

1 **Approved Minutes**

2 **Wallingford Conservation Commission**

3 **Regular Meeting**

4 **Thursday, Sept. 13, 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; Vice-Chair John Lathrop; Commissioners Dianne Lendler; Dianne Saunders; Carl
10 Arsenault; Mike Miller; Tom Pietras; Jeff Borne; Erin O’Hare, Environmental Planner; Cynthia Kleist, Recording
11 Secretary

12 Chair Heffernon called the Meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

13 **1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

14 **A. Minutes, Regular Meeting, August 9, 2018**

15 On page 2, line 9, Steve Palermo, Public Works Foreman, was not at the walk; page 2, line 22, cross out “at least
16 three bids”.

17 **Motion: A motion by Vice-Chair Lathrop, second by Commissioner Arsenault, to approve the Regular August 9,**
18 **2018 WCC Meeting Minutes as amended.**

19 **Vote: Unanimous**

20 **2. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT**

21 **A. Tyler Mill Preserve**

22 1. Kiosk replacement signage

23 Ms. O’Hare said there are no updates.

24 2. May 15 Storm damage – tree removal

25 a. Mayoral meeting – August 27, report

26 Ms. O’Hare said a regular bid was put out for the forester instead of a Request for Proposal (RFP). Ms. O’Hare noted
27 that Commissioner Saunders draft was reviewed at the August 27 meeting, and pointed out she did a tremendous
28 amount of detailed work on what a forestry report should look like. She said herself, Mayor Dickinson, Sal Amadeo,
29 Purchasing, and Chair Heffernon attended the meeting. Ms. O’Hare said it was agreed at the end of that meeting to
30 go out to bid, which was done.

31 b. Forestry Services contract bid – advertised 8/30; pre-bid walk, 9/10; opening bids

32 9/25

1 Commissioner Saunders said no one came to the August 30 pre-bid walk which was advertised. She said the bids will
2 be opened on Sept. 25. Commissioner Saunders said as of Wednesday, there were two local bidders on the portal;
3 Wallingford Tree Service and Ferrucci & Wailiki, and several out-of-state bidders. Commissioner Saunders said she
4 and Ms. O'Hare issued small clarifications on the map.

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

6 Commissioner Saunders referred to her report. She noted that in August, there were more trees falling. She
7 provided photos in her report. She said the edge of the laneway was trimmed and approximately 130 trees have
8 been cleared from the trails; the ridge (orange), Pink, Green south and Purple trails remain impassible at Tyler Mill,
9 and Blue west and Green at Bertini. Commissioner Saunders said the Commission has to determine what to do with
10 major areas of damage that are adjacent, but not on, trails, and not in the professional clean-up are Hemlock bluff
11 above the rive on the Blue Trail in the south section. Commissioner Saunders reported that road edge work to cut
12 back regular overgrowth so nothing can hit a vehicle will be completed by early October. She noted remaining
13 vegetation is low. She reported three trespass incidents.

14 4. Eradication of knotweed

15 Commissioner Saunders said the knotweed was treated at the Northford Road entrance to Tyler Mill Preserve as
16 well as in Ferguson Woods. She said the knotweed is beginning to die back.

17 **B. Fresh Meadows**

18 1. CT Recreational Trails Program Project

19 a. Completion status

20 Ms. O'Hare said the trails are 95% complete. She said the Contractor would return in September to finish the two
21 benches which will be brought to the site and installed; one bench will go near the Glacial Erratic Boulder and the
22 other bench near the terminus.

23 b. Glacial erratic signage

24 Ms. O'Hare showed the Commission a mock-up picture of the sign to be installed. She said she sent out bids to eight
25 sign companies, and only three responded. Ms. O'Hare said she hopes to have the money issue resolved by Friday
26 noting there is \$50,000 in the Open Space Management fund. She pointed out there is no grant money left.

27 c. Maintenance – trailside mowing & stone dust restoration

28 Ms. O'Hare said she spoke with Public Works Director Henry McCully Thursday, who told her he believed no one had
29 cut along the trail on the butterfly loop.

30 d. Port-o-let

31 Ms. O'Hare said John Gawlak, Parks & Recreation Director, said the Port-o-let was installed two weeks ago. Ms.
32 O'Hare asked Joan Stave, ADA Director, to check on whether the Port-o-let is ADA compliant.

33 e. Scotch thistle eradication

1 Ms. O'Hare said Sal Amadeo, Purchasing Dept. told her she could not re-hire Todd Mervosh, of TM Agricultural and
2 Ecological Services, LLC., to do more invasive eradication because hiring was limited to one time per fiscal year. Ms.
3 O'Hare said Mr. Mervosh told her to write a bid for eradication for a five-year period. Ms. O'Hare said it is too late I
4 the year for Scotch Thistle eradication but not too late for an eradication bid to be put out.

