

1 **WALLINGFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

2 **REGULAR MEETING**

3 **Thursday, August 13, 2015 – 7:00 p.m.**

4 **Town Hall, Basement Conference Room**

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

6
7 **MINUTES**

8 **PRESENT:** Chair Mary Heffernon; Commissioners Dianne Saunders,, Jeff Borne, Carl Arsenault, Tom
9 Pietras; Erin O'Hare Environmental and Natural Resources Planner; Dr. Dennis Richardson; Katherine
10 Orsini.

11 **NOT PRESENT:** Vice-Chair John Lathrop; Commissioners Jim Pyskaty, Ken Ryan, Dianne Lendler.

12 Chair Heffernon called the Meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

13 **1. PROPERTY USE REQUESTS**

14 **A. Chipmunk Parasite Study,** Tyler Mill Preserve – Dennis Richardson

15 Mr. Richardson spoke to the Commission and distributed the DEEP permit, the proposal and his curriculum
16 vitae. He said he teaches Parasitology and Invertebrate Zoology and studies wildlife diseases with a
17 specialty in a specific parasitic worm which he said came from fox squirrels in Illinois but has now been
18 reported in various areas throughout the United States. He said he is proposing to look at the long-term
19 ecology of this parasite in gray squirrels and chipmunks in CT. He said although the parasite has been
20 reported many times, there have been no studies conducted. Mr. Richardson said he proposes to collect
21 up to 40 chipmunks over a three-year period through different seasons to study the parasitic worm. He
22 said he would also collect the ectoparasite to study the occurrence of ticks, lice and mites in the region
23 which would provide insight as to whether the chipmunks are serving as a reservoir for deer ticks.

24 Mr. Richardson said he was curious as to whether the intensity of deer tick infections in chipmunks might
25 correlate with deer density. He said the data will be published and noted he has obtained a scientific
26 permit from DEEP to collect data at Quinnipiac River State Park but needs approval from the Conservation
27 Commission to collect data at Tyler Mill Preserve. He said he will do his project weekdays in the mid-
28 morning hours which he said was the best time and said he will collect 10 chipmunks for the season over a
29 three-year permit period. Commissioner Saunders suggested Mr. Richardson wear identifying gear. Chair
30 Heffernon asked Mr. Richardson to give copies of the DEEP permit to John Gawlak, Parks & Recreation
31 Director, and the Police Dept. as well. Commissioner Borne requested Mr. Richardson to share his findings
32 with the Commission.

33 The Commission said it was supportive of this project as long as it was conducted during regular hours
34 when Tyler Mill Preserve is open.

35 **B. Trail Proposal,** Keer open space property, Scard Road – Katherine Orsini

1 Katherin. Orsini, a Vo-Ag student in wildlife biology at Lyman Hall High School, went over her proposal to
2 construct a trail on the Keer open space property. She distributed a Google Earth map outline of her
3 proposal. She said her plan is to blaze a ½ mile trail in order to provide more places to hike. She also said
4 she will label certain trees. She noted there were the foundations of a few homes in this area and said she
5 looked up the history. Ms. Orsini said she would also provide on-line maps in order for people to be able to
6 print them out. She said she wants to keep the project small because of maintenance and said she hoped
7 to get other Ag students involved in order to be able to hand over this project to them. She said the
8 property has a lot of potential and a lot of history. She said she and her dad hike this area and fell in love
9 with it and this peaked her interest in this area. She said Emily Picard will be assisting her in this project.
10 Ms. Picard was going to attend this meeting but was ill. Commissioner Saunders suggested making a
11 topographic map of the area.

12 The Commission gave its permission for the project and requested Ms. Orsini return to the Commission
13 with a preliminary layout that includes parking, possible stream crossings, maintenance, etc.

