

1 **APPROVED MINUTES**

2 **SPECIAL MEETING**

3 **Wallingford Conservation Commission**

4 **Tuesday, May 22, 2018 – 5:00 p.m.**

5 **Basement Conference Room**

6 **Town Hall**

7 **45 South Main Street**

8 **Wallingford, CT**

9 **MINUTES**

10 The Conservation Commission conducted a Special Meeting on Tuesday, May 22, 2018 at 5:00 p.m. for the purpose
11 of discussing storm damage which occurred in Tyler Mill Preserve and other open space properties as a result of the
12 May 15, 2018 storm event. They also discussed plans moving forward.

13 **PRESENT:** Chair Mary Heffernon; Vice-Chair John Lathrop; Commissioners Jeff Borne, Dianne Lendler and Dianne
14 Saunders; Erin O’Hare Environmental Planner; Cynthia Kleist, Recording Secretary; Public: Tom Grace.

15 **NOT PRESENT:** Commissioners Carl Arsenault; Tom Pietras; Mark Ceneri; Mike Miller.

16 Chair Heffernon called the Meeting to order at 5:06 p.m. She reported that Ferguson Woods looked like a cyclone
17 went through it. She showed a map of damage from the storm and also showed damage at Marcus Cooke Park, but
18 noted she believed Marcus Cooke Park is safe and the damage could be cleaned up in a few hours.

19 Commissioner Saunders reported on Tyler Mill Preserve. She said she spoke to Parks & Recreation Director John
20 Gawlak on Friday about the scope of the problem. She distributed a map of the area. Commissioner Saunders said
21 she sent Mr. Gawlak a damage report and said the immediate need is to have a “Closed” sign for the Tyler Mill
22 entrance. Commissioner Saunders said Mr. Gawlak will get a sign that says “Tyler Mill Preserve Closed”. She said
23 there will be signs for nine Tyler Mill Preserve entrances and the Commission could put them up. Commissioner
24 Saunders noted that Mr. Gawlak suggested concrete blocks at the triangle going down to the bridge also be installed
25 which she said was a good idea.

26 Commissioner Saunders went over the trail status, noting that everything has been checked except for the Pink Trail
27 and the Purple Trail. She said these trails can be easily closed because they are discreet trails. Commissioner
28 Saunders said the Red Trail south of Tamarac Swamp Road needs to be checked because it is unsafe. She spoke
29 about a cleanup strategy, noting there is no way to do the cleanup with the chainsaw work parties because of the
30 enormity of the situation. Commissioner Borne said that Commissioner Miller informed him that the Sleeping Giant
31 Park Trails Crew is shut down until the State reopens the Park. He said eight of their crews are available to assist the
32 Commission. Commissioner Saunders said this would have to be approved by the Town’s Risk Manager. She noted
33 the bulk of the work needs a professional because it is either overhead or so big that trucks and loaders are needed

1 to move the material. She said the storm went across Bertini Park and went up the Black Trail and wiped it out. She
2 said the work would have to begin from the top down because the slope is gone. She said the storm took out the
3 tops of the hemlocks. She noted the damage is off the trail and doesn't have to be cleaned up. Commissioner
4 Saunders said the storm knocked out some of the trees on the Blue Trail . She said the storm dropped back down all
5 the way out to Maltby Lane which is gone. She said there is damage to Tyler Mill Road and there are huge trees
6 down on the Green Trail. She said the material was hauled out by truck.

7 Commissioner Saunders said the Commission could do spotty work on the trails. She noted many trees were thrown
8 across the road. She said these trees were healthy oaks and maples. She said at the edge of the trail, rocks are
9 falling down. Commissioner Saunders said there are big trees across the guardrail at Tyler Mill and three trees on the
10 flood plain at the dam. She said there is a big tree across the road and three or four trees hanging over the race at
11 the Pink Trail. She said where the farm field meets the Pink Trail cannot be seen because there is a wall of downed
12 trees.

13 Commissioner Saunders said Maltby is covered out to the gate with downed trees. She said on the Orange Trail,
14 trees have fallen down to the road and there are a few root balls taking up the trail. Commissioner Lendler said the
15 Orange Trail needs to be closed indefinitely. She said on the Red Trail, several down trees can be taken care of; the
16 North White Trail is clear except where the trail meets the Red Trail. She said the North Side is in better shape.