5 **C. Beseck Meadow**

6 1. Bamboo (4/13/18)

7 Commissioner Miller reported that the last time he visited the Beseck Meadow site, the bamboo was thriving
8 extending approximately 60 ft. along the fence line and 6 ft. to 7 ft. out from the boundary line and is thick. Ms.
9 O'Hare said she spoke to the Law Dept. requesting they write a letter to the neighbor. Commissioner Saunders
10 suggested the Commission could cut and dab the bamboo stalks. *The Commission will have a work party to cut and*
11 *dab the bamboo on Sunday, Sept. 23 at 9 a.m.*

12 **D. Beseck Mountain**

13 1. Footbridge issue (5/24/18)

14 Ms. O'Hare said there were no updates. She spoke with Town Engineer Rob Baltramaitis and sent another letter to
15 him in July. Ms. O'Hare said the Town was supposed to send surveyors out to see if the footbridge was on Town
16 property which if it is, will have to be removed. Ms. O'Hare said if the footbridge is determined to be on private
17 property, the property owner will have to go in front of the Inland Wetlands Commission.

18 2. Barrier on edge of Wisk-Key Wind Road (4/13/18).

19 Ms. O'Hare said there was nothing to report.

20 **E. Ferguson Woods**

21 1. Dumping of tree parts – status

22 Chair Heffernon reported the tree parts were moved over to the neighbor's property.

23 2. Eradication of Japanese knotweed

24 Chair Heffernon said Mr. Mervosh sprayed the knotweed that was around the sign up from Dibble Edge Road. She
25 said she went over to the site with cardboard and covered the area. She said she would take her old pool cover and
26 use that to cover the area.

27 **F. Lufbury Park**

28 1. Scheduling of site walk date – Randolph Steinem, DEEP Geologist, re: geological findings.

29 Ms. O'Hare said Mr. Steinem is a retired State Geologist who maps fractures and faults in trap rock and basalt. She
30 said he found Ferguson Woods from maps and went to the site and was excited at what he found at Ferguson and
31 Lufbury Park. Ms. O'Hare said Mr. Steinem told her he wanted to take the Commission on a field walk at Ferguson
32 Woods and Lufbery Park. *Ms. O'Hare will check with Mr. Steinem regarding dates for the field walk.*

33 **G. Field 4C, Whirlwind Hill Rd, open space property**

1 1. Management option – request to NRCS

2 Ms. O’Hare said she had contacted the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) a few weeks ago but had not
3 heard back. She said she finally got in touch with Diane Blaze who walked field 4C Wednesday night and wrote a
4 report. Ms. O’Hare said Ms. Blaze did an assessment and noted that 50% of field 4C was invasive. Ms. O’Hare said
5 Ms. Blaze noted a lot of organic matter but the field was in bad condition. Ms. O’Hare said Ms. Blaze recommended
6 the field be put out to bid to a lessee who wants to plow the field or eradicate the invasives, and then plant barley
7 grass or ultimately go to hay unless the field is fenced. Ms. O’Hare said Ms. Blaze also recommended taking soil
8 samples and sending them to the CT Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES).

9 *Commissioner Saunders will get Vo-Ag students to take soil samples to send them to CAES.*

10 Ms. O’Hare said then the Farmland Lease Committee will send out a bid.

11 **H. 1250 Whirlwind Hill Road property – Water Division response re: maintenance issue**

12 Ms. O’Hare said she received a response from the Water Division regarding the maintenance issue on the property
13 at 1250 Whirlwind Hill Road. She said the Water Division told her to let the field go back to nature because there is
14 no more money to spend on it.

15 Chair Heffernon said she attended a meeting Thursday with Neil Amwake, Water and Sewer Divisions General
16 Manager, who thanked her for her email about the mowing.

17 **I. Other properties - Nothing to report**

18 **3. FARMLAND LEASE PROPERTIES**

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

20 1. Proposed Request For Qualifications – status

21 Commissioner Saunders said this area is ready for work to begin. She said she can get Field 18A ready, noting most
22 of this field had been done.

23 2. Lease area boundary fence repair – nothing to report

24 3. Eversource Energy – Resiliency Clearing Program work

25 Ms. O’Hare said the clearing program work hasn’t been started by Eversource.

26 **B. Proposed lease bids**

27 Ms. O’Hare said she sent the bids to the Law Dept. and sent the bids to all farmers involved. She said all but one
28 farmer responded verbally. Ms. O’Hare said the next step is for the Law Dept write the letter, send the letter to the
29 lessees who will sign it in front of a witness and Mayor Dickinson.

