

1 WALLINGFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

2 **SPECIAL MEETING**

3 Thursday, February 20, 2014

4 7:00 P.M.

5 Town Hall, Basement Conference Room

6 45 South Main Street,

7 Wallingford, CT

8 **MINUTES**

9
10 **PRESENT:** Chairman Jeffrey Borne; Vice-Chair Mary Heffernon; Commissioners Jim Pyskaty;
11 Dianne Saunders; Dianne Lendler; Carl Arsenault; Ken Ryan; Tom Pietras; John Lathrop; Erin
12 O'Hare, Environmental and Natural Resources Planner; Bryan Saulis, member of the public.

13 Chairman Borne convened the Special Meeting at 7:03 p.m., noting it was a Special Meeting as
14 snow forced cancellation of the Feb. 13, 2014 Meeting.

15

16 **1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

17 **A. Minutes, Nov. 25, 2013**

18 It was noted that the Minutes referenced on the agenda should be Minutes, Special Meeting,
19 Nov. 25, 2013, 5:30 p.m. Ms. O'Hare apologized for this error.

20 Regarding Minutes for Nov. 25, 2013, On page 1, line 29, Vice-Chair Heffernon said she did not
21 attend this meeting.

22 **MOTION: A motion by Vice-Chair Heffernon seconded by Commissioner Lathrop to**
23 **approve the November 25, 2013 Minutes as amended. The motion passed**
24 **unanimously.**

25 **B. Minutes, Special Meeting, Dec. 12, 2013, 6:30 p.m.**

26 On page 5, line 15, should read "Chairman Borne nominated" not "Commission nominated."

27 On page 5, line 27, should read "Land Acquisition Review Point Person."

1 **MOTION: A motion by Vice-Chair Heffernon second by Commissioner Ryan to**
2 **approve the Dec. 12, 2013 Special Meeting Minutes as amended. The motion passed**
3 **unanimously.**

4 **2. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT**

5 **A. Tyler Mill Preserve**

- 6 1. DEP Recreational Trails Grant Program – parking lots, entranceways and
7 kiosks.

8 Ms. O'Hare reported Commissioner Saunders noticed a wording mistake made by the printer in
9 the Rules and Regulations sign installed inside the three kiosks. She said the sign company
10 takes responsibility and will correct the error. Ms. O'Hare said the entranceway off of Northford
11 Road is 90% complete; the boulders and wheel stops have been installed, the parking area is
12 nearly complete, the kiosk has been relocated and trees have been removed. She said items
13 not completed include the large free-standing name signs to be installed at the main entrance
14 of Tyler Mill Preserve and at the Tamarac Swamp Road entrance and the grading of the parking
15 area and repairing the guardrail by the closed bridge on Tyler Mill Road. She noted the sign
16 removal and gate repair at the Woodhouse Avenue/East Dayton Hill Road entrance to Tyler Mill
17 has also not been completed. Ms. O'Hare said the fencing contractor did meet with Public
18 Works Director Henry McCully to discuss that fence installation project.

19 Commissioner Lendler mentioned the lack of parking because of snow which has not been
20 plowed in the parking lots at the parks.

21 *Ms. O'Hare will write a letter to Parks & Recreation Director John Gawlak requesting the plowing*
22 *of Tyler Mill Rd./Northford Rd. parking lot and Vietnam Veterans Park parking lot, and Maltby*
23 *Lane parking area.*

- 24 2. Footbridges – update, D. Saunders – Nothing to report
25 3. Forest Edge Habitat Project – D. Saunders
26 a. Draft letter to DEEP
27 b. Other

28 Commissioner Saunders said the letter to Peter Picone, DEEP Wildlife Division Biologist, has not
29 been completed, but she has done research and is working on a proposal for the invasive plant
30 grant.

- 31 4. Pink Trail crossing – M. Heffernon – Nothing to report
32 5. Gold Trail – quote, D. Saunders

33 Vice-Chair Heffernon suggested using Quinnipiac University students to work on the Gold Trail
34 improvements. Commissioner Saunders spoke about a possible field trip to a saw mill in
35 Branford. Ms. O'Hare passed around a previous proposal from Ferrucci & Walicki for the Gold

1 Trail. Commissioner Saunders recommended footbridges with crosspieces rather than puncheon
2 bridges as bike tires can get stuck.

