

Final / Approved

WALLINGFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

REGULAR MEETING

Thursday, September 12, 2019

MINUTES

Present: Chair Mary Heffernon, Vice-Chair John Lathrop, Commissioners Jeffrey Borne, Dianne Saunders, Brad Sammis, Dianne Lendler, Mike Miller and Environmental Planner Erin O'Hare.

Not Present: Commissioners Carl Arsenault and Jared McQueen.

Chair Heffernon called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. in the Town Hall Basement Conference Room.

1. Approval of Minutes – Regular Meeting, August 8, 2019

The following corrections were made to the August 8, 2019 Minutes:

- p. 1 at 2.A.1., to delete the first sentence and to replace it with "Commissioner Saunders saw new plants after the storm."
- p. 1 at 2.A.2, second sentence, to say, "Commissioner Saunders said the gate at Maltby Lane was left open by the farmer,"
- p. 2 at 2.A.4., paragraph 2 after the motion, to correct the first sentence to read: "Regarding Field 18A, Chair Heffernon said there is still purple loosestrife in the Eversource right-of-way" and to delete "near Warren Williams' barn".
- p. 2 at 2.B.3., second sentence, to delete "Ms. O'Hare will ask" and to state that "*The Property Stewards will keep an eye on the amount of erosion.*"
- p. 2 at 2.B.5., to delete both the 5th and 6th sentences and to replace them with, "*Also, Ms. O'Hare said the lavender plants are good. The mugwort in the trail should be pulled or cut, and stone dust should be put there.*"
- p. 3 at 2.F.2., second sentence, to capitalize Building Official.
- p. 3 at 3.A., first sentence, to add Brad Sammis to the Committee list.
- p. 3 at 3.A., third sentence, to delete "NRCS funding has helped, besides the fact that" and to insert "The" before "Town has a constant price on leases."
- p. 3 at 3.C., to delete the second sentence about "They constitute 36 fields."
- p. 3 at 3.D., fourth sentence, to correct Ms. Small's title as "*Corporation Counsel*"; also, in this sentence, Ms. O'Hare asked to delete "*due on Field 4A being \$2,100 and Field 19A being \$2,200 for each of the last to years*" and instead to insert "*overdue for the fields, being \$2,125 for 2018 and \$2,150 for 2019.*"
- p. 4 at 3.I., to correct the field number to be "7F" throughout and to change "&" to "or" in the heading. Also, to delete the last sentence in paragraph 1. In paragraph 2, to delete "In addition," and to insert "Regarding Field 7F,"; to correct in the second sentence to read "This lease renewal is not coming up." Also, to delete the last sentence of "*Commissioner Saunders will draft a lease for bid including a mowing schedule.*"
- p. 5 at 5.E., to spell Dr. Steinen's name correctly.
- p. 5 at 6.F., the agenda item is "Field 5A", and to correct the wording to say, "*Ms. O'Hare will ask the Engineering Department to mark the northern boundary.*"

Motion by Commissioner Saunders to approve the Minutes of August 8, 2019, as corrected above; seconded by Commissioner Borne, and approved unanimously.

2. Property Management

A. Tyler Mill Preserve

1. Stewards of Tyler Mill – report, D. Saunders & D. Lendler
Commissioner Saunders submitted the Stewards report and said there are nine watch trees left.

2. Road erosion areas (2)

There has been no action yet. Ms. O'Hare had written a memo asking Public Works to take care of the ongoing erosion on Tyler Mill Road and Maltby Lane.

3. Signage: Tyler Mill street sign, unleashed dogs, no motorized vehicles, hunting notice (2 locations)

The Tyler Mill street sign and the pole were stolen. *Chair Heffernon will get the list of where the unleashed dog signs should go for Commissioner Miller to install. Ms. O'Hare will take care of the two hunting safety signs needed at Tamarac Swamp Road and Carini Field.*

4. Eradication of Japanese knotweed – status

Commissioner Saunders said that some Agricultural Science students helped cut the mugwort in this area. Knotweed was treated at the Preserve entrance.

5. Lilac Trail – post installations

These remain to be done.

