

1 **SPECIAL MEETING**

2 WALLINGFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

3 Thursday, April 9, 2015 – 7:00 p.m.

4 Town Hall, Basement Conference Room

5 45 South Main Street, Wallingford CT

6 **MINUTES**

7
8 **PRESENT:** Chair Mary Heffernon; Vice-Chair John Lathrop; Commissioners Jim Pyskaty; Dianne
9 Saunders; Dianne Lendler; Ken Ryan; Carl Arsenault; Jeff Borne; Tom Pietras; Erin O'Hare Environmental
10 and Natural Resources Planner; Thomas Worthley, UCONN Forestry Extension.

11 Chair Heffernon called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and took the agenda in the following order:

12 **2. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT**

13 **A. Tyler Mill Preserve**

14 1. Ash trees status & salvaging prospect, Thomas Worthley, UCONN Forestry Extension

15 Mr. Worthley spoke about the ash trees and salvaging prospect. He said at UCONN there is an ash
16 component and there are places where it is 100 percent of the stand. He spoke about the management
17 that he does and the pros and cons of cutting down trees and spoke about canopy gaps, what the forest
18 would look like with these gaps, and what would the users of the property find acceptable. He asked the
19 CC if they had discussion about the ash trees and its intentions. Chair Heffernon said this was
20 Commissioner Arsenault's suggestion because of the problems he sees with the ash borer beginning to kill
21 ash trees in Sleeping Giant State Park and trees should be removed to make openings.

22 Mr. Worthley said the first symptoms of ash borer damage starts with the top limbs of the tree. He spoke
23 about his involvement with a project on the 140-acre Wilcox Preserve in Middletown. He suggested
24 working with a local entity, do a demonstration on an acre to give people the chance to see what this looks
25 like, and in the process, run a series of educational programs, come up with a recommendation; cut the
26 trees and process the wood. He said he would come and work with the Conservation Commission to do a
27 demonstration.

28 The value of trees for timber was discussed. The Commission needs to define its management goals. Chair
29 Heffernon noted that the Ferguson Woods property was formerly a managed forest. Commissioner Borne
30 noted forests have been worked for 300 – plus years. Ms. O'Hare said she believed ecological management
31 was the goal.

32 Mr. Worthley said this wouldn't go far in solving the ash problem, but sends a message to the general
33 public giving them a material link and that this ash problem can be managed. He said his resources are his
34 own time and energy and student labor from the University. He said he also wants to teach people how to
35 process logs from the ash stands.

36 Vice-Chair Lathrop said it was a good idea to show people a good forest management plan. Commissioner
37 Arsenault said this was a good opportunity to show people where lumber comes from. Mr. Worthley said
38 people don't understand that trees have value and a market and the forest won't just be as good as it was.
39 Mr. Worthley said the ash borer can eat saplings and small trees, but this is not what they prefer.

40 Commissioner Saunders spoke about illegal cutting of trees and showed photos. She said there would have
41 to be a way to oversee to ensure the public doesn't go in. Mr. Worthley said during an active cutting, the
42 forester would police the area. Mr. Worthley said the ash borer is naturalized in North America and said in
43 Pennsylvania, Ohio and Michigan, millions of ash trees have died. He said more than likely, as with the
44 gypsy moths, a natural predator will come along. Chair Heffernon asked what time of year the cutting
45 should be done. Mr. Worthley said it revolves around the soil condition and said late summer or early
46 winter time is a good time for this activity. He said the trees he would give space to would be the sugar
47 maples, red oaks, white oaks and hickory. He suggested making a site visit, mark trees which need to be
48 removed and run a public demonstration project. Commissioner Saunders suggested the 10 year-old
49 Ferrucci & Walicki inventory report be updated. Chair Heffernon suggested sitting down with Mayor
50 Dickinson in May and then pick out an area, mark some trees, and have the Mayor come out to the
51 demonstration.

