

1 **Approved Minutes**

2 **Wallingford Conservation Commission**

3 **REGULAR MEETING**

4 **Thursday, August 9, 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; Commissioners Dianne Saunders; Jeff Borne; Carl Arsenault; Mike  
10 Miller; Erin O'Hare, Environmental Planner; Cynthia Kleist, Recording Secretary

11 **NOT PRESENT:** Vice-Chair John Lathrop; Commissioners Tom Pietras and Dianne Lendler.

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

13 **1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

14 **A. Minutes, Regular Meeting, July 12, 2018**

15 On page 2, line 18, should read "the Risk Manager suggested putting up "Must Stay on Trails" sign; page  
16 2, line 35 should read "Peter Picone of DEEP"; page 3, line 14 should read "representatives of Young  
17 Forestry Initiative"; line 20 should read "Peter Picone of DEEP"; page 5, line 7 should start with "Erin";  
18 page 7, line 12 should read "there is approximately \$40,000 in the Open Space Resource's Management  
19 Fund".

20 **MOTION: A motion by Commissioner Borne second by Commissioner Miller to approve the July**  
21 **12, 2018 Regular Meeting Minutes as amended.**

22 **Vote: Unanimous**

23 **2. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT**

24 **A. Tyler Mill Preserve**

25 1. Kiosk replacement signage

26 Ms. O'Hare said the sign for the kiosk is not done. Commissioner Saunders said she will paint white boards  
27 to state "Tyler Mill Preserve Closed Please Turn and Exit Now". Ms. O'Hare will add to the new sign:  
28 "Please Stay on Blazed Trails" and "Leash Your Dogs".

29 2. May 15 storm damage

30 a. Tree removal status & plan

1 Commissioner Saunders reported that 120 trees were removed from the trails and most trails are passable.  
2 She said the Stewards have begun working on storm damage at Bertini Park while waiting for  
3 Commissioner Arsenaault to remove the remaining hazard trees. Commissioner Saunders said massive  
4 overgrowth is being trimmed caused by additional sunlight and rain.

5

6 1. Mayoral site investigation, July 20 – report

7 Commissioner Saunders said the site investigation went well. She noted that Mayor William Dickinson, Risk  
8 Manager Kurt Treiber, Henry McCully, Public Works Director; Joan Stave, Mayor Dickinson's Administrative  
9 Aide; Chair Heffernon, Ms. O'Hare; Chris Donnelly and Dick Raymond, Urban State Foresters, attended.  
10 Ms. O'Hare everyone in attendance went down to view the damage along the roads at Tyler Mill Preserve.

11 2. Mayoral meeting August 9 re: tree removal – report, M.  
12 Heffernon, staff

13 Ms. O'Hare said she, Mayor Dickinson, Chair Heffernon, Commissioner Saunders, Joan Stave, Mayor  
14 Dickinson's Administrative Aide; Susan Schott, Grants Administrator, Steve Palermo, General Foreman,  
15 Public Works Dept. and Sal Amadeo of the Purchasing Dept. Director, attended the meeting to discuss the  
16 aftermath of the site walk. Ms. O'Hare said the Mayor agreed to have State foresters work with the Town  
17 and to put on a Request for Proposal (RFP). Ms. O'Hare said a professional forester will craft a bid to get  
18 harvesters, but before this, the professional forester will mark the trees to be removed and quantify the  
19 approximate value.

20 Commissioner Saunders said the Commission will look at the trees before they are marked and then  
21 removed, which will be only in areas being worked on. Commissioner Saunders said this will be a two-  
22 envelope process with a rating scale based upon qualifications. Commissioner Saunders said she took the  
23 State recommendations so there will be no skidding. She said there also needs to be a ranking criteria.

24 3. Stewards of Tyler Mill – report, D. Saunders & D. Lendler

25 Chair Heffernon thanked the Stewards for all of their work.

26 Commissioner Saunders went over the Stewards report. She noted that in July, the vegetation is out of  
27 control because of the heat and humidity, increased sunlight and extensive tree damage. She  
28 recommended resuming regular trimming to the back of the trail edges. She noted some trails are almost  
29 completely grown in. She pointed out Bertini Park was not damaged as much by the storm as the Tyler Mill  
30 side. Commissioner Saunders spoke about the Trees of Heaven, noting that the piles of brush made by the  
31 Stewards from the Red and North Trails have completely grown in. She said a giant maple and a cherry  
32 tree had fallen in Kondracki's lease field and there were a bunch of sprouts four to six feet high from the  
33 Trees of Heaven. Commissioner Saunders said these sprouts can be pulled up or cut the sprouts and dab  
34 them with chemicals.

