

1 **DRAFT**

2 **CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

3 **TOWN OF WALLINGFORD**

4 **SPECIAL MEETING**

5 **Monday, November 25, 5:30 P.M.**

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7 A Special Meeting of the Wallingford Conservation Commission took place in the Basement
8 Conference Room, Town Hall, 45 South Main Street, Wallingford, CT on Monday, November 25,
9 2013 at 5:30 p.m. for the purpose of considering three agenda items as noticed and discussed
10 below.

11
12 **PRESENT:** Chairman Jeffrey Borne; Vice-Chair Mary Heffernon; Commissioners Dianne
13 Saunders; Dianne Lendler; Ken Ryan; Carl Arsenault; Tom Pietras; Jim Pyskaty; Erin O'Hare,
14 Environmental and Natural Resources Planner.

15 **NOT PRESENT:** Commissioner John Lathrop.

16 Chairman Borne called the meeting to order at 5:34 p.m.

17 **1. Final Approval of kiosk construction and installation**

18 Ms. O'Hare asked for the approval of the installation and functionality of the three kiosks so that
19 the contractor could get paid. She said this item could wait until the regular Dec. 14, 2013
20 Conservation Commission meeting. The Commission made a motion to approve all three kiosks.

21 **MOTION: A motion by Commissioner Pyskaty second by Commissioner Ryan to**
22 **approve the kiosks while authorizing Ms. O'Hare to make the final decision of**
23 **approval of the kiosks. The motion passed unanimously.**

24 **2. Approval of a possible modification to the approved Tyler Mill Preserve**
25 **Entranceway Improvement plan.**

26 Ms. O'Hare showed the Commission the plan as submitted to the Planning and Zoning
27 Commission (PZC) and Letter of Approval on November 13, 2013 with a condition which states
28 that if any trees in the area are removed, they must be replace by a tree of the same "caliper."
29 Ms. O'Hare said staff, including Vice-Chair Heffernon had met with Mayor Dickinson last Friday
30 to discuss this Improvement Plan and this condition. She said Public Works was ready to begin
31 construction in three weeks but this "condition" is causing concern.

1 Commissioner Saunders said this condition only involves a red oak tree.

2 Ms. O'Hare said we will be going back to PZC on Dec. 9 to present this plan and the
3 modification to plan permit regarding this condition or the Town cannot move forward.

4 Chairman Borne asked why the trees can't be replaced with equal caliper.

5 Ms. O'Hare said it was because it would be cost prohibitive.

6 Commissioner Saunders said "of similar tree" was used and not the word "caliper." She said this
7 was an error and "replaced with a similar tree" was used and the PZC was only talking about
8 the little red oak tree.

9 Ms. O'Hare said the areas where trees would have to be removed cannot therefore be built on.
10 She said the Mayor asked how many trees would have to be removed. Commissioner Lendler
11 said approximately 10 or 11 would have to be removed.

12 Ms. O'Hare said it is not the amount of trees, but the fact that they would have to be replaced
13 with trees of similar caliper.

14 Commissioner Saunders said all that would have to be left is the little red oak, the musclewood
15 and the little green oak tree next to it.

16 Ms. O'Hare clarified that the red oak tree will be saved so that tree is not in question.

17 Chairman Borne asked about the parking and wondered if the tree bed was going to be a
18 parking area, and where would all these replacement trees be placed.

19 Ms. O'Hare said the location of these replacement trees was not discussed at the PZC meeting,
20 only the caliper. Ms. O'Hare said Mayor Dickinson wants the Commission to approve the plan
21 with five less parking spaces because the Mayor's position is until the Commission approves the
22 plan, Public Works cannot commence work. She said the expectation is that PZC will reword
23 their condition and the plan can then be built out.

24 Vice-Chair Heffernon made a motion to approve the schematic plan without the five parking
25 spaces and then take the plan back to Planning and Zoning requesting the "condition" be
26 removed.

27 Commissioner Saunders said the "condition" should be removed but leaving the little red oak
28 tree should be included in the motion.

29 Chairman Borne suggested modifying the motion to acknowledge that the Commission likes the
30 plan as proposed and that the Commission would anticipate minimal disturbance to trees not
31 critical to the project, and every effort be made to maintain the trees that are not in the way

1 of the parking. He said the motion should be made to include flexibility and to support the
2 original plan.

3 Commissioner Lendler suggested the Commission approve a temporary modification until the
4 Dec. 9 Planning and Zoning Commission meeting.

5 Commissioner Ryan suggested adding to Vice-Chair Heffernon's motion that the Commission
6 recommend going to the Dec. 9 Planning and Zoning Commission meeting to review adding
7 back in the five spaces near the Muddy River.

8M Ms. O'Hare said this doesn't change anything. She said on December 9, the PZC will approve
9 the plan and then we are back to square one. She said Town Engineer John Thompson has
10 refused to remove these five parking spaces physically from the plan so that is why the
11 Conservation Commission has to say it approves the plan with five less parking spaces in
12 memorandum.

