

1 **WALLINGFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

2 **REGULAR MEETING**

3 **Thursday, June 12, 2014 – 7:00 p.m.**

4 **Town Hall Basement Conference Room**

5 **45 South Main Street, Wallingford, CT**

6 **MINUTES**

7
8 **PRESENT:** Chair Mary Heffernon; Vice-Chair John Lathrop; Commissioners Dianne Lendler;
9 Dianne Saunders; Jim Pyskaty; Ken Ryan; Tom Pietras;; Erin O'Hare, Environmental and
10 Natural Resources Planner; Mark Bernick

11 **NOT PRESENT:** Commissioners Carl Arsenault and Jeff Borne

12 Chair Heffernon called the Meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

13 **1. Potential Eagle Scout project, Mark Bernick**

14 Chair Heffernon introduced Eagle Scout candidate and Lyman Hall High School student Mark
15 Bernick who spoke about constructing five kestrel boxes on poles including an informational
16 kiosk at the entrance to Farnham Field and at 4 kestral boxes on poles Land Trust field. Mark
17 said he has already obtained permission from the Land Trust, but needed permission from the
18 Conservation Commission to put the boxes at the Town field, Field 3A. Commissioner Saunders
19 said the boxes would have to be monitored and cleaned daily. She suggested that performing
20 an assessment of birds that may be prey to the kestrels would be helpful. Ms. O'Hare suggested
21 targeting different species of birds if the boxes have to be maintained every day.

22 On the suggestion of Chair Heffernon, Mark will discuss the project with Bryan Saulis, naturalist,
23 and return in July to give the Commission and update.

24 **2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

25 **A. MINUTES**, Regular Meeting, May 8, 2014, 7:00 p.m.

26 On page 3, line 16, the word "big" should be removed and replaced with "point."

27 Page 4 – 2A (5), top of page should read "Red Trail" on footbridge.

28 Page 7 – 4 (c)(7), 4th paragraph, the \$625 cost was just for the wood.

29 2A (3) – Deer population, first sentence, put in "possible" problem and eliminated the word
30 "dense."

1 2A (1) – guardrails, take out the word “missing”
2 Item No. 11, Correspondence/Reports, (B) Open Space-ATV’s were not mentioned

3 **MOTION: A motion by Commissioner Ryan second by Vice-Chair Lathrop to approve**
4 **the Meeting Minutes as amended. The motion passed unanimously.**

5 **B. Special Meeting Minutes, May 21, 2014, 5:45 p.m.**

6 **MOTION: A motion by Vice-Chair Lathrop second by Commissioner Pyskaty to**
7 **approve the Special Meeting Minutes of May 21, 2014 as presented. The motion**
8 **passed unanimously.**

9 **3. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT**

10 **A. Tyler Mill Preserve**

11 1. Remaining planned improvements – report, staff

12 Chair Heffernon spoke about a letter she had written to Mayor Dickinson regarding her concern
13 that no one was taking care of the guardrails. Ms. O’Hare said Sal Amadeo, Town Purchasing
14 Agent, had obtained three written quotes. She said she has to get authorization from Mayor
15 Dickinson to take the money out of the Open Space Fund and then she can send out a
16 purchase order. Ms. O’Hare noted that the lowest bidder did not put in a charge for removal of
17 the guardrail, so an amended quote must be submitted. She said she met on-site with one
18 contractor to discuss how the guardrails will be installed, but stressed a time-limit must be put
19 on this improvement project and referred to the damaged fence that needs to be repaired at
20 the end of East Dayton Hill Road and Woodhouse Avenue which will now go to a different
21 vendor.

22 Ms. O’Hare said remaining improvements to Tyler Mill Preserve include: signage for the horse
23 trailer parking area, which has been brought to Public Works attention, installing gravel at the
24 closed bridge, the guardrails and sprucing up the horse trailer area and installing the
25 handicapped sign. Commissioner Lendler spoke about peoples’ concern of not realizing
26 information was posted on the reverse side of the kiosks and suggested painting “See other
27 side” on the front of the kiosk.