35 Commissioner Saunders said that despite the rain, the river is very shallow and is not flowing in many  
36 places; there is heavy mosquito breeding; She noted that jumpseed along the trails is doing well and

1 provides a soft, deer-resistant edge and alternative to tick-harboring invasive plants; and reptiles are still  
2 notably missing since the storm.

3 Commissioner Saunders reported the Water Division mowed the easement at the Northford Road entrance  
4 ("little meadow") again in July which has been very helpful in preventing the invasive mugwort from  
5 flowering and going to seed (showed photo of the mowing). She said the mowing also increased visibility  
6 and deters people problems in the parking areas. She said the Stewards trimmed back and thinned out the  
7 edge habitat area. Commissioner Saunders showed photos of Commissioner Arsenault and Scott Grey  
8 clearing part of the hazards on the downslope of Moss Rock, on the Blue Trail; the remaining hazard area  
9 at Moss Rock – steep section of the Black Trial above the river. She noted in the photo that it shows  
10 several large spring poles and partially thrown trees on the slope above this trail. She also showed a photo  
11 of Commission members clearing summer overgrowth with the newly purchased weedwacker.

#### 12 4.Eradication of knotweed proposal

13 Commissioner Saunders said the knotweed at the main Preserve entrance, was cut back twice and  
14 trimmed. Ms. O'Hare funds up to \$300 can be spent for Todd Mervosh, CT Agricultural Experiment Station,  
15 to do knotweed eradication.

16 **Motion: A motion by Commissioner Saunders second by Commissioner Miller to have Todd**  
17 **Mervosh do the knotweed eradication at a cost of up to \$300. Chair Heffernon was opposed,**  
18 **all other Commissioners voted unanimously.**

#### 19 B. Fresh Meadows

##### 20 1. CT Recreational Trails Program Project

##### 21 a. Completion status

22 Ms. O'Hare said the Contractor fixed the steep trail and the Engineering Dept. will do the final punch list.  
23 Ms. O'Hare said the bench had not been ordered by the Contractor. Chair Heffernon noted the handicap  
24 parking space needs to be fixed as well as the erosion problem near the Cuneo property. Ms. O'Hare said  
25 the stake for the post for the glacial erratic sign also has not been installed. Chair Heffernon mentioned  
26 she was told by someone who lives near the Butterfly Meadow they saw a fawn lying down in front a tree  
27 in the cleared area. She mentioned that she and Commissioner Saunders installed some plastic around the  
28 trunk of Ken Ryan's Tree as well as spraying some natural deer repellent. Commissioner Borne mentioned  
29 a fallen walnut tree in this area and suggested it be removed.

30 *Ms. O'Hare will ask Henry McCully, Public Works Director, to remove the tree.*

##### 31 b. Glacial erratic signage

32 Ms. O'Hare said the signage fabrication is in the works.

##### 33 c. Maintenance program – trailside mowing & stone dust restoration

1 Ms. O'Hare said there isn't a current maintenance program but there should be one. She asked the  
2 Commission for ideas. Commissioner Saunders said the Town did a good job mowing near the road and  
3 along the paved Cheshire Trail. She said the stone dust trail edges need to be mowed. Commissioner  
4 Arsenault suggested the Commission get a small walk-behind mower. Commissioner Miller wondered  
5 where this mower would be stored and how it would be maintained.

6 *Ms. O'Hare will request a meeting take place with she, Mayor Dickinson, Henry McCully, Public Works*  
7 *Director, Steve Palermo, Public Works Foreman and Chair Heffernon to discuss this issue.*

## 8 **C. Beseck Meadow**

### 9 1. Bamboo (4/13/18)

10 Commissioner Miller reported the sign was moved and the bamboo is spreading out into the driveway and  
11 in some places, six feet out past the boundary line. He said there is a 60 ft. to 70 ft. long stretch of  
12 bamboo along the fence line and in some places, the bamboo is 10 ft. tall. He noted the neighboring  
13 property has bamboo spreading. *Ms. O'Hare and Chair Heffernon will write a letter to the new neighbors*  
14 *regarding the bamboo.*

### 15 3. Tree removal – M. Miller

16 Commissioner Miller said the Town cleared the two trees that were down across the trail; the field has not  
17 been hayed and is tall.