6. Geology & Botany Walk – Sat., Oct. 12, 9 a.m.-12 p.m. (rain date, Sun., Oct. 13, 9 a.m.-12 p.m.)

Flyers have been approved and are being circulated. A maximum of 40 persons may sign up for this walk. The starting point is the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Park parking lot by East Center Street. Commissioner Saunders detailed the route. It has been posted on the "Connecticut Outdoor" site.

7. Other Reports

Mr. Kenny Michaels has been appointed as the new Director of the Parks and Recreation Department.

Commissioner Saunders said the Tyler Mill kiosks, signposts and wood guardrails need cleaning and restaining. The Stewards will do the work.

Motion was made by Commissioner Saunders to spend \$150.00 from the Open Space Resources Management Fund to stain the kiosks, name signposts and guardrails at Tyler Mill; seconded by Commissioner Miller, and approved unanimously.

B. Bertini Park – storm damage

Chair Heffernon stated that the trails still need clearing at Bertini Park. The Committee set September 22nd as the work date. It was noted that hunting season starts on October 19th in the Preserve.

C. Fresh Meadows

1. Road drainage undermining Cheshire Road Trail

Ms. O'Hare reported that no work has been done yet.

2. Site conditions

Commissioner Saunders said the Lyman Hall Agricultural Science students will be pulling the weeds out of the stone dust trail.

3. Port-o-let

This was removed from the old parking lot. Another one was placed in the new parking lot area.

4. Dead tree

The dead tree has not yet been removed.

Ms. O'Hare had an inquiry from someone who wants to place a memorial near the glacial erratic. Commissioners suggested a metal memorial plaque could be attached to a bench or a tree planted nearby. Another idea was to plant a shad bush or tree. *Chair Heffernon asked Ms. O'Hare to report with a visual on the*

person's final plan, including specifics as to memorial location and choice of planting, if any, and she will check with Director of Parks and Recreation Kenny Michaels.

D. Marcus Cooke – trail maintenance
Trail maintenance must be done.

E. Beseck Meadow – bluebird box installation, M. Miller
Commissioner Miller will do this.

F. 1242 Whirlwind Hill Rd. – mowing report, C. Arsenault & D. Lendler
Commissioners Arsenault and Saunders are going out to see this property.

G. Property Reports – J. Lathrop, M. Miller, C. Arsenault, D. Saunders, D. Lendler
Bertini Park
Vice-Chair Lathrop will make a tally of trees to be cut.

Chair Heffernon gave everyone the revised list of Property Stewards.

Field 20A, off Powder Hill Road in Durham
Commissioner Miller took pictures there. Bamboo is still in the driveway edge, creeping toward the road and needs to be trimmed back. One post along the access road has been run over. *Ms. O'Hare will report this to Public Works for replacement and request that the bamboo be addressed.* The field was mowed five weeks ago. *Two trees are down in the field, and Commissioner Miller will tell the farmer.* The hay field was trimmed back, the Autumn olive is gone, and it's mostly all meadow now.

Tyler Mill Preserve

Commissioner Saunders said that we still have damage from the storm. Two more invasive species appeared this year: bristled knotweed and Asian jumping worms. She gave a handout on these to Ms. O'Hare and the Commissioners. Worm castings and cocoons were most prevalent in the areas of ATV damage. She said the worms ruin the fertility of the soil, and nothing can be done to control them on a large property like this.

H. Other properties – None discussed.

3. Farmland Lease Properties Program

A. Farmland Lease Committee

1. Monitoring reports have been submitted by Commissioners Sammis and Saunders. *Another report is coming from Commissioner Arsenault.* The updated properties spreadsheet and maps of East Wallingford locations were distributed.

2. Committee meetings, Aug. 29 & Sept. 11 – These meetings were held. Bid proposals and renewal information are still to come, which will need the consensus of the Commission.

