

**CONSERVATION COMMISSION
TOWN OF WALLINGFORD
November 13, 2008**

MINUTES

The Wallingford Conservation Commission held a Regular Meeting on Thursday, November 13, 2008, at 7:00 p.m. in the Basement Conference Room of the Town Hall Municipal Building, 45 South Main Street, Wallingford, CT. Present were Chairman Jeffrey Borne, Vice Chairperson Mary Heffernon (arrived at 7:23 p.m.), and Commissioners Carl Arsenault (arrived at 7:10 p.m.), Dianne Saunders, John Lathrop, James Pyskaty, and Kenneth Ryan. The Town staff persons attending were Ms. Erin O'Hare, Environmental and Natural Resources Planner, Program Planner Mr. Don Roe, and Recording Secretary Ms. Kathleen Burns. One person, Mrs. Doreen LeGrand, was present from the public.

Chairman Borne called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

2. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

B. Farmland Lease Properties Program

4. Field 14A – 205 Main Street – Encroachment

Chairman Borne acknowledged Mrs. Doreen LeGrand of 215 Main Street, Yalesville. He noted that Corporation Counsel Adam Mantzaris had sent a letter to Mr. and Mrs. LeGrand about the encroachment that exists onto 205 Main Street, the Town's open space Field 14A.

Mrs. LeGrand said their swingset/playscape is located on Town property. They moved in 16 years ago. A huge forsythia bush covered most of the side part and to the metal pole in the back yard. They found a clothesline pole in the back plus a metal flagpole, and they assumed that that was the property line. When Dunkin Donuts was surveyed, Dunkin Donuts moved their fence over two or three feet and told them that the LeGrands had mismarked the side yard. Mr. LeGrand did not think that was correct, but they finished the fence across the front. Mrs. LeGrand said she has not seen the map from Corporation Counsel Mantzaris, although Mr. Mantzaris and her husband walked the property several months ago. She believes the pine tree is theirs, and there was a stake.

Mrs. LeGrand said they knew that the space behind was Town property. They have always kept an eye on the farmer's equipment in the back. She believes that the retaining wall is on their side of the property. The two driveways are side by side, and the tree is in the middle. Mr. LeGrand measured from the garage several times before he built their retaining wall, but he did not continue the wall to the property line.

Commissioner Carl Arsenault arrived at 7:10 p.m.

Mr. Lathrop thought that the LeGrands probably were mistaken about their boundary from many years ago. A proper survey would clarify the boundaries.

Mrs. LeGrand said she probably can find a drawing with dimensions that they were given when they bought the house. Her family would like to use the property back to the clothesline pole. Their daughter is young, and they still want her to have access to the playset and the garden for a few more years. She offered to lease or purchase a portion of land from the Town.

Mr. Roe noted that if the State was involved in the open space purchase, then there are dedication agreements which constrain what the Town can do. Chairman Borne said the Town Engineering Department did a survey, which he thought would be correct. He advised Mrs. LeGrand that, if her drawing has conflicting mapping, then she should show it to Adam Mantzaris as soon as possible.

Mr. Ryan wanted to know how much property is involved. Ms. O'Hare estimated a size of 15' x 100' in the back, and some on the west side, maybe 10' x 70'. The Town has been working on posting the 42 open space properties, which is how this situation was discovered. She asked Mrs. LeGrand, if it is proved by measurements that the line is where the Commission thinks it is, can her family move their playscape back toward Main Street?

Mrs. LeGrand said it is a wood playset, with probably another two to four years for her daughter to enjoy it. There is nothing on the back property line that can't be moved, nothing permanent—a garden, a playset, and a dog kennel—all those things can be moved. She noted that the side part cuts into their yard quite a bit, very close to their pool. Her family always mowed the side part for access to the Town field.

Chairman Borne said the Commission will discuss the situation. Either the Conservation Commission or Attorney Mantzaris will respond to the LeGrands. The Town owns a lot of open space properties, and the Commission has to be diligent about stewardship. Encroachment is always an issue. This has been on the Commission's agenda. Chairman Borne thanked Mrs. LeGrand for coming to the meeting.

Mrs. LeGrand left the meeting at this time. Vice Chairperson Mary Heffernon arrived afterward, at 7:23 p.m.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Minutes, October 9, 2008

Motion: John Lathrop, to approve the Minutes of the October 9, 2008, Regular Meeting as presented.

Second: Jim Pyskaty.

Vote: The motion was approved unanimously by all members, except that Dianne Saunders abstained from voting because she had not attended in October.

2. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

A. Tyler Mill Preserve

1. Trails System Improvement Program

a. Northern area: Trails Committee report

Mary Heffernon, Chairperson, said there is no new information since the report last month. Erin O'Hare has to write the bid to get costs on how much it will be to blaze the trails. Mileage figures for the trail sections are needed. The Commissioners asked Ms. O'Hare to contact the person from Connwood, who was supposed to convert the GPS trails segment data into mileage. Dianne Saunders noticed that some trees there have been marked with numbers. Those trees were flagged by Wayne Fogg and some Boy Scouts in connection with trail blazing. Unfortunately, the planned work was cancelled, per the Tyler Mill rules, because hunting was allowed at Tyler Mill on that day.

Separately, Ms. O'Hare said that Ms. Heather Clark of the Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies notified her that the Road Salt Study is discontinued due to equipment problems. The Commission had voted in July to allow this study. One handout tonight was from the Menunkatuck Audubon Society (November 2005). It describes the types of road salt/de-icers plus sand that could be used and gives the effect for each upon the environment.

b. Southern area: DEP Recreational Trails Grant – status

Don Roe, Mary Heffernon, and a DEP archaeologist had met for a site visit on November 11th. They provided the archaeologist with background information. The DEP archaeologist will use a base map of Wallingford from 1850; geological, topographical, and historical data; the chapter on Tyler's Mill that was written by Lisa Toman; and State Archaeologist Nicholas Bellantoni's information that was included in the Environmental Review Team study of this area. With this study, the grant can move along.

c. Contracts – Ms. O'Hare is assembling this information.

4. PROPERTY ACQUISITION

A. Reports

Chairman Borne said the Commission was asked by Mayor Dickinson to view a property in east Wallingford. Chairman Borne briefly described it. He and Ken Ryan, Jim Pyskaty, and Mary Heffernon had seen the property on October 18th. Carl Arsenault, Dianne Saunders, John Lathrop, and Erin O'Hare will try to go out on Wednesday, November 19th with Jim Pyskaty. Chairman Borne prepared a draft report, which the Commissioners reviewed. It was the Commissioners' unanimous consensus that this report will be submitted to the Mayor as soon as possible and any further comments should be forwarded to Mr. Borne so he can relay them to the Mayor.

B. Farmland Lease Properties Program

1. Field 1D – fencing

Ms. O'Hare said that the lessee on Field 1D is asking for a fence next to the right-of-way for the Rod & Gun Club in order to keep Club-associated vehicles off Town property. Commissioners recommended that Ms. O'Hare should contact the Rod & Gun Club and ask them to tell their members to avoid driving on the leased farmland.

2. Field 7A – Northford Road – restoration project. There has been no

activity. Ms. O'Hare will ask Public Works Director Henry McCully to fix the basin on the property.

3. Bid Proposal – There has been no action.

4. Field 14A – 205 Main Street – encroachment.

Chairman Borne told Ms. Heffernon about the discussion tonight with Mrs. Doreen LeGrand. At this time, it was the unanimous consensus of the Commission that absent new property boundary information, the property owner will probably be asked to move the playscape off the Town open space property. This consensus will be communicated to Corporation Counsel Adam Mantzaris. Ms. O'Hare said the Engineering Department's survey stakes are in place. Ken Ryan suggested that the Commission might be flexible as to when the playscape and the dog kennel should be moved.

C. Bertini Park

1. Campground proposal – status

Parks and Recreation Department Director John Gawlak has said that the well water will need to be tested quarterly if it is to be used. Also, the Connecticut Department of Public Health will visit the property to look at licensing the YMCA's proposed campground use.

D. Beseck Mountain

1. Cliffside Trail – boundary marking

Ms. O'Hare asked the Engineering Department to stake the boundaries. It was found that the line is more toward the south than the Commission thought. Mr. Wayne Fogg already put orange markers on the private property trees near the trail, so Ms. O'Hare will inform him of the discrepancy on the boundaries. On the other side, the neighbor's woodpile was found to be on Town property. Ms. O'Hare will inform both neighbors as to where the actual boundaries are. She suggested installation of boundary markers and cedars in the spring to help mark the boundary.

At 8:45 p.m., Mr. Don Roe left the meeting.

E. Fresh Meadow Swamp at Cheshire Road

1. Tree plantings

The Public Works Department is offering the Conservation Commission 22 trees. Public Works is willing to plant them. The Commissioners said that Ms. O'Hare should work with Mr. McCully on where to place the trees at the Galko/Fresh Meadow Swamp at Cheshire Road open space and that some Commissioners will install red flags to mark preferred tree locations.

2. Butterfly Meadow

Committee Chairperson Mary Heffernon said the seed order has been decided—a mix of 50% grasses and 50% forbs. The Commission's motion in October had designated \$550 for seed. Tonight Ms. Heffernon asked for an additional \$450 from the Commission to include as many native species as possible in the seed mix.