14 *Ms. O'Hare will forward Ms.Orsini copies of any files, maps, etc..*

15 **2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

16 **A. Minutes, Regular Meeting, July 9, 2015**

17 On page 4, #5A, "Farm to Table Dinner" should read "Rock Hill Road" not "Rockville School".

18 **Motion: A motion by Commissioner Arsenault second by Commissioner Saunders to approve**
19 **the July 9, 2015 Meeting Minutes as amended. The motion passed unanimously.**

20 **3. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT**

21 **A. Tyler Mill Preserve**

22 1. Management Plan – status, D. Saunders

23 Nothing to report.

24 2. Tree by bridge – staff

25 Ms. O'Hare said she went to the site with Public Works Director Henry McCully who determined the tree is
26 not dead and branches from the tree will not fall into the Stewards Restoration Area.

27 3. Stewards of Tyler Mill, D. Saunders

28 Commissioner Saunders said the main entrance to Tyler Mill has gone from having knotweed to wild
29 lettuce last year. She said outside of the east parking lot at Tyler Mill Preserve by the stream corridor and
30 the sign and ravine is now covered with prickly lettuce and presented a sample. She said this was removed
31 and was dominating the area. She said these plants have no value to wildlife. She said the Stewards are
32 also continuing to remove wild pepper. Commissioner Saunders said in the stream corridor, the Vo-Ag
33 students planted elderberry plants. She distributed a photo and noted that the pulling out of the garlic
34 mustard and the mugwort has made a difference. She said the students also did a lot of trail work. Chair
35 Heffernon complemented the Stewards noting they have done an excellent job. Commissioner Saunders
36 said trail work will continue for the next few weeks and noted five trees fell down on the Green Trail
37 because of the rain storm.

1 4. Yellow Trail trail-head

2 Ms. O'Hare said at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Park she noticed the Yellow Trail trail-head is difficult to
3 find and proposed erecting a Yellow Trail head sign on a post. Commissioner Saunders spoke about the
4 rotting footbridge. Chair Heffernon suggested installing the trail head sign on the other side of the bridge.
5 Commissioner Saunders suggested trimming the trees so the existing trail head sign would be visible. *The*
6 *Stewards of Tyler Mill Preserve and the Vo-Ag students will trim the trees this month and will replace the*
7 *footbridge in the Fall.*

8 Commissioner Saunders noted the Stewards will also work on the Red Trail this month.

9 **B. FRESH MEADOWS**

10 1. Invasive plant eradication work

11 Ms. O'Hare said the eradication work has been completed as of this week by Todd Mervosh, weed scientist
12 and invasive plant specialist. Ms. O'Hare said she went to the site and noted the 11 acres have never
13 looked better. She said the mugwort and the multiflora rose have diminished. She showed samples of a
14 mugwort sample which she said was growing in a crack and also showed samples of flowers from the
15 Butterfly meadow. Commissioner Saunders showed a sample of Canadian goldenrod from the Butterfly
16 Meadow. Chair Heffernon asked when the Butterfly Meadow should be mowed. Commissioner Saunders
17 suggested using a weed wacker and mowing the end of May, mid-July, October and November.

18 2. Cottonwoods

19 Ms. O'Hare said the cottonwoods have expanded their area to approximately 1/2 acre and noted the stems
20 are one-inch in diameter and the height of the trees are 8 to 10 ft. She suggested Public Works mow the
21 trees down or be bulldozed or cut. Chair Heffernon suggested using Burnout to eradicate the trees.
22 Commissioner Saunders said if mowing is chosen, this should be done the first week of November.

23 **C. Field 4C, Whirlwind Hill Road – contract status**

24 Ms. O'Hare said a contract is being put out for Field 4C.

25 **D. Doolittle Park – riparian corridor project**

26 Ms. O'Hare said the Army Corps of Engineers has requested photos to determine if a permit is needed.

27 **E. Beseck Mountain**

28 1. Dumping

29 Ms. O'Hare said she went to the site on Wisk Key Wind Road and took photos of the huge amount of
30 dumping which she noted was mostly yard waste. *Ms. O'Hare will write a letter to four houses on this cul-*
31 *de-sac informing them that the dumping of yard waste and bamboo must stop immediately. She will*
32 *request the Traffic Department install "No Dumping" signage.*

33 Commissioner Borne suggested the letter include alerting neighbors to notify if they see a violation.

34 2. Cliffside Trail

1 Ms. O'Hare showed photos of the woodland flowers and showed photos of dumping by neighbors. She said
2 she wrote a notice of violation letter to the neighbors.