17 Commissioner Lendler said she hiked the Red North Trail earlier in the day and reported that mountain bikers were
18 already going through. Commissioner Saunders pointed out that most people have no clue how dangerous this
19 situation is. She noted that huge limbs have been snapped off and proposed using professionals or contractors with
20 trucks. She said she received resources from the CFPA and got bid document samples. She said the work parties are
21 ready to start work this Thursday. She said the work parties will do the hazards first which include the widow maker
22 tree on the Red South Trail; the cantilever near the dam area, the Red North, the Swamp Trail and the Green South
23 Trail. Commissioner Saunders said the work parties can attempt to work on the Black South Trail. She said the work
24 parties can also look for hazards on the Purple Trail and the Pink Trail.

25 Commissioner Lendler noted the farmers are also upset over the storm damage to their fields.

26 Commissioner Borne suggested having a policy regarding the Contractors possibly taking the wood. Commissioner
27 Saunders said she is hoping the Contractors take the wood to keep the price down. She said the Contractor work will
28 be confined to the roads. Commissioner Lendler noted there are some parts of the Orange Trail where the wood
29 removal will have to wait until winter. Commissioner Saunders said the tree canopies are almost down to the road
30 and the ridges are dangerous. Commissioner Borne suggested mimicking nature in the back areas. Commissioner
31 Saunders said the contractors have to remove all the debris and if it is left, it will plug up the culverts. She said she
32 didn't know if the root balls should be removed. She said the Contractors would be required to attend a site visit
33 with the access being through Woodhouse Avenue only. Commissioner Lendler suggested doing this work as quickly
34 as possible.

35 Commissioner Saunders spoke about the information on the Contractors and spoke about the names of foresters
36 and loggers. She said a forester could tell us what should come down. Commissioner Borne wondered if the
37 Commission could get DEEP foresters to look at the damage at no expense. Commissioner Saunders suggested
38 putting out a Request for Proposal (RFP), not a bid. She suggested getting someone to mark the trees. She pointed
39 out that some of the live standing trees are bent or have had their canopies snapped off and are hanging. Ms.

1 O'Hare said Comptroller Jim Bowes said the Town is assessing all over town to put in for FEMA reimbursement
2 which is by county. She said she also spoke to John Gawlak, Public Works Director, who said he wanted the
3 Commission to assess the scale of damage. Ms. O'Hare said Mr. Gawlak told her to tell the Stewards of Tyler Mill not
4 to do any work yet. She asked if the farm fields are accessible to the farmer so their hay could be mowed.

5 Ms. O'Hare said the big picture is the impact to the farm fields and that the emergency access be free and clear to
6 access the areas. Ms. O'Hare spoke about funding and Commissioner Saunders suggested using the Open Space
7 Fund and the Town Council contingency funds. She said this is a matter of public safety.

8 Commissioner Borne spoke about using contingency funds or rainy day funds. Commissioner Saunders said all the
9 information has been gathered on where the blown downs are and where the blockages are located. She said these
10 locations are infrastructure roads for forest fire prevention. Ms. O'Hare asked at what point this becomes a magnet
11 for forest fires. Commissioner Saunders said the fires could happen once the tree canopies are dried. She said Mr.
12 Gawlak has emergency funds to use for signs. She said she wants red signs for Tyler Mill Preserve and need more
13 "Do Not Enter" caution tape. Chair Heffernon said Steve Palermo, Parks & Recreation Director, would bring in
14 cement blocks when he could obtain them. Commissioner Saunders spoke about sub-contractors. Commissioner
15 Borne suggested speaking to Eric Hansen.

16 Commissioner Saunders said the next step would be to continue counting trees and noted the Pink Trail and Purple
17 Trails were not done. She said she only wants the Contractors to do the roads so we can tell Mr. Gawlak how many
18 blockages there are.

19 Ms. O'Hare suggested doing a map of the damage for Mayor Dickinson. Commissioner Saunders said she is working
20 on this. She also said she would add suggestions and attach a sample and do the maps. Commissioner Saunders also
21 spoke about the problems on Maltby Lane with the trees. *She said she would modify the plan and maps and contact*
22 *the DEEP forester, work on an RFP and present this information to Mr. Gawlak.*

23 Commissioner Saunders said boots on the ground are needed to count trees for the FEMA reimbursement.

24 *Commissioner Lendler said she would do the farm fields and speak to farmer Colleen Auger. She said the hazards*
25 *must be cut. Ms. O'Hare said she would like to see an aerial photo of the damage. Vice-Chair Lathrop will spot and*
26 *saw.*

27 Chair Heffernon said she would be giving a PowerPoint presentation at the June 12 Town Council meeting and
28 asked other Commission members to attend.

29 **ADJOURNMENT**

30 Commissioner Borne made a motion to adjourn the Meeting at 6:18 p.m. Vice-Chair Lathrop seconded the motion
31 which passed unanimously.

32 Respectfully submitted,

33 Cynthia A. Kleist

34 Recording Secretary