

Final / Approved

WALLINGFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

REGULAR MEETING

Thursday, October 10, 2019

MINUTES

Present: Chair Mary Heffernon, Vice-Chair Lathrop, Commissioners Dianne Saunders, Jeffrey Borne, Jared McQueen, Brad Sammis, Carl Arsenault, Mike Miller

Not Present: Commissioner Dianne Lendler

Chair Heffernon called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. in the Town Hall Basement Conference Room.

1. Approval of Minutes – Regular Meeting, September 12, 2019

A correction was made to p. 2, 2.A.7. to delete “Commissioner Saunders will put notices of his appointment in the kiosks.”

Motion by Vice-Chair Lathrop to approve the Minutes of September 12, 2019, as corrected; seconded by Commissioner Miller, and approved unanimously.

2. Property Management

A. Tyler Mill Preserve

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

Commissioner Saunders had emailed out her report and submitted a copy to Ms. O’Hare at the meeting.

2. Staining maintenance project

Commissioner Saunders said these have been stained: kiosks, some signs and guardrails. Guardrails take much more stain and they require two applications. Ms. Saunders will calculate how much more stain will be needed. The recent expense for stain came from the Commission’s Open Space Resource Management Fund.

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

Commissioner Saunders said the street sign is not there. The ATV signs are not available yet. The Connecticut Trail Riders’ Association of horses and riders is having a big trail ride here on October 20th --20 to 30 horses—and got a permit from the Parks and Recreation Department. Commissioner Saunders and the Stewards will try to get the Pink Trail done before then. She made a temporary map for the Association showing trail changes because the Orange Trail portion is closed to horses.

Commissioner Miller will put up the signs prohibiting unleashed dogs. “No motorized vehicles” signs and hunting notices are still to be put up. Commissioner Saunders said 40 signs are missing, mostly due to the storms last year, and she will replace them in the three kiosks and on posts. Signs are coming from DEEP, and Ms. O’Hare said Public Works is putting some up next week. Commissioner Saunders said trail head signage for the Pink Trail (two signs) and Green Trail (one sign) are going up this week.

4. Lilac Trail – post installation

Commissioner Arsenault will do this.

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

Chair Heffernon distributed flyers to the Commissioners. About 18 from the public and seven Commissioners are expected. Access is from the rear of the Vietnam Veterans Park parking lot.

6. Unpermitted event

Commissioners became aware of a posting by someone who would lead a plants hike with digging of plants involved in Tyler Mill Preserve, but apparently no permit had been taken out. For this kind of fee-charged, led hike, the permit fee is \$200 from the Parks and Recreation Department and insurance is required.

7. Road erosion areas (2)

These were reported to the Public Works Department previously. *Commissioner Saunders will write a memo to Public Works and Steve Palermo about requesting level spreaders to be used near the Maltby Lane entrance at Tyler Mill Preserve.*

8. Other reports

Commissioners had heard about commercial advertising possibly being requested for some Town properties. They wanted to be clear that advertising should not be allowed on Town open space properties. *Chair Heffernon will write a letter to the Town Council Ordinance Committee and the Parks and Recreation Commission expressing the Commission's views.*

B. Bertini Park – storm damage, Trails Committee

Vice-Chair Lathrop said the work crew took down all but one leaning tree on the Yellow Trail. Commissioner Saunders said damaged trees remain at the top of the Blue Trail. Clearing remains to be done before the end of October.

C. Fresh Meadows

1. Road drainage undermining Cheshire Road Trail – No report.
2. Trail bed weeds
Ag students may help with the removal.

Chair Heffernon said the stone dust trails look terrible due to the weeds in the trails; she suggested the Commission should redo those trails. Commissioner Saunders believes that mugwort rhizomes are causing the problem.

3. Proposed memorial donation

Ms. O'Hare said the family of a young man wants permission to install a memorial bench. She took pictures of the bench that is there already. Commissioners mentioned the existing memorial traditions in Town. It may be too late in the season to accomplish now. *This discussion was moved to November. Ms. O'Hare will tell the family. Ms. O'Hare will schedule a meeting on this topic with the Mayor and pertinent departments.*

Commissioner Saunders said Parks and Recreation Department has tan textured spray paint that works on wood that has graffiti.

4. Dead tree

Chair Heffernon said the dead tree by the parking lot will be taken down.

D. Marcus Cooke – trail maintenance

Commissioner McQueen will pick up some glass by the fire pit. He saw evidence of runoff on steep parts in the park.