3 **F. Volunteer Projects**

4 Nothing to report.

5 **G. Other Properties**

6 Chair Heffernon spoke about Ferguson Woods and the debris on the trails from the June 23 microburst.
7 She said she and Commissioner Arsenault will work on cleaning up the debris and said a third person
8 would be needed to assist. Ms. O'Hare asked about the possibility of using open space monies to hire a
9 tree company to cut fallen trees.

10 Commissioner Saunders said she pulled goldenrod at Ferguson Woods and found a dead yellow jacket
11 nest. Chair Heffernon spoke about a man who uses a vacuum machine to remove yellow jacket bees out of
12 their nests and sells the venom.

13 **4. PROPERTY ACQUISITION/PRESERVATION**

14 **A. 75 Tyler Mill Road property – status**

15 Nothing to report

16 **B. Westside property - preservation options**

17 Chair Heffernon said she and Commissioner Borne are involved in this and informed the Commission that a
18 man responded to the pamphlets that were sent out stating he was interested in protecting his property.
19 Chair Heffernon said she spoke to the man and Mayor Dickinson about using this property as a possible
20 conservation easement.

21 **C. Other property**

22 Commissioner Borne asked if there was an update on the Choate Boathouse property acquisition. Ms.
23 O'Hare indicated an environmental assessment was underway.

24 **5. FARMLAND LEASE PROPERTIES PROGRAM**

25 **A. Field 14A – encroachment status**

26 Ms. O'Hare said she keeps asking the Engineering Dept. to do the next step in order to verify that
27 everything was completed as required by the court.

28 **B. Field 7A – issues**

29 Commissioner Pietras went over his letter. He said there is a problem with the field close to Northford
30 Road. He said the lessee, Nelson Ceccarelli, put a corn crop in by mistake in the corner of the field that has
31 a small wetland area. He said he went to the field and looked over everything with Commissioner Saunders
32 and noted the corn crop is doing well. He showed a photo of the area.

1 Commissioner Pietras said this wetland area is cropable land and said the lessee wants to use this area as
2 a tillable area and use the back property to grow hay in the fall to cover strawberries, but it is up to the
3 Commission to allow this. Ms. O'Hare said the map of the field would have to be changed and the lease
4 would have to be revised.

5 Commissioner Pietras recommended keeping the tillable land this year and getting the lease issue resolved
6 for next year.

7 **Motion: A motion by Commissioner Pietras that the area on the map shown as CMA-2 wetland**
8 **is to be revised to be included in Crop Area 1. Commissioner Borne seconded the motion**
9 **which passed unanimously.**

10 **Motion: A motion that after looking at Field 7A and finding that the soils and vegetation in**
11 **Crop Area #1 are stabilized, it is suitable for the farmer to utilize Crop Area# 2 for hay**
12 **production. Commissioner Borne seconded the motion which passed unanimously.**

13 Commissioner Borne said the farmer was contacted by a Maine professor who conducted a bumble bee
14 study at Field 1C where there are native wildflowers. He noted the farmer said the bumblebees are
15 pollinating the vegetable crop.

16 The Commission will revisit the idea of a second access on Field 7A. Commissioner Pietras will make sure
17 the lessee is aware of requirements regarding CMA-4.

18 **D. Field 9D – status, C. Arsenault**

19 Commissioner Arsenault said he contacted the farmer who cut the tree when he hays, the rock will be
20 moved.

21 **E. Field 9B –fencing & sign**

22 Ms. O'Hare said Henry McCully, Public Works Director, agreed to install the split rail fence and the original
23 sign will be put back at Vietnam Veterans Memorial Park, on the fencing.

24 **F. Field 14A – fencing & bedstraw**

25 Ms. O'Hare said the lessee called concerned about the bedstraw. She said she sent the lessee informational
26 literature about the bedstraw. Commissioner Saunders recommended the lessee contact UCONN or NRCS
27 about management options.