28 *The Commission agreed to have Commissioner Lendler look into this issue.*

29 Commissioner Saunders said the back of the kiosk at the Northford Road entrance to Tyler Mill
30 Preserve needs to be cleared because of high dirt.

31 2. Deer population – thinning

32 Chair Heffernon spoke about a report from Howard Kilpatrick, wildlife biologist, and about a
33 lime disease report in Wallingford she requested from the Health Department. She solicited
34 opinion from the Commissioners and sought direction.

1 Vice-Chair Lathrop said Mr. Kilpatrick should bring a forester or a botanist and also should
2 conduct a deer count after the first snowfall. He suggested luring deer back into Tyler Mill
3 Preserve and set up sites away from the trails to set up the thinning. *Ms. O'Hare will contact Mr.*
4 *Kilpatrick.*

5 Ms. Saunders said Anthony Zemba of CT Audubon suggested putting up cages to keep deer
6 out and to see if the birds eat the plants. Ms. O'Hare spoke about a recent article on a deer
7 hunt conducted in Wilton. *Ms. O'Hare will contact the Wilton Environmental Planner and contact*
8 *Howard Kilpatrick to schedule a date and ask about "exclosures" for deer study.*

9 3. Gold Trail – planned improvements – update, D. Saunders

10 Commissioner Saunders said she received a quote of \$900 for oak wood for the stringers for
11 the Gold Trail work coming in from the Woodhouse Avenue, which the Choate students are
12 planning on working on in the fall. She said the waterproof lag bolts would cost \$200.
13 Commissioner Saunders also spoke about the horses going up into the floodplain, up the steep
14 slope behind the bridge. She said two "No Horses" signs were erected and proposed restrictions
15 on the floodplain from the bridge out to the Green Trail. Commissioner Saunders passed around
16 a photo of the completed footbridge on the floodplain on the Red Trail. She said the second
17 footbridge will be done Saturday and the third footbridge will be done with the Boy Scouts.

18 4. Stewards of Tyler Mill – Les Merhoff Biodiversity Grant project – update, D.
19 Saunders.

20 Commissioner Saunders said the Stewards planted one big section. She spoke about
21 interference from the Autumn Olive. She said the Stewards will try to plant again with seed
22 this weekend, and next weekend will order plants which are \$8 to \$10 apiece. She went over
23 the planting list sent to her from Anthony Zemba and noted that one more seeding will be done
24 in the fall.

25 5. Encroachment -82 Anderson Road –recommendation

26 Chair Heffernon said Mayor Dickinson is looking for a recommendation from the Commission
27 regarding the approximate two-acre encroachment into Tyler Mill Preserve by two local
28 residents from the 82 Anderson Road property, which abuts Tyler Mill Preserve. Ms. O'Hare said
29 the land is currently being used as pasture and noted the property owners corresponded to
30 Mayor Dickinson that they desire to lease this approximate two-acre pastureland from the Town
31 for \$1,000 a year. Chair Heffernon asked if this would be set up as a Farmland Lease.

32 Ms. O'Hare said the Town will be contacting CT DEEP for information because CT DEEP
33 assistance was used to purchase Tyler Mill Preserve. She said another alternative would be to
34 purchase another piece of property which abutted another piece of open space property that CT
35 DEEP had granted assistance to and swap it out. Chair Heffernon said a lease would have to be
36 written on this and would have to go to the Town Council and would become public knowledge
37 and possibly set a precedent.

1 Vice-Chair Lathrop said he believed it would be a good thing to lease the land back to these
2 property owners to use as property if the Law Dept. pursues the idea of it being a liability if
3 horses are on the property. He said he has no problem with having these people lease the land
4 back and make improvements.

5 The Commission said they were reluctant to put a stamp of approval on a regular farmland
6 lease, but reached a consensus that this be a special lease and a special agreement be
7 executed as long as this does not set a legal precedent and if the encroached land is sold by the
8 property owners, it is to revert back to the Town. They emphasized that the lease should non-
9 transferable and there should be no subleasing.

