Proposal for promoting pollinators program – staff**

8 Ms. O'Hare spoke about the pollinators being in trouble and how the general public doesn't understand
9 the concept of not having manicured lawns which inhibit the pollinator success and how a public event
10 would be helpful. Vice-Chair Lathrop and Commissioner Cenari spoke about the importance of bees.
11 Commissioner Saunders noted that one-third of the world's food supply depends upon pollinators. Ms.
12 O'Hare noted the DEEP has a new webpage on promoting pollinators.

13 **6. OPEN SPACE USERS GROUP MEETING – April 26, 2016, report of attendees**

14 Commissioner Saunders said mountain bikers spoke about possible nighttime riding at Tyler Mill Preserve.
15 Commissioner Saunders spoke about people walking through Field 11A.

16 **7. BUDGET FY 15-16**

17 **A. Commissioner Reimbursements**

18 Commissioners Saunders and Borne submitted their invoices to Ms. O'Hare for reimbursement.

19 **B. Year-end**

20 Discussed below.

21 **8. OTHER TOPICS**

22 **A. Commissioner Ryan memorial**

23 Chair Heffernon said with the year-end money, a tree would be purchased for the Commissioner Ryan
24 Memorial . Ms. O'Hare said Commissioner Ryan's favorite tree was the Black Gum and said a two foot tree
25 was picked out which cost \$360 plus \$120 for delivery. The Commission supported having the Contractor
26 for \$100 extra to dig the hole to plant the tree.

27 *Ms. O'Hare will obtain the guarantee from the vendor.*

28 Chair Heffernon said the pond at Fresh Meadow was being considered as the site to plant the tree.

29 *Commissioner Arsenault, Borne and Ms. O'Hare will look over the site to select a location for the tree*
30 *planting at Fresh Meadows on May 16 at 3 p.m.*

31 **B. Other**

1 **9. CORRESPONDENCE/REPORTS**

2 **A. CFPA magazine, "CT Woodlands" Spring 2016** – (highlights, imperiled sandplains; "silver
3 tsunami" in woodlot ownership; proposed legislation)-staff – discussed by Ms. O'Hare.

4 **B. DEEP – "CT's Endangered, Threatened, and Special Concern Species – 2015"** document
5 – staff - Ms. O'Hare said a new document was printed this winter.

6 **C. DEEP – CT Geological Survey work in Tyler Mill Preserve, etc.** – staff

7 Ms. O'Hare said the person doing the survey is a retired State geologist and is interested in sites of
8 exposed rock. Commissioner Saunders said she informed him of geological outcrops at Tyler Mill and the
9 Barrett property. She said this information will be given to the State which is interested in fractures for
10 future groundwater supply.

11 **D. DEEP Annual Trails Conference – Oct. 2016** – request for topics

12 Discussed

13 **F. Bamboo –legislation**

14 Commissioner Saunders said the revised legislation passed both house and senate. She said the bamboo
15 has to be 40 ft. from the property line but no more containment. She said she didn't believe the
16 enforcement part of the Legislation passed.

17 **G. Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Seminar**, sponsored by the Town of Wallingford, June
18 9, 2016, 3:00 p.m., Room 315, Town Hall, Wallingford

19 Chair Heffernon noted this Conference and invited the Commissioners to attend.

20 Chair Heffernon noted the Fishway Open House will take place June 21 from 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

21 **10. NEXT MEETING** – June 9, 2016

22 **11. ADJOURNMENT**

23 **MOTION: A motion by Commissioner Ceneri second by Vice-Chair Lathrop to adjourn the**
24 **Meeting at 10:15 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.**

25

26 Respectfully submitted,

27 Cynthia A. Kleist

28 Recording Secretary

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