## 18 **D. Beseck Mountain**

### 19 1. Footbridge issue (5/24/18)

20 Ms. O'Hare said she resent her memo to the Engineering Dept. requesting survey work in the vicinity of  
21 the recently installed footbridge.

### 22 3. Barrier on Wisk-Key Wind Road (4/13/18)

23 Ms. O'Hare said she resent her memo to Henry McCully, Public Works Director regarding the work to be  
24 done.

## 25 **E. Ferguson Woods**

### 26 1. Storm damage and closure

27 Chair Heffernon reported that she, Commissioners Arsenault, Miller and his wife, Karen Marotta, finished  
28 cleaning up the storm damage in this area on Tuesday.

### 29 3. Dumping of tree parts – (letter 6/21/18, surveyed 7/2/18)

30 Chair Heffernon reported the tree parts in Ferguson Woods still have not been moved. Ms. O'Hare said  
31 survey crews installed new markers. She showed the location of the new markers on a map. Ms. O'Hare  
32 suggested planning bushes to remind the private property owners of the Town boundary here which also  
33 depicts trespass where the owner is mowing Town land.

1 **F. Field 4C, Whirlwind Hill Rd. open space property**

2 1. Autumn olive clearing work

3 Ms. O'Hare said she received word on Wednesday; the vendor cleared four fields for \$5,050. She noted the  
4 vendor cut weeds on Field 4C and then went back and cut the autumn olive and did a fine job.

5 2. Management options

6 Ms. O'Hare said a few years ago, \$4,000 was paid to All-Habitat Services to spray and cut the autumn  
7 olive. She noted that in June, a vendor was paid \$2,200 to cut the field. Ms. O'Hare asked the Commission  
8 what else could be done. She suggested planting hay. Commissioner Saunders said the soil is infertile. Ms.  
9 O'Hare suggested either planting Christmas trees or pine trees or leasing the field. Commissioner Saunders  
10 suggested having Lyman Hall High School students perform soil testing and to ask NRCS for advice.  
11 Commissioner Arsenault suggested contacting Anthony Zemba, Ecologist.

12 *Ms. O'Hare will speak to NRCS (Natural Resources Conservation Service).*

13 **G. 1245 Whirlwind Hill Road property – mowing**

14 Ms. O'Hare said there was nothing new to report. She suggested letting this field go to forest. *Ms. O'Hare*  
15 *will write a letter to the Wallingford Water & Sewer Division and to Mayor Dickinson regarding this*  
16 *property.*

17 Chair Heffernon spoke about a young mountain lion which was spotted on Thorpe Avenue on Saturday by  
18 Steve Palermo, Public Works Foreman.

19 **H. Other properties**

20 Commissioner Borne reported he went to Community Lake where the area was cleared of brush to the  
21 Lake and it looked good. He said there were plenty of trees left that were not cleared and now one can  
22 look down and see the Lake. He said he didn't see any serious erosion and noted he saw piles of  
23 woodchips.

24 Ms. O'Hare noted that she had spoken with Patrick Comins of the CT Audubon Society and who told her  
25 the area around Pistapaug Reservoir will be designated an Important Bird Area largely because of the  
26 wintering water fowl.

27 **3. FARMLAND LEASE PROPERTIES PROGRAM**

28 **A. Field 18A, 995C East Center St./Tamarac Swamp Rd.**

29 1. Proposed Request For Qualifications – status

30 Ms. O'Hare said she asked Colleen Auger, farmer, if she was still interested in expanding the fenced area in  
31 Field 18A. Ms. Auger expressed interest.

32 2. Lease area boundary fence repair

1 Ms. O'Hare said there was no new update as she had not yet visited the site.

2 3. Eversource Energy – Resiliency Clearing Program work

3 Ms. O'Hare said she went out with representatives of Eversource Energy preventing them from spraying  
4 the entire stream channel which was the plan. She told the Eversource representatives she prefers they  
5 eradicate invasives species by species which they agreed to do. Ms. O'Hare said the Town can now  
6 proceed with the leasing of this future water supply property.

7 **B. Fields 7E & 7F – Northford Road**

8 1. Consideration of removal from Program

9 Ms. O'Hare said Vendor Nick Kern mowed Fields 7E & 7F located on Northford Road. She asked the  
10 Commission if these fields should be removed from the program. Commissioner Borne said he wasn't  
11 against paying to have the fields mowed. Commissioner Saunders agreed saying it should be mowed once  
12 a year but noted these fields are a turtle habitat. Commissioner Borne suggested having NCRS visit the  
13 fields. Ms. O'Hare suggested paying someone to mow the fields using Open Space funds in the future.