10 6. Maltby Lane Road (closed portion) – drainage issue

11 Ms. O'Hare showed photos of the area and noted the road is beginning to erode again.
12 Commissioner Saunders suggested the possibility of doing a grant and hiring an engineering
13 environmental service and have them write the grant, because Tyler Mill Road, Tamarack
14 Swamp Road and the section of Tyler Mill Road section continues to wash out. She said she
15 spoke to Commissioner Borne previously about doing this grant and he was interested in it.
16 Commissioner Pietras suggested Town Engineer Rob Baltramaitis do this project. Chair
17 Heffernon suggested putting together a Departmental meeting to discuss this and other issues.
18 Ms. O'Hare said she would consider putting a meeting together in the Fall.

19 **B. FRESH MEADOWS**

20 1. Trails Program – status

21 Ms. O'Hare said nothing new has been done.

22 2. Eagle Scout Project – status

23 Chair Heffernon reported that Eagle Scout candidate Zachary Blum has begun the project. She
24 showed photos of the partially completed trail path and spoke about the picnic tables and how
25 many there should be and how many are out there right now. She spoke about how the grass is
26 starting to grow around the picnic tables, some areas were mowed and some areas not.
27 Commissioner Ryan said Zachary's project is half completed.

28 Chair Heffernon spoke about correspondence she received from Zachary asking to use Douglas
29 fir with a high color UV resistant sealer, instead of white oak for the picnic tables because of the
30 price-\$360 for two picnic tables. Chair Heffernon said Zachary asked the Commission to decide
31 the color of the stain and suggested the Commission possibly pay for the wood for the two
32 picnic tables. Ms. O'Hare noted there is \$531 in the office supplies budget line item which
33 might be used to offset some of the cost of the wood for the picnic tables.

34 Commissioner Saunders presented Ms. O'Hare with an \$168 invoice for supplies and offered to
35 divert some of the bill to help purchase white oak for the picnic tables. Ms. O'Hare said she
36 could seek a special exception from Finance, because the deadline to use office supply money is

1 Friday, to be able to pay for the supplies for Zachary. She added that money could also be
2 used from the Open Space Management fund which is revolving.

3 **MOTION: A motion by Vice-Chair Lathrop second by Commissioner Pyskaty to offer**
4 **\$200 towards the purchase of white oak for the picnic tables, to Eagle Scout**
5 **candidate Zachary Blum, and if he cannot accept the funds, be allowed to use**
6 **Douglas fir. It was also decided to use the light brown color for the UV resistant**
7 **stain. The motion passed unanimously.**

8 Chair Heffernon will send Zachary Blum an e-mail to inform him of the Commission's decision.

9 **C. 1250 Whirlwind Hill Road – mowing**

10 No update. *Chair Heffernon will ask Commissioner Arsenault about the mowing.* Ms. O'Hare
11 suggested asking the person who cut the Autumn Olive on Field 4C to do this mowing.

12 **D. Volunteer projects**

13 1. Choate Kohler Environmental Center students – status

14 No update.

15 **E. Invasive Species Eradication**

16 1. Report, D.Saunders

17 Commissioner Saunders presented her report for May. She said on the red floodplain, there was
18 repeat clearing of the garlic mustard and initial clearings for cardamime impatiens as requested
19 by the botanist/advisor. Commissioner Saunders said on the Green Trail south, there was
20 repeated clearing of the garlic mustard; the roadside edges are accessible to traffic with the
21 repeated clearing of the garlic mustard; both floodplains were scanned for lesser celandine at
22 the suggestion of the botanist/advisor and one lesser celandine plant was found.

23 2. Contracted work (Tyler Mill entranceway & Trees of Heaven) – status

24 No update. The Commission will look into spraying the entranceway at Tyler Mill for invasives.
25 *Ms. O'Hare will follow-up.*

26 **4. PROPERTY ACQUISITION**

27 **A. Property owner outreach- discussion**

28 Taken up above.

29 **5. FARMLAND LEASE PROPERTIES PROGRAM**

30 **A. Proposed bid – Field 5A & 7A – approved**

31 Commissioner Saunders spoke about her visit with Anthony Zemba, CT. Audubon, who made
32 recommendations. She suggested a field visit with him. Three Commissioners will attend with

1 staff on June 27 tentatively. Commissioner Saunders said Field 7A has three options: lease for
2 hay, pasture or deep zone tillage or meadow. She suggested these options should be separate,
3 with a map.