3 6. Management of Tamaracks – request to IWWC

4 Ms. O'Hare said this project, which is from 2006, will move forward from the recommendation
5 of the State Forester and State Botanist, and even though a permit is not needed, there is a
6 IWWC Request for Determination Of Exemption which falls under the conservation of wildlife
7 management and vegetation which will be taken up and a decision will be made at the March 5
8 Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission Meeting because this is not a regular
9 application, a decision can be made that night.

10 Commissioner Arsenault reported on the tree removal plan.

11 Commissioner Saunders suggested girdling the trees. She requested more research be done
12 and expressed concern that native vegetation would be killed. She believes the larches should
13 be checked for the destructive larch beetle. She believes a limited number of people should be
14 involved in the work in this delicate area. She said the area must be able to be monitored for
15 invasive plant species. Commissioner Arsenault said it would be.

16 For the record, Commissioner Saunders returned to Ms. O'Hare, two books she had borrowed –
17 "Yale Tamarack Swamp Study" and "Trap Rock Ridge."

18 **B. Fresh Meadows**

19 1. Trails Program - status

- 20 a. Meeting with Mayor – report
- 21 b. Meeting – Mayor, Departments and Commissioners, Feb. 19, 2
22 p.m.

23 Vice-Chair Heffernon spoke about the meeting. She said herself, Chairman Borne and
24 Commissioners Ryan and Lathrop met with the Mayor and had a good meeting and discussed
25 concerns about the Trails Program. She said a second meeting on Wednesday, Feb. 19 at 2
26 p.m. took place between Paul Magyar, Trails Project consultant from Lenard Engineering, the
27 Parks & Recreation Director, John Gawlak, Program Planner Don Roe, Town Engineer John
28 Thompson and Vice-Chair Heffernon, Ms. O'Hare and Commissioners Ryan and Lathrop. She
29 said it was decided that a thicker layer, up to 9 inches, three inches of millings and six inches of
30 base, would be used on the trails instead of stone dust.

31 Commissioner Ryan said the millings could be rolled every year for easier maintenance.

32 Vice-Chair Heffernon said the Cheshire Road trail will be eight-feet wide and the Butterfly Trail
33 would be six-feet wide. She said there will be no parking improvements at the Cuneo property
34 end of the trail to discourage after-hours parking and no parking improvements by the pond but
35 two handicapped signs will be installed. She noted that three handicapped parking spaces, one

1 for a van and two for regular vehicles and seven regular spaces will be installed and there will
2 be no picnic tables. She said a grant will be needed to fund these improvements.

3 Chairman Borne said Mr. Magyar will firm up the cost of these improvements and will also work
4 on the specifications for the platform.

5 Vice-Chair Heffernon expressed concern regarding how the trail would work down to the pond
6 regarding wetness.

7 Ms. O'Hare said she has been working on the project. She said the consultant has to do the
8 final drawings and cost estimates within the next few weeks. She said she met with the Building
9 Official regarding the platform railing and discussed a possible be cut-out on the platform railing
10 for handicapped individuals. She said she also met with the Town Planner, Kacie Costello, who
11 stated a Planning & Zoning site plan improvement permit will be needed for the existing parking
12 lot if the two handicap signs are installed. She said as a result, those signs will not be installed
13 as it triggers many improvements. Ms. O'Hare said the Commission will have to decide where
14 signage for the trail heads will be located.

15 Ms. O'Hare said the \$115,000 Recreational Trails Grant application will have to be upgraded
16 within the month, from the original submission a year and a half ago because of the new
17 proposed improvements.

18 Ms. O'Hare asked the Commission if they preferred all the trail head signs be the same.

19 Vice-Chair Heffernon suggested the Trails Committee discuss this matter.

20 Ms. O'Hare said she needs an answer within a week's time. She noted when all of this is
21 completed, an Application for a variance must be submitted to Zoning Board of Appeals, and
22 also applications to Planning & Zoning and Inland Wetlands.

