

WALLINGFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

REGULAR MEETING

Thursday, September 14, 2017 – 7:00 p.m.

Town Hall, Basement Conference Room

45 South Main Street, Wallingford, CT

MINUTES

PRESENT: Vice-Chair John Lathrop (Acting as Chair); Commissioners Dianne Saunders; Dianne Lendler; Jeff Borne; Carl Arsenault; Jim Pyskaty; Erin O'Hare, Environmental Planner; Public Mike Miller; Cynthia Kleist Recording Secretary.

NOT PRESENT: Chair Mary Heffernon; Commissioners Mark Ceneri and Tom Pietras.

Acting-Chair Lathrop called the Meeting to order at 7:20 p.m.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Minutes, Regular Meeting, August 10, 2017, 7 p.m.

Ms. Saunders said that on page 2, under Item A.4 "Entranceway mowing and Japanese knotweed", that it was decided to request the knotweed treatment ASAP by getting three quotes which wasn't in the Minutes and the discussion should be referenced in the Minutes.

Ms. O'Hare noted that if the project is under \$300, no quote is needed. Ms. Saunders said under "Ferguson Woods" Item A.2 should include "Vice-Chair Lathrop"; On page 4, Item 3A, "Fields 1C and 1D should read "about the Rod and Gun Club", they were not at the meeting and should also read "John Gawlak (by phone)" regarding the Rod & Gun Club issue.

Ms. O'Hare noted some corrections from Chair Heffernon: Diane Lendler should be "Dianne"; Recording Secretary should be listed in the PRESENT; Page 2, under A, "Vandalism" should read "she and Commissioner Saunders will go out this Saturday or Sunday." Under "Weed Clearing Along Trail" should start with "Chair Hefferenon said she and Vice-Chair Lathrop, Commissioner Saunders and Commissioner Arsenault cleared weeds; page 3 above, the sentence above Lufbery Park should read, "Commissioner Saunders spoke about Field 1C, North Branford Road, which she said was filled with pollinators"; under Lufbery Park, second sentence should read "discuss at their Parks & Recreation Commission Meeting the existing signage attached to trees"; page 5, under CFPA Programs, third sentence, add "system based on Wallingford's which she said was a success."

Motion by Commissioner Borne seconded by Commissioner Pyskaty to approve the August 10, 2017 Meeting Minutes as amended. The vote was unanimous.

2. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

A. Tyler Mill Preserve

1. Kiosk – status

Commissioner Saunders said as of Wednesday, Sept. 13, she had given John Gawlak, Parks & Recreation Director, the last two scaled drawings and the specs for the hardware. She said she also had it scanned on the Library's scanner.

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

Commissioner Saunders distributed her written report. She spoke about the dumping, noting that there has never been this big of a problem over the past several years and indicated it may be the same people doing the dumping. She said the Police have been notified and noted the majority of the debris seems to be construction and landscape debris. She said since April, the dumping has occurred at least three times a week in the same location. Commissioner Saunders said the Stewards also worked with the graffiti cleaner.

Commissioner Saunders said a Steward did a culvert clean-out on the Blue Trail South. She said the Stewards will construct a cedar fence around the culvert. Commissioner Saunders said the Stewards are working on the plant restoration sites and are getting eight additional warm season grass clumps last week with a \$100 Gift Card from the QRWA. Commissioner Saunders spoke about a problem with dog training on Farmland Lease fields and on the trails. She said the pollinator program has worked well.

Commissioner Saunders spoke about her siting some fisher cats at Tyler Mill. Ms. O'Hare spoke about a rut in Tamarac Swamp Road. She said she notified Steve Palermo, Public Works Foreman who had Public Works flatten the rut out the next day.

3. Tyler Mill Preserve Management Planning Committee

a. Sept. 7 meeting – report

Commissioner Saunders reported on the first meeting, noting it was organizational. She said Ms. O'Hare made a list of materials in the Commission's Library. Commissioner Saunders said she got flash drives to put all the resources on them. Ms. O'Hare said each of these studies will make recommendations and will be reviewed by the Planning Committee.

b. Next meeting, Sept 19, 9 a.m.