52 *Chair Heffernon will be in touch with Mr. Worthley to set up a site walk.*

53 **1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

54 **A. Minutes, Regular Meeting, March 12, 2015**

55 On page 5 under "E", should read "farms less than 150 not 40 acres", and should read "matching
56 state/local grant program".

57 Under "Doolittle Park" it should read "\$1,000 from the QRWA" . Page 3 under "Entrance Area" the word
58 should be "conference", not "luncheon".

59 **MOTION: A motion by Commissioner Lathrop second by Commissioner Psykaty to approve the**
60 **March 12, 2015 meeting Minutes as amended. The motion passed unanimously.**

61 **2. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT**

62 **A. Tyler Mill Preserve**

63 2. Remaining planned improvements – staff

64 Ms. O'Hare said Henry McCully, Director of Public Works, will install the horse trailer sign and send the
65 design to her for approval. She said he will also fill in the potholes at the entrance to Tyler Mill Preserve.

66 Chair Heffernon said there will be a public hearing regarding the cutting down of the parking lot tree in the
67 Tyler Mill Preserve parking lot at 9 a.m. on Monday morning. She said a resident objected to the tree
68 being cut down because it is in the greenbelt. Chair Heffernon urged Commission members to attend the
69 public hearing.

70 3. Visit to Lyman Hall High School Agricultural, Science and Technology, April 20. 3:30 p.m.

71 Chair Heffernon said the visit is scheduled on April 20 at 3:30 p.m.

72 4. Gold Trail, D. Saunders

73 4. Gold Trail

74 Commissioner Saunders said there is approximately 8 inches of water in the field and that the Stewards
75 need another week to let it dry. She said there were no frog eggs in the water there but frog eggs were
76 found in the back of the soccer field on the field itself and noted more eggs were added on Thursday. She
77 said the Stewards will move the eggs to the swamp.

78 5. Stewards of Tyler Mill, D. Saunders

79 Commissioner Saunders brought the before and after photos of the Les Merhhoff Grant project at Tyler Mill
80 Preserve Site C which she had displayed at the Land Conservation Conference. She passed around the
81 Stewards' Annual Report. She requested money for plants and said she received a reply from Jay Palowski
82 of the Water Division who wanted to see the plans. She said Mr. Palowski gave her a map and said the
83 Stewards asked for permission to do the entire entrance of Tyler Mill. She said the meadow will be mowed
84 as needed and a green area will be put on the map noting where not to mow.

85 **MOTION: A MOTION BY COMMISSIONER BORNE SECOND BY COMMISSIONER LENDLER TO**
86 **ALLOCATE \$400 FOR PLANTS AND SEED FOR THE ENTRANCEWAY TO TYLER MILL. THE**
87 **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

88 6. Trail maps for kiosks – status, D. Saunders

89 Chair Heffernon said this is on hold.

90 7. Opening of hunting season signage

91 Nothing new to report.

92 8. Tamarack project, C. Arsenault

93 Commissioner Arsenault said another section around the tamarack trees were cut. Chair Heffernon said she
94 isn't convinced more trees have to be cut but noted the brush needs to be removed. Commissioner
95 Arsenault said more trees do need to be cut down. Chair Heffernon complimented Commissioner Arsenault
96 for all of the work he has done.

97 9. Entrance area plant restoration project – planting plan & maintenance proposal, D.
98 Saunders.

99 Discussed above under item 2.A.5.

100 **B. Fresh Meadows**

101 1. Trail plan- final plan drawings

102 Ms. O'Hare said she is still working on the drawings. She said there may be new trail grant monies and
103 said Don Roe, Program Planner, will contact the State to see if the Conservation Commission is eligible.