23 **2. Mowing**

24 Commissioner Ryan said the Mayor asked for an update on the mowing plan.

25 Commissioner Lathrop said the suggestion was made that a mowing plan should be presented
26 each year. Commissioner Saunders suggested a meeting take place to discuss the mowing
27 because things have changed.

28 Ms. O'Hare suggested the mowing be staggered fields and staggered height with a buffer
29 around water bodies.

30 *Vice-Chair Heffernon, as Mowing Committee Chair, will give the Mowing Plan to Public Works.*

31 **C. 1250 Whirlwind Hill Road – mowing – Nothing to report**
32

1 **D. Invasive Species Eradication**

- 2 1. Long-term invasive species management program – update, D.
3 Saunders

4 Commissioner Saunders said invasive species eradication was completed on the Green Trail in
5 January. She spoke about the Larry Weiner presentation. She said Harry Hubbard, Steward,
6 wants to donate five native tamarack trees. She asked the Commission to come up with places
7 to plant the trees. She has worked on a draft narrative to apply for a Les Mehrhoff Plant
8 Biodiversity Preservation Grant for \$1,000. She said the application deadline is February 28. She
9 said the grant money would be used to purchase plants to be planted at the Tyler Mill entrance
10 at Northford Road stream corridor, and the area between Tamarac Swamp Road and Tamarac
11 Swamp and at the bridge site. She said there is no map required, but said she was working on
12 an interactive map. Commissioner Saunders said the Town would do the chemical treatment of
13 the knotweed and the Phragmites. She said the members of the public would be used as work
14 parties. She said an inventory was done of these three sites.

15 Bryan Saulis, who visited the three sites that were inventoried, reported he has cataloged the
16 species of birds that inhabit these sites.

17 Commissioner Saunders passed around the draft version of the narrative and photos of the
18 refuge trees the birds use. She said Anthony Zemba, of the CT Audubon Society, is working on
19 putting together a list of deer resistant plants to be planted at the three sites.

20 *Ms. O'Hare will find out about the application sign-off by the Town and advise Commissioner*
21 *Saunders.*

22 **E. Bamboo**

- 23 1. Beseck Meadow - status

24 Vice-Chair Heffernon said Public Works cut down the bamboo on the access way.

25 **3. PROPERTY ACQUISITION**

26 **A. Property in southern part of town**

27 **B. Other properties**

28 Commissioner Borne discussed land acquisition possibilities.

29 **4. FARMLAND LEASE PROPERTIES PROGRAM**

30 **A. Farmland Lease Cycle – 2014-2018**

- 31 1. Bid waiver (Field 8B & Fields 9B & 9C together) – Town Council approval,
32 1/14/14

33 Ms. O'Hare said the bid waiver was approved by the Town Council and the leases are done.

1 2. Field 5A and Field 7A

2 Chairman Borne asked Commissioner Saunders, Chair of the Farmland Lease Committee, if the
3 Committee's proposal for Field 5A and 7A has been submitted.

4 Commissioner Saunders said no and that she needed assistance typing up the finalized Field 5A
5 report. In regards to Field 7A, she said that was submitted a while ago – Tom Pietra's work.

6 Ms. O'Hare indicated she had typed up the Field 7A version in April 2013 and asked if this was
7 the Committee's final proposal.

8 Commissioner Saunders indicated it was.

9 *It was agreed Ms. O'Hare will type up the Field 5A proposal when it is submitted, will use the*
10 *April version for Field 7A, will prepare hand-drawn maps for the bid, and will then set up a*
11 *meeting with the Farmland Lease Committee to review same.*

12 3. Field 12A – gate to access Field 9B

13 Ms. O'Hare said Commissioner Saunders and Colleen Auger researched the location of the gate
14 new gate needed to access Fields 9B and 9C due to the planned improvements at Vietnam
15 Veterans Park. She said the Town will purchase the gate.

16 Commissioner Saunders showed an aerial photo of the area where the gate would be located
17 in the two fields that go down into Vietnam Veterans Park. She said the gates cost between
18 \$300 and \$400.