4. Entranceway mowing & Japanese knotweed – status

Commissioner Saunders said the Water and Sewer Divisions mowed the mugwort. She said this week, the Water and Sewer Divisions also installed boundary stakes. She said Water and Sewer will attempt to mow more frequently. She suggested having a permanent sign installed. Ms. O'Hare commented on the boulders and said it would make sense for Public Works to mow around them. Commissioner Saunders said the Stewards already trim in between the boulders.

Commissioner Saunders reported on the Japanese knotweed. She said Todd Mervosh, Gen. Manager, TM Agriculture and Ecological Services, came Tuesday afternoon, and hesitated on spraying the knotweed because of the pollinators and did a cut and dab of the knotweed instead.

5. Audubon CT request – D. Saunders

Commissioner Saunders said she and Chair Heffernon received this request from a group called New Haven Harbor Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership. She explained Audubon CT has partnered with several groups in the Greater New Haven area and a grant was obtained. She said a GIS tool was developed online in order to find little pocket parks to enable people in urban areas to be able to utilize green spaces. She said this has been done in New Haven. Commissioner Saunders said the Audubon CT wants the Commission to define meaningful properties, i.e. properties good for wildlife and birds, with the Wallingford map and then work with groups in Town. The Commission discussed possible property sites around Town.

Commissioner Saunders will email the link to the Commissioners.

B. Ferguson Woods

1. Tree vandalism report – D. Saunders

Commissioner Saunders said she sent the report by email to the Commissioners. Vice-Chair Lathrop said this is being addressed by the Police and John Gawlak, Parks & Recreation Director.

2. Weed clearing along trail

Acting-Chair Lathrop said he, Commissioners Arsenault, and Saunders and Chair Heffernon cleared the end loop of the trail that comes near the closed off parking lot which was totally overgrown with forsythia and bittersweet. He said all the trail posts are now exposed.

C. Beseck Meadow

1. Town signage

Ms. O'Hare noted the main sign is located three feet off Town property. She said she has contacted Public Works Director Henry McCully regarding moving the sign.

2. Bamboo management

Ms. O'Hare said she has not as of yet forwarded Jeff Ward's report to Public Works Director Henry McCully on how to treat the bamboo. Commissioner Saunders said the Stewards eradicated 5 ft. tall ragweed on Tamarac Swamp Road. *Ms. O'Hare will ask Public Works to cut the bamboo if needed.*

3. Gate

Ms. O'Hare said the gate was installed two weeks ago by moving the pole and widening the opening.

D. Fresh Meadows

1. CT Recreational Trails Program Project – Bid opening Sept. 21, 2:00 p.m.

Ms. O'Hare said the Engineering Dept. did the Construction Bid Proposal. She said she checked it, then the Purchasing Dept. sent the bid out for advertising. She said the bid opening will be Sept. 21, at 2 p.m. Ms. O'Hare said this bid includes the base bid and the alternate (which is the pond trail and the fishing pier). She said if the bid is too high, the alternate bid can be eliminated. She said the Engineering Dept. wants the project to begin in the fall.

2. Town Council

Ms. O'Hare said the money for this Recreational Trails Program Project must be appropriated by the Town Council.

E. Lufbery Park – alteration activity remediation

Nothing to report.

F. Property stewardship

Ms. O'Hare said the idea was to come up with property assignments. She noted that former Commissioner Ryan used to monitor Fresh Meadows. Ms. O'Hare asked the Commissioners to come up with a property they would like to steward. Commissioner Borne suggested a list be made.

Ms. O'Hare will make up the list and email it to the Commissioners to be discussed at the next meeting.

G. Other properties

Ms. O'Hare spoke about 16 acres and 5 acres on Mansion Road.

3. FARMLAND LEASE PROPERTIES PROGRAM

A. Field 1A, No. Branford Rd – Autumn olive in conservation management area

Ms. O'Hare said the lessee needs to mow the conservation area. Commissioner Saunders indicated the lessee usually mows the area in October or November.

B. Hunting parking signage – Fields 1A & 2A, No. Branford Rd.

Ms. O'Hare said she would like to see a parking sign which says "Hunter Parking" on Field 2A and at the opening to Field 1A so that hunters do not just park in the farm road.