B. Field 1A, 300 No. Branford Rd. – conservation management area – *To be discussed in October.*

C. Field 1C, 300 No. Branford Rd. – conservation management area – *To be discussed in October.*

D. Field 2A, 75 No. Branford Rd. – unpermitted dog training

Commissioner Saunders saw dog training being done on Field 2A. *Ms. O'Hare will write to the Rod & Gun Club to advise that the two persons who are bringing this activity to Field 2A should cease this activity, which is not permitted there.*

Chair Heffernon proposed posting a sign such as "No dog training allowed". Commissioners noted this field is under Watershed protection, with no dogs allowed to be in the field but only leashed dogs walking

around the edge of the field, and owners must pick up after them. *Chair Heffernon will discuss this signage with Mayor Dickinson.*

E. Field 4A, 1390 Whirlwind Hill Rd. & Field 19A, 1351 Scard Rd. – proposed bid & fence replacement
Commissioner Saunders is still working on this bid request.

F. Field 4C, Whirlwind Hill Rd./Scard Rd.

1. Proposal to transfer into Program & bid to renovate for hay or perennial crops – *To be discussed in October.*
2. Fall mowing – *Ms. O'Hare will ask the Public Works Department to mow in the fall, and she will then seek quotes to mow Fields 4C and 8B at 80 Tyler Mill Road if Public Works cannot.*
3. Fall eradication of Autumn olives in hedgerow
Commissioners Saunders and Arsenault will spray orange paint only on the invasive Autumn olive saplings that are to be removed by Public Works. If Public Works cannot, it will be done at the Big Event in April. There is to be NO cutting of trees at the hedgerow along the road.
4. Soil testing – *The state Department of Agriculture will do soil testing.*

G. Field 5A, Cooke Rd. – renewal proposal & conservation area mowing – *To be discussed in October.*

H. Fields 6A & 6B, 200 Northford Rd. - conservation area mowing – *To be discussed in October.*

I. Field 7A, Northford Rd. – renewal proposal & conservation area mowing – *To be discussed in October.*

J. Field 8B, 80 Tyler Mill Rd. – proposed bid – *To be discussed in October.*

K. Field 18A, 995 E. Center St.

1. Conservation mowing – *To be discussed in October.*
2. Eversource Energy vegetative maintenance work –
Ms. O'Hare said Eversource will do the eradication, but nothing has been done yet.
3. Bid waiver
Commissioner Saunders said this is first priority. *The Committee will review a bid waiver letter.*

L. Other Fields

1. Field 10A, 35 Tamarac Swamp Road
Ms. O'Hare reported the lessee's contractor was spraying this field because of the horse nettles noxious weeds there. She went out there and found a strong chemical smell in the air. She indicated the lease does not prohibit chemical spraying. *Commissioner Borne suggested that Ms. O'Hare should include in all future leases that records be kept and submitted about herbicide use on the leased fields. Ms. O'Hare was directed to send letters to lessees of hay fields in this regard.*
2. Field 7F, Northford Road
Commissioner Saunders will continue writing the draft contract for Field 7F regarding mowing and other work.

4. Public Events

A. Choate Rosemary Hall – Environmental Sustainability Project, tree installations at Tyler Mill Preserve, Oct. 4, 9:45 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Chair Heffernon and Commissioner Saunders will assist 10 Choate students that day in planting tulip tree sprouts and hickory nuts in the central blowdown area between the Purple and Green Trails. Chair Heffernon said that Commissioner Saunders will acquire the necessary supplies.

B. Spring Farm Day event

Commissioner Saunders and Chair Heffernon will meet with Will DellaCamera to plan this event.

C. Grand Street Park

Chair Heffernon attended the Parks and Recreation Commission's meeting to discuss plans for revitalizing this park near the Boys & Girls Club. Chair Heffernon suggested creating a pollinator plants garden. The grant money that Audubon CT had suggested for such projects is no longer available.

5. Other Topics

A. Pollinator Pathways

Wallingford's participation is now mentioned on the Town website. *Ms. O'Hare will attend the September 24th South Central CT Regional Council of Governments (SCCROG)-sponsored presentation on Pollinator Pathways.*

B. Other – Commissioner Borne will submit his receipt for paying \$15.60 to copy the Commission's recent report.

6. Reports/Correspondence – None.

7. Next Meeting – October 10, 2019.

8. Adjournment

Motion by Commissioner Sammis to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Commissioner Borne, and approved unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen L. Burns
Recording Secretary