30 **C. Lease renewals – status – discussed above**

31 **D. Proposed bid for Field 8B**

1 Ms. O’Hare said there is no update, no bid has been done yet. She noted that a farmer planted sunflowers on Field
2 5A on Cooke Hill Road.

3 **E. Farmland Committee**

4 Commissioner Saunders said the committee will meet to work on the bids. She noted a new member is needed for
5 the Farmland Lease Committee. Chair Heffernon appointed Commissioner Miller to the Farmland Lease Committee.

6 **4. OTHER TOPICS**

7 Chair Heffernon reported the new Parks & Recreation booklet has the New England Trail listed. She noted that at
8 Tyler Mill Preserve, the signs are up at the Northford Road entrance. She gave the sign for the Cliffside Drive
9 entrance to Commissioner Arsenaault to install. The sign say: “To N.E. Trail – Mattabesett Section”.

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

11 Chair Heffernon said the event will take place Friday, Oct. 12 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. She said 10 to 15 students can
12 be involved. Planting the garden plot areas in the Butterfly Meadow was discussed.

13 **Motion: A motion by Commissioner Borne second by Commissioner Miller to spend \$400 on plants and materials**
14 **to pump up the Butterfly Meadow.**

15 **Vote: Unanimous**

16 **5. REPORTS & CORRESPONDENCE**

17 **A. DEEP Recreational Trails Grant – application deadline Oct. 31, 2018**

18 Ms. O’Hare said there was nothing to report. *Commissioner Saunders will send a letter to Public Works requesting*
19 *that Fields 7E & 7F be mowed. Ms. O’Hare will take photos of Fields 7E & 7F.*

20 **B. CT Farmland Trust – Sunset Harvest farm tour and dinner fundraiser, White Gate Farm, East Lyme, CT,**
21 **Sept. 19 5:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.**

22 **C. SCROG Open Space Inventory Project – review of draft GIS mapping**

23 Ms. O’Hare discussed putting the map on the SCROG website.

24 **D. Dayton Pond dam project – status, staff**

25 Ms. O’Hare reported the dam is failing and DEEP is funding the refurbishing. She said the Engineering Dept. is
26 working on this and got the contract. Ms. O’Hare said the bids will be put out this week and the Contractor will first
27 be drawing down Dayton Pond which she said will take one week to allow the turtles and frogs to relocate.

28 **E. Rockfall Foundation – newsletter, Sept. 2018 – distributed.**

29 Chair Heffernon asked about the delay in completing the Center Street bridge. She asked Ms. O’Hare to ask Mayor
30 Dickinson for an update. Commissioner Arsenaault noted it stated the completion date was revised by a year.
31 Commissioner Lendler said she was concerned about the Water Division property not being allowed to be
32 maintained.

1 Commissioner Saunders spoke about the oak trees with gypsy moth damage. She said the Stewards are checking
2 trails and road edges in Tyler Mill Preserve for oak damage by the gypsy moths not covered by the bid
3 work, and using the USFS (US Forest Service) classification by Gottschalk and MacFarlane to determine
4 possible hazard trees (Class 3 or 4) to watch for next year. She said Dr. Kirby Stafford at CAES was asked
5 for advice on the black oaks, due to the large population of them in TMP. So far, only 6 trees have been
6 flagged as hazards, 5 white oaks and 1 hickory, which are dead due to repeated gypsy moth defoliation.
7 Commissioner Arsenault said the gypsy moth population might be declining. He said he saw a lot of
8 shriveled up caterpillars that died from the fungus.

9 Commissioner Saunders also reported that the Mile-A-Minute plant is in southeast Wallingford and is
10 making it up to Toelles Road. Chair Heffernon asked about the solar array. Ms. O'Hare said the solar array
11 was approved March 13 by the CT Siting Council and the Town Council approved the lease of the landfill
12 property two years ago before the plan was brought up. Chair Heffernon asked Ms. O'Hare to ask the
13 Town Council how this land will be dealt with. Commissioner Saunders said the land is filled with invasives.
14 Ms. O'Hare said the entire project area is 150 acres with the top half being owned by the Town and the
15 bottom half owned by the State.

16 *Chair Heffernon asked Commissioner Saunders to contact DEEP regarding the Mile-A-Minute invasive at*
17 *this site.*

18 **NEXT MEETING** – Oct. 11, 2018

19 **ADJOURNMENT**

20 Vice-Chair Lathrop made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:38 p.m. The motion was seconded by
21 Commissioner Borne and passed unanimously.

22 Respectfully submitted,

23 Cynthia A. Kleist

24 Recording Secretary

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