104 2. Maintenance of Eagle Scout project- wood chips

105 Chair Heffernon talked about possibly obtaining wood chips to deposit on the trail Zachary Blum
106 constructed. *Commissioner Saunders will contact Wallingford Tree Service regarding obtaining wood chips*
107 *and Commissioner Lendler will contact the Electric Division about obtaining wood chips.*

108 3. Visit to observe ADA accessible trails at CT Audubon and Trout Brook Preserve, Fairfield, CT,
109 May 2, (rain date, May 3)

110 Ms. O'Hare said this has been scheduled. *Chair Heffernon will ask if a guide can speak about the ADA trail.*

111 **C. Doolittle Park**

112 1. Riparian Corridor Restoration project – status, M. Heffernon, staff

113 Chair Heffernon spoke about the Inland Wetland application which will be submitted. Ms. O'Hare said May
114 6 will be the presentation to the Inland Wetlands Commission.

115 **D. Volunteer Projects**

116 1. Quinnipiac University "Big Event", April 11 – project

117 Chair Heffernon spoke about the "Big Event" scheduled for Saturday from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. She said they
118 will be working with the Quinnipiac students to relocate and blaze the North White Trail. She said the
119 students will also cut back the multi flora rose and widen the trail. Chair Heffernon spoke about a high
120 school senior who has 29 community service hours who will help at the "Big Event". Commissioner
121 Saunders suggested the student do some planting or take out the dead wood and work on installing planks
122 on the Green Trail. *Chair Heffernon will forward the students phone number to Commissioner Saunders.*

123 **E. Other properties**

124 Not taken up.

125 **3. PROPERTY ACQUISITION**

126 **A. 75 Tyler Mill Road property**

127 Chair Heffernon said the Town is waiting on further word regarding an environmental assessment before
128 they are able to move forward on the property purchase.

129

130 **4. FARMLAND LEASE PROPERTIES PROGRAM**

131

132 **A. Field 13A – bid proposal – status**

133 Ms. O'Hare said there was an issue with bidding Field 13A. She last year the Town hired a farmer lessee to
134 cut the field and he reported the hay had too many invasives and needs to be redone and the hay needs
135 to be removed from the field for the July 4th fireworks per the Fire Department. The field would need a
136 significant investment to re-seed for hay. There are restrictions because of the Town aquifer and all these
137 issues make a bid unattractive. *Ms. O'Hare will contact the two farmers who had expressed interest*
138 *regarding all these issues to see if it is worth bidding.*

139 **B. Field 9C - fence restoration**

140 Ms. O'Hare said she got a call from the farmer who requested a 12 ft. gate and a 12 ft. wide stone access
141 at the southwest corner be installed however, the Town is not done and so this must wait awhile.
142 Commissioner Saunders said Steve Palermo would seed the lollipop area.

143 **C. Field 14A – encroachment status**

144 Ms. O'Hare referred to a letter from Corporation Counsel Janis Small. She said on March 15, the
145 encroacher was supposed to get his property out of the encroachment area. Ms. O'Hare said she noticed
146 an 8 ft. fence section was constructed recently. She said she believed the fence was in the right-of-way on
147 Main Street and requested Atty. Small's opinion.

148 Ms. O'Hare said she went out to Field 2A on North Branford Road with Commissioner Arsenault, Henry
149 McCully, Public Works Director and Steve Palermo, Public Works Foreman. Commissioner Arsenault said
150 Public Works will prepare an estimate. He said on North Branford Road, the guardrail would be extended to
151 the driveway, the tree would be lined with boulders and the gate would be installed. Commissioner
152 Saunders said she has a drawing for Field 2A which doesn't include installing a gate, just installing
153 boulders. She spoke about a "public watershed sign – "Police Take Notice" being installed because the
154 Water Division doesn't want a gate. *Commissioner Saunders will work on her drawing and enlarge the*
155 *map.*

156 Commissioner Arsenault said on Field 1C said the long roadway was from the farmer and nothing could be
157 done about it. He said a spot by Field 1A was supposed to have a "No Motor Vehicles" sign installed by the
158 Traffic Division and boulders were to be installed to make a more defined parking area.

159 **8. COMMISSIONER'S LIBRARY – inventory, D. Lendler**

160 Commissioner Lendler said she did an inventory of everything in Ms. O'Hare's office which belonged to the
161 CC. She said she made up a list and categorized it. She passed around the list which will be kept in Ms.
162 O'Hare's office along with a sign-off sheet.