Motion: Ken Ryan, that the Commission authorize the spending of up to \$1,000 on the seed mix from Prairie Moon Nursery for the Butterfly Meadow.

Second: John Lathrop.

Vote: Unanimous.

The seed mix will be purchased soon. Mary Heffernon will arrange with Mr. Will Shultz and his Vo-Ag students to drill and place the seed.

3. Walking Path Concept Plan (phase two) – Not discussed.

F. Garden Road

1. Skatepark plan

Erin O'Hare asked Department of Parks and Recreation Director, John Gawlak per the Commission if a boat launch could be added to the skate park plan. John Gawlak has said that could be included. Tonight the Conservation Commission members unanimously voiced support for this plan.

G. Pragemann Park

More parking is to be added by the Town. No wetlands are affected.

H. Invasive Species Eradication

1. DEP Invasive Species Grant application – proposed properties

This DEP grant is for municipalities, up to \$50,000 per proposal, and two proposals are allowed for areas of "high recreational use". If granted, then the Town would have to participate at 20% of the project cost. Ms. O'Hare said she will attempt to write two proposals, which are due by December 8th. The Commissioners agreed on the Tyler Mill Preserve, especially by Northford Road, and on the Galko/Cuneo properties that have Phragmites, Tree of Heaven, and other invasives.

Motion: Mary Heffernon, to authorize Erin O'Hare to apply for the State DEP Invasive Species Grant by making at least one proposal for the Fresh Meadow Swamp at Cheshire Road/Galko open space and possibly a second proposal for the Tyler Mill Preserve.

Second: Jim Pyskaty.

Vote: Unanimous.

2. Long-term invasive species management program proposal

Ms. O'Hare suggested that the Commission should earmark a certain percentage of funds each year from the Open Space Management Fund to combat invasive species, and the Commissioners endorsed this idea. Chairman Borne asked Ms. O'Hare to find out the cost and to write a plan for the Commission's consideration.

Mary Heffernon reported on ways to control invasive aquatic plants. Recommended methods are: using herbicides; hand pulling, which takes three times to be effective; or placing a cloth on the bottom of the pond that would suffocate the invasive plants. If this were to be proposed for the ice pond, a study would need to be completed on the proposal.

3. DEP Beetle Control Program – Swamp loosestrife – Tilcon
Mary Heffernon will write to Tilcon to ask their cooperation on controlling swamp purple loosestrife on their property.

I. Volunteer Work Program

1. Planning assignment list – Boy Scouts, etc. – No report.
2. Summer interns - No report.
3. VoAg student projects

Erin O'Hare proposed that all the above groups could do Invasive Species Mapping, which is needed for all of the Town's open space properties. Dianne Saunders said she is willing to map some invasive species in the northern portion of the Tyler Mill Preserve.

3. GRASSLAND BIRD HABITAT ENHANCEMENT / RESTORATION INITIATIVE

Not discussed.

5. OPEN SPACE PLAN – 1999 – Update - Not discussed.

6. SPEAKER EVENT

A. Topics – Not discussed.

B. Adult Ed. Course – Not discussed.

8. CORRESPONDENCE / REPORTS

1. Geocaching – Park & Rec

Chairman Borne noted this concept, as reported by Parks and Recreation Director John Gawlak. He felt that the Town's parks could be put to that purpose first.

2. Asian Longhorned Beetle alert – Color photos were distributed to help identification. If any beetles are found, they should be frozen. Then the finding should be reported to the Agricultural Experiment Station.

3. CACIWC Conference, Nov. 8, MountainRidge – Report deferred.

4. "Public Benefits of Forests: What Are They Worth?", 4th Annual CT Forest Conservation & Research Forum, Nov. 25, Storrs. This event was noted.

5. Social Marketing Workshop, Sept. 9 – Mary Heffernon's report was deferred.

6. CCM Workshops "Planning for Agriculture", Durham, December 18. Dianne Saunders will attend this seminar.

9. NEXT MEETING – Is scheduled for Thursday, December 11th.

7. 2009 MEETING CALENDAR – The Recording Secretary asked for a change of the regular meeting week, but the Commission decided to continue to meet on the second Thursday of the month, except in February 2009.

Motion: Mary Heffernon, to approve the 2009 Schedule of Regular Meetings as presented.

Second: John Lathrop.

Vote: Unanimous.

Chairman Borne signed the 2009 Schedule of Regular Meetings, which will be filed and posted with the Town Clerk's Office.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Motion: Mary Heffernon and Jim Pyskaty, to adjourn the meeting.

Second: Ken Ryan.

Vote: Unanimous. The meeting was adjourned at 9:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen L. Burns, Recording Secretary