C. Fields 1C & 1D, North Branford Road – R.O.W. issue

Ms. O'Hare said she went out to the fields with Henry McCully and the Police Dept. and noted the Police did install the sign on one side, Field 1D and will follow suit with Field 1C soon.

D. Field 4A, Whirlwind Rd & 19A, Scard Rd – maintenance

Ms. O'Hare said Triangle A (lessee) has not mowed Field 4A and Field 19A. *Ms. O'Hare will contact the lessee regarding the mowing of these fields.*

E. Field 8B, Northford Road - mowing and field edge maintenance

Ms. O'Hare said Triangle A (lessee) has not mowed Field 8B this year and she will contact them again. Commissioner Saunders said the Stewards mow the weeds around the Lilac Trail post and have done this twice this year.

F. Field 18A, 995 East Center St./Tamarac Swamp Rd

1. Issues

Ms. O'Hare said the cows have gotten loose eight times since the spring and got loose again this past Tuesday. Ms. O'Hare said apparently the weeds pushed up the fence allowing the cows to get out. Ms. O'Hare said the lessee is patching the fence. Ms. O'Hare said the owner of 14 Tamarac Swamp Road doesn't want stray cows on her property or additional pasture behind her home. Ms. O'Hare said the Farmland Committee will deal with this issue.

2. Lease proposal – Sept. 7 meeting – report

Ms. O'Hare said she met with the Farmland Lease Committee on Sept. 7 and are working on the lease which has to be put out this fall. She said this bid will be qualifications based bid. She said a bid waiver can't be used.

3. Next meeting, Sept. 28, 3:30 p.m.

G. Field 20A, Beseck Meadow, off Powderhill Rd – status

Ms. O'Hare said a wider gate was installed. Commissioner Saunders will check the property.

H. Farmland Committee – monitoring reports

Ms. Saunders brought blank reports for the Committee. She said she also made a list of the field terms for the Committee and discussed field assignments with the Commission.

4. PUBLIC OUTREACH

A. Vehicle idling initiative: film, "Idle Threat", Library, Sept. 7 – report

Ms. O'Hare said the intern in the Health Dept. who worked on the idling project stated that five people attended the event. Acting-Chair Lathrop noted that Chair Heffernon informed him that the Electric Division will put the vehicle idling information on their November newsletter.

5. REPORTS & CORRESPONDENCE

A. Open Space & Watershed Land Acquisition Grant Program – Application deadline 2/2/18

No updates.

B. CFPA Program, Wallingford Public Library, Aug. 17 – report

Ms. O'Hare said Chair Heffernon noted the event was great event and will give a report at the October meeting.

C. CT Association of Conservation and Inland Wetland Commissions, Inc., (CACIWC)

40th Annual Meeting & Environmental Conference, Radisson Hotel, Cromwell, Nov. 18, 2017.

Commissioner Saunders said she is planning on attending.

D. Monarch Butterfly Student Project – Fresh Meadows & Tyler Mill Preserve.

Ms. O'Hare reported the student wanted a plot at Fresh Meadows. Commissioner Saunders said she had spoken to the student, Hayley Gibbs, about giving her a field in Tyler Mill. She suggested the farmer give the student Field 1B on North Branford Road. Vice-Chair Lathrop said Chair Heffernon told him she will take the students down to the fields in October when the monarch season is over.

Acting-Chair Lathrop will speak with Chair Heffernon next week about coordinating this project with Commissioner Saunders.

E. CFPA newsletter, "Rock, Root & Trail", Aug. 2017.

F. Community Lake – Parks & Recreation Dept. – tree cutting planned.

Vice-Chair Lathrop noted that Chair Heffernon said the Parks & Recreation Dept. wants to cut an additional 540 feet of trees next to an area previously cut to expose the view of the pond. He said the Dept. wanted the Conservation Commission's input before the trees were marked. Ms. O'Hare said the butterfly area was manicured down to the lake and removed shrubs. She said mulch was applied. Ms. O'Hare noted that if cutting occurs within 50 ft. of the lake, a wetlands permit will be required.

Ms. O'Hare said she will contact the Parks & Recreation Dept. on this issue.

NEXT MEETING – October 12, 2017

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Borne moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:27 p.m. Commissioner Arsenault seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia A. Kleist

Recording Secretary