14 **B. Proposed lease bids - 19 hayfields – terms expire Dec. 2018**

15 Ms. O'Hare said she wrote a letter to Andy Bozzuto, who leases 11 fields notifying him that he wasn't  
16 trimming the edge of the hayfields and that he has to mow the conservation area at the corner of  
17 Northford Road and Cooke Road. Ms. O'Hare also reported she received a call from the lessee on Field 5A  
18 on Cooke Road, informing her a tree fell on the property and the lessee cut it up. Ms. O'Hare gave the  
19 lessee permission to push the cut up tree into the weeds in non-wetlands.

20 **C. Farmland Committee**

21 Ms. Saunders said the Committee has not recently met up until now because of lack of work.

22 **4. SANDPLAINS - STATUS**

23 Chair Heffernon said the sandplain application in front of the Planning & Zoning Commission has been  
24 withdrawn. The Commission discussed possibly meeting with Allnex the property owners.

25 *Chair Heffernon will speak to the Allnex representative.*

26 **5. OTHER TOPICS**

27 **A. Choate students**, October community involvement event: Environmental sustainability.

28 Chair Heffernon said she and Commissioner Saunders discussed the possibility of having the Choate  
29 students work planting plants in the Butterfly Meadow. Commissioner Saunders suggested having some of  
30 the Choate students do a play about Monarch butterflies for young audiences.

31 **6. REPORTS & CORRESPONDENCE**

32 **A. CT Butterfly Association newsletter, Summer, 2018**

1 **Motion: A motion by Commissioner Miller second by Commissioner Arsenault to pay the \$25**  
2 **dues to the CBA. The motion passed unanimously.**

3 **B. CT Greenway Council Trail Symposium – proposals due by July 31, 2018 – taken off**  
4 **agenda**

5 **C. CT Farmland Trust – winery tour, Woodstock, CT (date not provided)**

6 Ms. O'Hare spoke about the upcoming picnic at Smith's Farm in Derby, CT.

7 **D. CT Land Conservation Council, membership renewal – taken off agenda**

8 **E. CT Agricultural experiment station, "Meadow Tour", July 28 – report M. Heffernon,**  
9 **staff**

10 Chair Heffernon said this was a nice event. Ms. O'Hare said the use of pesticides as the first step in  
11 creating a meadow, was not discussed as was the case five years ago when several Commissioners  
12 attended a workshop at CFPA. She said that five meadow sites were visited during the tour and there were  
13 some demonstrations of how to grow a meadow and pollinators were also discussed.

14 **F. SCRCOG Open Space Inventory Project – review of draft GIS mapping**

15 Ms. O'Hare said she received an email from the South Central Regional Council of Governments (SCROG)  
16 which sent her its open space map of the Town. Ms. O'Hare said she then sent SCROG the official open  
17 space map of the Town. Ms. O'Hare said there were mistakes on the map sent to her by SCROG noting the  
18 map said "Water Authority" which is not what the Water Division is called in Wallingford and the Land  
19 Trust parcels had been omitted, etc. Ms. O'Hare spoke about the conservation easements on the maps.

20 **Motion: A motion by Commissioner Saunders second by Commissioner Miller to send a letter**  
21 **to SCRCOG requesting that they contact the Commission be contacted first regarding the**  
22 **maps and any future project because the information SCRCOG provided was erroneous and to**  
23 **remove the open space map and take all the Town trail maps down from the web because**  
24 **they are erroneous.**

25 **Vote: Unanimous**

26 *Ms. O'Hare will speak to Mayor Dickinson regarding this issue.*

27 Chair Heffernon spoke about an article in the newspaper about DEEP inviting non-profit organizations,  
28 communities, state departments and travel governments to apply for funding for recreational trails and are  
29 taking proposals until Oct. 31, 2018. Chair Heffernon said the Commission should think about this for the  
30 September meeting. Commissioner Saunders suggested purchasing a DR Mower or trailer or a self-  
31 propelled cart. Chair Heffernon suggested a shed to store the equipment. Ms. O'Hare suggested  
32 enhancements for Fresh Meadows such as benches and plants.

33 **7. NEXT MEETING – Sept. 13, 2018**

34 **8. ADJOURNMENT**

1 Commissioner Borne made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:31 p.m. Commissioner Arsenault  
2 seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

3 Respectfully submitted,

4 Cynthia A. Kleist

5 Recording Secretary

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