

Approved, as amended, February 14, 2018

WALLINGFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

REGULAR MEETING

Thursday, December 13, 2018, 7:00 p.m.
Basement Conference Room, Town Hall,
45 South Main Street, Wallingford, CT

MINUTES

PRESENT: Chair Mary Heffernon, Jeff Borne, Dianne Saunders, Dianne Lendler, Mike Miller, Tom Pietras, Erin O'Hare, Environmental Planner

NOT PRESENT: Vice Chair John Lathrop, Carl Arsenault

Chair Heffernon called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Minutes, Regular Meeting, Oct. 13, 2018

Chair Heffernon called for approval of the Minutes.

MOTION: Commissioner Miller, second, Commissioner Lendler

VOTE: Unanimous

2. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

A. Tyler Mill Preserve

1. May 15 Storm damage – “Hazard Tree Mitigation” bid

Commissioner Saunders reported the Purchasing Department will send the bid out Thursday after the forester confirms a date for the “pre-bid showing” to take place in the Preserve. Ms. O'Hare reported on a few last minute changes Henry McCully, Public Works Director and Tree Warden, made in the final bid language. Mr. McCully will be tagging the trees, as legally required, once bids are received and he has agreed that no nails will be used to tag. Commissioner Borne attended the Mayor's meeting in this regard and noted the Mayor had determined that Mr. McCully would be the Town's designated contact person overseeing the harvesting bid once awarded along with Eric Hansen, Ferrucci & Walicki, contract forester, who will directly oversee the logging work in the field. Commissioner Saunders reported that recent strong winds have resulted in twisted stress fractures in some of the demarcated trees. Ms. O'Hare explained that the bid document provides a proposal chart with proposed amount to be paid to the Town for the damaged trees or proposed amount Town to pay harvester for the work. Commissioner Borne indicated that the mayor's position is that there can be no hazard trees along the trails. Commissioner Saunders noted the bid states no chipping in the forest and she feels the awardee must be a certified forest practitioner as per State law.

2. Stewards of Tyler Mill – report, D. Saunders & D. Lendler

Commissioner Saunders reported Commissioner Arsenault's expertise is needed in the removal of four hazard trees in particular and that several of the fallen trees in the ridge

area have precarious root balls which Commissioner Arsenault and Steward Scott Grey can handle. She requested Commission approval for certain changes in trail configurations, as follows:

- 1) Redirect critical sections of the Purple and Green Trails where tree damage is great by using approx. 1,500 lineal feet of the closed section of Tyler Mill Road for part of the trails.
- 2) Use a section of Maltby Lane for part of the Purple Trail in that area where the Trail has become an impassable tangle due to downed trees – from the parking lot area to where Maltby Lane intersects with Tyler Mill Road.
- 3) Close to horses permanently the “swamp trail” located at the base of the ridge by Tamarac Swamp due to hazard trees and to inform John Gawlak, Director of Parks & Recreation Department, of this recommendation.
- 4) Relocate two footbridges that were washed downstream in the September 25 storm (5.5 inches of rain). *The Trails Committee will explore suitable locations and, with Commissioner Pietras, explore possible anchoring of the footbridges.*

The Commission agreed with the above recommendations.

B. Fresh Meadows

1. Signage fortification and replacement of one broken sign
Ms. O’Hare reported a replacement sign is being fabricated.

C. Beseck Mountain

1. Footbridge issue (5/24/18)
Ms. O’Hare will send a reminder to Engineering Dept. in this regard.
2. Barrier on edge of Wisk-Key Wind Road (4/13/18)
Ms. O’Hare will send a reminder to Public Works Dept. in this regard.

D. Ferguson Woods

1. Geology site walk, Nov. 10 – report
The Nov. 10 event was postponed on Nov. 9 to the scheduled rain date, Sunday, Nov. 11. Randolph Steinen, of the CT Geological Survey and former State Geologist, led the walks attended by Commissioners Heffernon, Saunders, Lathrop, Miller, Arsenault, Ms. O’Hare, and Steward Sonja Wulff. Mr. Steinen explained the many unique geologic features found on this property which are described in a report he distributed to all and will appear in a technical publication soon. Chair Heffernon noted that the bowl-shaped landform she had always noticed on the site she learned had been scooped out by the glacier.