19 Commissioner Arsenault suggested making the opening and installing the gate when the
20 weather improves.

21 *Ms. O'Hare will ask Public Works if they will make the opening and install a 13-foot metal gate*
22 *which Ms. O'Hare will order.*

23 **B. Farmland Committee**

- 24 1. Monitoring Reports – Not taken up.
25 2. Draft Proposal bid documents for Field 5A and Field 7A – Taken up above.

26 **C. Property Issues**

27 1. Field 3A – encroachment – Nothing to report

28 2. Field 2A - fence & signage

29 Commissioner Saunders reporting on the dumping of a mattress in Field 2A and suggested
30 either signage of a split rail fence be installed to further discourage this practice.

1 She reported part of Field 4A was disturbed by the roofing contractor's equipment who was
2 installing a new roof on the white barn.

3 She reported Fields 10A & 10B have been damaged by snowmobile trespass and the
4 information she gave to Ms. O'Hare to follow up on.

5 3. Field 7D – gate

6 Commissioner Saunders said the broken gate at Field 7D (renamed Field 7H), was removed and
7 the concrete blocks installed. She said two walkways were installed for the hikers in the parking
8 lot. She said the area around the existing gate on the road was cleaned out as well as the
9 opening to the field which was all done by Public Works. Public Works will also have a wider
10 gate installed.

11

12 **5. BUDGET FY 14-15**

13 **A. Discussion – line item: “Purchased Services – Natural Resources”**

14 Ms. O'Hare asked the Commission for recommendations for the proposed \$6,000 for purchased
15 services. She said this past year, the money was spent on Lenard Engineering to do the
16 baseline surveys for Fresh Meadows. She said the budget is due February 24. She said Mr.
17 Magyar of Lenard Engineering said \$6,000 would purchase 1,500 sq. ft. of stone dust trail.

18 Commissioner Saunders suggested using the monies for forestry management at Tyler Mill, i.e.,
19 cutting down dead trees and planting deer resistant plants. She also suggested spending the
20 monies on a bucket loader or a pusher.

21 The Commission discussed retaining Anthony Zemba of the CT Audubon Society to evaluate the
22 Commissions the old field off of the Green Trail and come up with a plan. They also discussed
23 using some of the money for possible improvements to the Gold, Pink and White Trails. Ms.
24 O'Hare suggested looking at all of the open space holdings to create an early successional
25 habitat including Tyler Mill.

26 Vice-Chair Heffernon said if a plan is made it should be followed-through.

27 Chairman Borne suggested that three proposals be solicited from three different vendors
28 including Audubon, to convert old fields into an early successional habitat.

29 **MOTION: A motion by Commissioner Lathrop second by Vice-Chair Heffernon to**
30 **direct Ms. O'Hare to write-up the creation of an Early Successional Habitat in Tyler**
31 **Mill with a consultant writing the proposal; to build the Gold and White Trails with**
32 **one water crossing on the Gold Trail and one water crossing on the White Trail to**
33 **continue with the eradication of invasive plant species at Fresh Meadows; and come**

1 **up with a open space plan with a consultant to assist with map development. The**
2 **motion passed unanimously.**

3 **6. PUBLIC OUTREACH**

4 **A. 2014 CT Trails Day Weekend**, Tyler Mill Preserve, Green Trail – Family Hike
5 (geared to ages 5-12) – June 7, 10:00 a.m. to 12 noon (rain date, June 8).

6 Vice-Chair Heffernon said Ms. O'Hare came up with a proposed hike which was submitted to
7 CFPA for Trails Day which is being done in conjunction with the Library.

8 **B. Fall Program** – Not taken up

9 Chairman Borne took the agenda in the following order:

10 **8. ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

11 **MOTION: Commissioner Saunders made a motion to nominate Vice-Chair Heffernon**
12 **as Chair of the Conservation Commission and John Lathrop as Vice-Chair of the**
13 **Conservation Commission. There were no other nominations from the floor.**
14 **Commissioner Pyskaty seconded the motion which passed unanimously.**

15 Vice-Chair Heffernon thanked Chairman Borne for his 16 years of service as Chairman. She
16 presented him with a book from the Commission, "This Land is Your Land."