163 **D. Farmland Committee**

164 Discussed above.

165 **E. Property Issues**

166 Discussed above.

167 **5. PUBLIC OUTREACH**

168 **A. Property owner outreach – status, M. Heffernon**

169 Chair Heffernon said the pamphlets went out and said she received a call from a property owner on how to
170 exempt his property

171 **B. CT Trails Day – farm tour hike, June 6, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.**

172 To be discussed next meeting.

173

174 **C. Film event** – co-sponsored with Wallingford Public Library

175 Chair Heffernon said the film, "Origins" will be shown in August at the Library.

176 **6. OPEN SPACE USER'S GROUP MEETING**, April 8, 2015, 7:00 p.m. – report

177 Commissioner Borne said the meeting was well run. Commissioner Saunders said it was good that Town
178 officials attended. Chair Heffernon said it was a good meeting for sharing. Commissioner Borne suggested
179 the Conservation Commission become more involved with the property acquisition by coming up with a
180 plan and possibly forming a sub-committee. *Commissioner Saunders will write up comments for the next*
181 *meeting.*

182 **7. OPEN SPACE PLAN UPDATE**

183 **A. Status**, M. Heffernon, J. Borne, staff

184 Commissioner Borne said she spoke with Town Planner Kacie Costello and Ms. O'Hare about putting
185 together the inventory.

186 **B. Mapping**

187 Ms. O'Hare said South Central Regional Council of Government, (SCROG) has grant monies available. She
188 requested the Commission come up with maps. *Ms. O'Hare will come up with suggestions and obtain a*
189 *sample map from SCRCOG to bring to the next meeting.*

190 **9. BUDGETS**

191 **A. FY 15-16** – Town Council Public Hearing, April 9, 6:00 – report

192 Chair Heffernon said there were no questions from the Town Council.

193 **B. FY 14-15** – year end expenses

194 Discussed above.

195 **1. OTHER TOPICS**

196 Chair Heffernon said she spoke with Rob Baltramaitis, Assistant Town Engineer about the survey on the
197 McCarthy property but said she wasn't sure when this would occur. Commissioner Saunders showed
198 photos of the markers ripped off of Town property. Ms. O'Hare spoke about bamboo on Town Right-Of-
199 Way. *Ms. O'Hare will write Atty. Small regarding this issue and about enforcement.*

200 Chair Heffernon told the Commission that the World Health Organization has determined that glyphosates
201 cause cancer.

202 **11. CORRESPONDENCE/REPORTS**

203 **A. CT Land Conservation Council – 2015 Conference**, Wesleyan University, Middletown, CT,
204 Sat., March 21, 2015 – reports

205 Commissioner Borne spoke about the meeting and spoke about the Avalonia Land Conservancy in Preston
206 reaching out to the public. He suggested the Conservation Commission reach out to the Land Trust to see
207 if they would turn over their land to the Town for management or merge with another Land Trust.

208 **B. CT Butterfly Association Spring program – “The Future of the Monarch Butterfly: What Can**
209 **We Do”?**, The Whitney Center, 200 Leeder Hill Drive, Hamden, CT., April 17, 7:00 p.m.

210 Chair Heffernon spoke about the program and distributed the flyer.

211 **D. Wallingford Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) – PZC Special Meeting**
212 **re: Steering Committee**, April 20, 2015, Robert Early Auditorium, Town Hall, 7 p.m.

213 Chair Heffernon spoke about this meeting. She said she will attend.

214 She distributed information about the box turtle crossings to be provided in the proposed new railroad line
215 installation.

216 **12. NEXT MEETING – May 14, 2015**

217 **13. ADJOURNMENT**

218 **MOTION: A motion by Commissioner Lathrop second by Commissioner to adjourn the**
219 **Meeting at 10:15 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.**

220

221 Respectfully submitted,

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223 Cynthia A. Kleist

224 Recording Secretary

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