E. Lufbery Park – Geology site walk, Nov. 10 – report

The geology walk – see above - continued at Lufbery Park. Mr. Steinen explained many unique geologic features found on this property which are described in a second report that he distributed to all. Ms. O’Hare stated that the biggest ‘take home message’ from the walks was the presence of so much geologic information in the landscape which we can be completely clueless about when enjoying the outdoors – for example the knoll in the woods with a flat open rock area that we stood on not noticing the polygonal design in the rock resembling a patio. The design pattern had been created when the molten rock had cooled. Commissioner Saunders reported that there will be a geology walk for Tyler Mill Preserve.

F. 205 Main Street – student project

Chair Heffernon reported that a VoAg student got permission to complete a student

project on trash and invasive plants on this farmland lease/Water Division property and she provided him a copy of the property map.

G. Other properties – not taken up

3. FARMLAND LEASE PROPERTIES PROGRAM

A. Field 18A, 995C East Center St./Tamarac Swamp Rd.

1. Proposed Request For Qualifications – status

Commissioner Saunders requested another extension be provided on the current lease as the current lease expires this year and the Request for Qualification bid is not ready regarding the next lease. *Ms. O’Hare will follow-up with the Law Dept.*

2. Lease area boundary fence repair

Ms. O’Hare reported she had not gotten out there to see fence conditions but that the farmer had indicated it was a nonissue.

3. Eversource Energy - Resiliency Clearing Program work – status

Ms. O’Hare reported she received a call from Eversource indicating commencement but none could verify completion of the maintenance work on Town land.

B. Lease renewals – status

Ms. O’Hare reported the Law Dept. has completed all the renewal leases as requested.

C. Field 8B – bid proposal – taken up below

D. Farmland Committee

1. Proposed bid for Field 8B, Northford Rd.

Commissioner Saunders indicated she and Ms. O’Hare will complete a bid proposal soon. She reported that Vo Ag students are going to cut invasive plants and complete a survey of streamside plants on this property.

2. Field 4C, Whirlwind Hill Rd., lease proposal

Commissioner Saunders will follow-up on site soils testing by VoAg students.

4. 2019 MEETING SCHEDULE

The Commission agreed to approve the draft Regular Meeting schedule as proposed.

5. ELECTION OF OFFICERS – nominations

Chair Heffernon indicated elections will be held at the next meeting. She asked the Commissioners to think of ‘new blood’ for the opening in the Commission.

6. OTHER TOPICS – none discussed

7. REPORTS/CORRESPONDENCE

A. Choate students, Fresh Meadows -Environmental sustainability project, Oct12 - report

Chair Heffernon and Commissioner Saunders reported on the event planting butterfly-attractant plants. Ms. O’Hare showed the thank-you letter from Choate.

B. Quinnipiac University – Big Event activity

Chair Heffernon asked the Commission to think of project ideas for the April 6 Big Event for the next meeting – maybe be re-blazing of trails in Ferguson Woods or Tyler Mill Preserve.. Commissioner Lendler suggested the correction of the muddy area near the head of the Yellow Trail.

C. Rockfall Foundation –email news Oct. – Dec. 2018 – several – not discussed

D. CACIWC Annual Environmental Conference, “Managing For A Changing Climate”, Nov. 17 – reports
Chair Heffernon attended and reported.

E. Quinnipiac River Watershed Association – annual membership
Chair Heffernon thought this had been paid.

F. CACIWC newsletter, *The Habitat*, Fall 2018 – **distributed**

I. CT DEEP Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Grant Program,
letter from Mayor to M. Heffernon, Chair, Conservation Commission, with
DEEP Notice; dated 12/5/18; received 12/7/18, **proposals requested by**
12/14/18

Chair Heffernon noted this was the first time she received a letter in this regard which is usually routed to staff. Ms. O’Hare noted the recent flurry of development activity in the watershed – three sites – and stated in her view acquisition of watershed land should be the number one priority for the Town which she will discuss with the Water Division.. Commissioner Borne brought up acquiring an easement on Allnex’s sandbarren.

The following correspondence was provided for viewing - not discussed:

G. DEEP magazine, *CT Wildlife*, Sept.-Oct. 2018

H. CT Audubon Society, report, *Connecticut State of the Birds: In Cities and Suburbs, A Fresh Look At How Birds Are Surviving in CT*, 2018

J. CT Farmland Trust – newsletter, Dec. 2018 & donation appeal

K. CFPA magazine, *CT Woodlands*, Fall 2018

L. CT DEEP notice from Urban Forestry Coordinator re: Emerald Ash Borer

8. NEXT MEETING – Jan. 10, 2019

9. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Commissioner Borne; second: Dianne Saunders

Chair Heffernon wished all Happy Holidays and adjourned the meeting at 9:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Erin O’Hare, Environmental Planner
Acting Recording Secretary