13 Commissioner Ryan suggested two motions, with motion one being that the modified plan be
14 approved with five fewer parking spaces and motion two being that the Commission resubmit to
15 Planning and Zoning at their Dec. 9 meeting the original plan. He said he wanted the
16 Commission to go on record stating they wanted the five parking spaces put back into the plan.

17 The Commission discussed several other options to the motion before arriving at the following
18 motion.

19 **MOTION: A motion by Vice-Chair Heffernon second by Commissioner Ryan to**
20 **approve the modified plan with five fewer parking spaces. The motion passed**
21 **unanimously.**

22 **The consensus of the Commission was to go on record hoping the modification is**
23 **approved and the five parking spaces are re-incorporated in the design.**

24 Commissioner Pietras left the meeting at 6:05 p.m.

25 Ms. O'Hare said the reason this issue has to go back to the PZC is because our approval was
26 derailed. She said when this statement was originally submitted to the PZC by Commissioner
27 Saunders as an individual without the representing the Conservation Commission, it derailed it.

28 Ms. O'Hare distributed copies of a statement that Commissioner Saunders had submitted to the
29 PZC on Dec. 9.

30 Commissioner Saunders said she took issue with Ms. O'Hare over that statement. She said her
31 memo talked about one tree, and the safety of the wheel stops which she felt was a bad idea.
32 She said she went to all of the parks over the weekend, and none of them have wheel stops.

1 Vice-Chair Heffernon said that if the Conservation Commission makes a decision, Commissioner
2 Saunders cannot stand up as an individual and go against us.

3 Commissioner Saunders said she taped the meeting and was going to listen to the wording. She
4 said the word "caliper" was never used.

5 Vice-Chair Heffernon, who represented the Town application at the PZC meeting, said at the
6 meeting, the condition involved "trees" not just one tree. She said it was uncomfortable making
7 the presentation having a member of the Conservation Commission saying things that might
8 make a problem for us.

9 Commissioner Saunders said she was very unhappy with the process, emphasizing there was
10 not enough input at the grassroots level. She said there are bureaucrats, every Town
11 department manager going to these meetings and making decisions and not inviting the
12 Conservation Commission to give input. She said she stand behinds the safety issue of the
13 wheel stops.

14 Vice-Chair Heffernon said the PZC wanted the wheel stops because the parking area will not be
15 paved and each parking spot will not be lined therefore.

16 Commissioner Saunders said people have been parking there for 30 years without the wheel
17 stops.

18 Vice-Chair Heffernon said there are code issues now and that is why the wheel stops will be
19 installed.

20 Commissioner Saunders said oftentimes the Conservation Commission approves a plan and it
21 goes through ZBA or PZC and gets changed. She said unless we keep on top of it individually,
22 all these changes happen that we never know about. She said the Conservation Commission
23 was a joke and just takes up chairs.

24 Ms. O'Hare said the Commission is advisory and performs a useful function.

25 Chairman Borne spoke about the re-forming of the Conservation Commission in 1997 with the
26 concern there was no one here in the position to recommend open space purchases for the
27 Town. He said since that date, we have acquired hundreds of acres for the Town, and to say
28 we just occupy chairs is wrong. He said all of the major land acquisitions have come with the
29 recommendation of our Commission. He noted that the entrance to Tyler Mill Preserve would
30 not be happening without the Commission in place regarding the Fresh Meadows ADA-
31 compliant trail plan and the changes Town personnel made to it.

32 *Vice-Chair Heffernon and himself will be setting up a meeting with Mayor Dickinson to discuss*
33 *the role of the Commission.*

1 Ms. O'Hare said the Conservation Commission's plan was put into a Request for Proposal, (RFP),
2 in May and \$12,000 was to be spent on that plan. The \$115,000 trail grant application
3 submitted is also the Commission's trail plan.
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5 **3. Consideration for approval of a possible bid waiver recommendation relative**
6 **to four hayfields in the Farmland Lease Properties Program, which received no bids**
7 **in the recent Town bid, as follows: Field 8B (80 Tyler Mill Road, corner of Northford**
8 **Road and East Center Street), Field 9B & 9D (bid in tandem – East Center Street at**
9 **southern end of Vietnam Veterans Memorial Park), and Field 13A, 141 Hope Hill**
10 **Road.**

11 Ms. O'Hare said the Town Council has decided not to meet on December 10 so this item will not
12 be heard until the next Council meeting in January.

13 **MOTION: A motion by Commissioner Ryan second by Commissioner Psykaty to move**
14 **forward and approve a possible bid waiver relative to these fields that did not**
15 **receive a bid and leave it up to Ms. O'Hare to offer the fields to the qualified bidders**
16 **in the order of their ranking for qualifications. The motion passed unanimously.**

17 *Commissioner Aresenault will contact a farmer for interest in Field 13A and will advise Ms.*
18 *O'Hare.*

19 *The Commission also authorized Ms. O'Hare to order the entry signs for the Tyler Mill Preserve*
20 *Entryway.*

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22 **Adjournment**

23 **The meeting adjourned at 6:40 p.m.**

24

25 Respectfully submitted,

26 Cynthia A. Kleist

27 Recording Secretary

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