4 **B. Farmland Committee**

5 No updates. *Chair Heffernon requested the bid work on 5A & 7A to be given to her on a travel*
6 *drive by Ms. O'Hare.*

7 **C. Property issues**

8 1. Field 3A – encroachment; recent trespass damage

9 Ms. O'Hare said Roger Dann, General Manager, Water & Sewer Divisions, was going to look at
10 the encroachment and recent trespass damage.

11 2. -Field 2A – fence & signage; recent trespass damage

12 Nothing to report

13 3. - Field 7H – gate

14 Nothing to report

15 4. - gate to access Field 9B

16 Ms. O'Hare said the gate will be installed in August.

17 5. – Field 4A – ground disturbance by white barn in accessway

18 Commissioner Saunders said Public Works installed the requested rip-rap.

19 6. Field 19A – mowing maintenance required

20 Commissioner Saunders said the area was brush-hogged and just needs to dry –out

21 7. Field 14A – accessway

22 Ms. O'Hare said Public Works installed the accessway.

23 **6. MOWING** – M. Heffernon

24 Chair Heffernon noted that Fields 4C and 6C needed to be mowed and she had written a letter to
25 the Mayor about possible use of contractors. Ms. O'Hare said she spoke with Henry McCully,
26 Director of Public Works, who said contractors may be used to mow these fields.

27 **7. BUDGET FY 13-14**

28 Use of funds discussed above.

1 **8. PUBLIC OUTREACH**

2 **A. CT Trails Day Hike – Tyler Mill Preserve, Green Trail, June 7, - report**

3 Chair Heffernon reported on the CT. Trails Day hike at Tyler Mill Preserve. She said two families
4 attended along with Commissioner Arsenault, herself and Ms. O'Hare. Commissioner Lendler
5 spoke about the low attendance at the Sunday hikes and is considering cutting the hikes back
6 to a seasonal event.

7 **B.FALL Program**

8 Nothing to report

9 **C.Celebrate Open Space Event**

10 Nothing to report

11 **9. OPEN SPACE PLAN UPDATE**

12 Noting to report

13 **10. OTHER TOPICS**

14 Chair Heffernon spoke about Beseck Meadow and showed photos of dug-up bamboo on the
15 Town side on the private residence side of the property. Ms. O'Hare said Public Works plans on
16 mowing and chemically treating the bamboo. Chair Heffernon noted that the appearance on the
17 Town Right-Of-Way needs to be improved and the access way should be mowed. Commissioner
18 Saunders said the Stewards may do a work party here.

19 **11.CORRESPONDENCE/REPORTS**

20 **A. Town dog park – status**

21 Chair Heffernon gave an update. She said the area which will house the dog park has been
22 cleared out and a fence will be installed.

23 **B.Memorial tree- report, M. Heffernon**

24 Chair Heffernon said a woman contacted Parks & Recreation and donated a 4-ft .northern red
25 oak in memory of her mother. Chair Heffernon asked the Commission for suggestions.
26 Commissioner Saunders suggested putting a fence around the tree after it is planted to keep
27 the deer away. Chair Heffernon suggested the possibility of planting the tree at the
28 entranceway to Tyler Mill Preserve and noted the Water Division would have to inspect that site
29 because of water pipes. Ms. O'Hare suggested the tree be planted at MacKenzie Reservoir;
30 Vice-Chair Lathrop suggested planting the tree at Vietnam Veterans field by the Community
31 Gardens. Chair Heffernon said access to the meadow is now blocked by thick vegetation.

32 **12.NEXT MEETING – July 18, 2014**

1 **14.ADJOURNMENT**

2 **MOTION: Commissioner Ryan made a motion to adjourn the Meeting at 9:31 p.m.**
3 **Commissioner Pyskaty seconded the motion which passed unanimously.**

4 Respectfully submitted,

5 Cynthia A. Kleist

6 Recording Secretary.

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