17 Commissioner Lendler suggested putting term limits on the agenda for next year.

18 Commissioner Pietras left the meeting at 9:19 p.m.

19 **7. OPEN SPACE PLAN UPDATE**

20 **A. Revisions:** "Vision Statement", "Purpose" & Open Space Defined"

21 Possible use of Environmental Planner to assist with Plan preparation was discussed.

22 **B. Interdepartmental coordination**

23 Chairman Borne spoke about a meeting with Mayor Dickinson regarding the Galko trail issues.
24 He said he told the Mayor that the Commission wants the Mayor and the Department heads to
25 listen to their suggestions. Improved co-ordination could possibly begin with the Town Planner's
26 office.

27 Ms. O'Hare read an excerpt from the CT State Statutes regarding the responsibilities of
28 conservation commissions and how it said a water management plan may be formulated. She
29 said in the open space plan update, we should think about the watershed.

1 Chairman Borne said the Commission should work closer with the Water Division when
2 acquiring property.

3 **9. ANNUAL REPORT – M. Heffernon**

4 Vice-Chair Heffernon spoke about comments on her draft Report she received from the
5 Commissioners.

6 Chairman Borne suggested putting in the acquisition of State property up front in the Annual
7 Report.

8 Vice-Chair Heffernon said she would put into the Report thanking Chairman Borne for his 16
9 years of Chairing the Commission.

10 Ms. O'Hare submitted her comments.

11 Commissioner Ryan reported New England National Scenic Trail is having a dedication of its
12 Gateway to Guilford at Chittendon Park, in Guilford on Sunday, June 8.

13 **10. LEGISLATIVE REQUESTS**

14 **A. Proposed bamboo bill #70 & #71**

15 **B. Other**

16 Vice-Chair Heffernon said the everyone except for Commissioner Pietras fully supported the
17 proposed bamboo bill #70 and #71 and the protection of the open space. She said the
18 Commission also supported the proposed draft ATV ban bill.

19 **11. CORRESPONDENCE/REPORTS**

20 **A. Town Dog Park Proposal, off Quinnipiac Street – status**

21 Ms. O'Hare said this item is on the March 5, 2014 IWWC agenda.

22 **B. CT Land Conservation Council – Conference, Wesleyan University, Middletown,**
23 **March 15, 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. (optional 6 p.m.) – registration**

24 Ms. O'Hare distributed the flyer to the Commission.

25 **C. CT Land Conservation Council - membership**

26 Vice-Chair Heffernon suggested the Commission become members of the CT Land Conservation
27 Council for \$100. Membership will allow reduced conference registration (\$40) for the March 15
28 Conference.

1 **MOTION: A motion by Vice-Chair Heffernon second by Commissioner Lendler to join**
2 **to CT Land Conservation Council. The motion passed unanimously.**

3 *Ms. O'Hare will process the payment.*

4 **D. CT Federation of Lakes – correspondence and brochure – newsletter**
5 distributed to Commission. Commission declined to donate to the organization.

6 **E. League of Women Voters, Cheshire, Wallingford & Wallingford Public**
7 **Library – panel discussion – “Women and Water”, Community Room, Library,**
8 Saturday, Feb. 22, 1-3 p.m. – discussed.

9 **F. CFPA - membership**

10 **MOTION: A motion by Vice-Chair Heffernon second by Commissioner Ryan to pay**
11 **the CFPA membership for \$75. The motion passed unanimously.**

12 **G. CFPA, “Building Walking Opportunities in the Town of Wallingford” - To**
13 be taken up at the March 13, 2014 Meeting.

14 **H. New England National Scenic Trail 2013 Annual Report – discussed**

15 **I. Vernal Pool inventory proposal, Connecticut Ecosystems, LLC – discussed**
16 by Ms. O'Hare

17 **J. CACIWC – newsletter, “The Habitat”, Winter 2014 – newsletter distributed.**

18 **12. NEXT MEETING – March 13, 2014**

19 **13. ADJOURNMENT**

20 **MOTION: A motion by Vice-Chair Heffernon second by Commissioner Pyskaty to**
21 **adjourn the Meeting at 10:23 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.**

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23 Respectfully submitted,

24 Cynthia A. Kleist

25 Recording Secretary

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