28 **G. Farmland Committee**

29 Commissioner Saunders brought up a few issues. She said she attended the Farm Equity workshop. She
30 also spoke about Field 4A and the white barn which she said has vines growing on it. She said the back
31 wall lean to looks as if it is about to collapse and said the lessee is concerned. *Commissioner Saunders will*
32 *do a site visit.*

33 Ms. O'Hare said Field 8B and Field 3A was also just mowed by the lessees. Commissioner Saunders said
34 she visited Field 2A and noted it needs to be mowed along the road. Commissioner Saunders reported the
35 lessee on Maltby Lane left the gate open and there was a car trespass in the Preserve. Commissioner
36 Saunders spoke about the stream corridor becoming woody and the northern end of the field getting

1 overrun with Autumn olive and multiflora because of the lack of mowing of the edge. She said the mowing
2 of the edge is part of the lease requirement.

3 *Ms. O'Hare will follow-up.*

4 **6. PUBLIC OUTREACH**

5 **A. Farm to Table dinner**, sponsored by Methodist Church on Rock Hill Rd, Sept. 26, 5:30 p.m.

6 Chair Heffernon reminded everyone to try to attend.

7 **B. Celebrate Open Space – Fall hike**

8 Canceled until next year.

9 **7. OPEN SPACE PLAN UPDATE – status, J. Borne & staff**

10 Commissioner Borne spoke about what the Commission wants to consider as protected open space. He
11 noted that cemeteries, schools, and golf courses are not considered open space. Ms. O'Hare said the State
12 was also re-considering its definition of open space. *Commissioner Borne will speak with Town Planner*
13 *Kacie Costello.*

14 **8. Plan of Conservation & Development – M. Heffernon**

15 Chair Heffernon said the Town is moving along and there are three sub groups. She said there a lot of
16 input on the survey. She said the next plan is for the group to get back together and meet with the public
17 to gather its input. She said the deadline for filing the POCD was delayed in an attempt to put the POCD
18 together more thoughtfully.

19 **9. OTHER TOPICS**

20 Ms. O'Hare spoke about a person who transformed a condo association open space property into a world
21 class garden. She passed around a photo and said the person diverted a river and created a dam. She
22 said this is a half-acre of land which was transformed and includes a lawn and Chinese vegetables in the
23 garden. Ms. O'Hare said this is a transgression which was done artfully and is primarily an open space
24 encroachment issue.

25 Commissioner Borne asked if homeowners' association land was protected open space property. Ms.
26 O'Hare said it is considered protected open space.

27 Commissioner Saunders spoke about bat scans done by Anthony Zemba, ecologist at Baystate
28 Environmental. She said his company made an invention which is placed on top of a truck and detects the
29 sounds bats make 75 feet from the truck. She said the loop of Tyler Mill Road was scanned and various
30 bats were discovered, including four or five different species of bats. She said the most bats were found at
31 the railroad trestle and Tyler Mill Road near the Pink Trail and the top of Field 18A. Commissioner
32 Saunders also spoke about gypsy moth sitings at the edge of the Lilac Trail.

33 At Chair Heffernon's request, the Commission agreed to change the next Conservation Commission
34 meeting date to Sept. 17 from the Regular Meeting date of Sept. 10.

1 Commissioner Borne spoke about old Conservation Commission materials he found at his home and gave
2 to Ms. O'Hare to file.

3 **10. CORRESPONDENCE/REPORTS**

4 **A. Film, "Origins", Wallingford Public Library , August 17, 6 p.m.**

5 **B. The Connecticut Butterfly Association – newsletter, Summer 2015**

6 **11. NEXT MEETING – September 17, 2015**

7 **12. ADJOURNMENT**

8 **Motion: A motion by Commissioner Borne second by Commissioner Arsenault to adjourn the**
9 **meeting at 10 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.**

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11 Respectfully submitted,

12 Cynthia A. Kleist

13 Recording Secretary

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