E. Beseck Meadow – bluebird box installation, M. Miller
Commissioner Miller will put up these boxes.

F. 1242 Whirlwind Hill Rd. – mowing report, C. Arsenault, D. Saunders, D. Lendler
Not completed yet.

G. Property Reports – M. Heffernon, J. Borne, B. Sammis, staff
Vice-Chair Lathrop and Commissioner Arsenault submitted their property reports to the Commission. Chair Heffernon asked Commissioners Borne and Sammis and Ms. O'Hare to submit their October reports by email.

H. Other properties

Chair Heffernon said Ferguson Woods is in great shape. There is no trash, the blazes look great, and there are no invasive species. Cover remains over the knotweed that she sprayed with vinegar.

3. Farmland Lease Properties Program

A. Farmland Lease Committee

1. Monitoring reports

Committee Chair Saunders said some reports remain to be done.

2. Committee Meeting

Committee members Dianne Saunders and Carl Arsenault met with Ms. O'Hare. Ms. O'Hare wrote letters to collect fees. Commissioner Saunders is typing bid proposals, but nothing is ready for the Town Council.

B. Field 1A, 300 No. Branford Rd. – conservation management area.
This field is not to be mowed.

C. Field 1C, 300 No. Branford Rd. – conservation management area

Commissioner Saunders said this field—being unmowed—is good for Rod & Gun Club hunting. Ms. Saunders will tell the lessee that it is to be mowed only once, in June. (See mention of Field 1C in 3.D. below.)

D. Field 2A, 75 No. Branford Rd. – unpermitted dog training – report, M. Heffernon & staff

Chair Heffernon had a photo of the agricultural field. The Mayor has said that the present signs are adequate, and “No dogs” signs are therefore not necessary. Commissioner Saunders indicated that the Rod & Gun Club representative said its people were out there twice this year at both Field 2A and Field 1C. Ms. O'Hare wrote to the Rod & Gun Club president, asking him to notify members that dog training is not permitted in those fields.

E. Field 4A, 1390 Whirlwind Hill Rd. & Field 19A, 1351 Scard Rd.

1. Proposed bid

Committee Chair Saunders indicated it will be a two-envelope bid.

2. Fence replacement – Not discussed.

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

1. Proposal to transfer into Program & bid to renovate for hay or perennial crops – Not discussed.

2. Fall mowing – Not discussed.

3. Fall eradication of marked Autumn olives in hedgerow – Not discussed.

4. Soil testing

Commissioner Saunders reported there is no information so far.

G. Field 5A, Cooke Rd.

1. Renewal proposal

Committee Chair Saunders indicated a cover crop will be requested to be installed in any bare areas.

2. Conservation area mowing – Not discussed.

H. Fields 6A & 6B, 200 Northford Rd. – conservation area mowing – Not discussed.

I. Field 7A, Northford Rd.

1. Renewal proposal

The lessee does not wish to renew.

2. Conservation area mowing

Commissioner Saunders said this entire field needs to be mowed by December 31st. *Ms. O'Hare will write the lessee re this.*

J. Field 8B, 80 Tyler Mill Rd. – proposed bid – Not discussed.

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

1. Conservation mowing

Commissioner Saunders said this conservation mowing was done. Ms. O'Hare said the farmer had also mowed the access road, not Eversource. Purple loosestrife is in the swamp area and by the stream.

2. Eversource Energy vegetative maintenance work – report, staff.

Ms. O'Hare found out that this work, which originally was to be completed in June 2018, is on their schedule, but it is not assigned a certain date.

3. Bid waiver proposal

Commissioner Saunders is working on this.

L. Other fields

Ms. O'Hare had talked with Ms. Laurie Fortin at the DEEP about dog training on fields, whether the Town's or the State's. Her answer was that the Town has to let hunters who have a license and a daily permit walk through the fields during the season, but not the public, and dog training is not allowed. Chair Heffernon advised to report such activity to the police. Ms. O'Hare stated that dogs cannot go after migratory birds and cannot go after released birds.

Commissioner Mike Miller left the meeting at 8:34 p.m.

Ms. O'Hare noted that Fields 4A and 19A on Scard Road are leased together, and this bid remains as two envelopes. Commissioner Saunders said Fields 8B and 7A are one-envelope bids.

Ms. O'Hare said new leases will require that every hay field must be mowed every year, and the crop areas of vegetable fields must be mowed in fallow years.

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. – report, M. Heffernon, D. Saunders

Chair Heffernon and Commissioner Saunders reported this was a great day. Property Stewards had cut the walking path and areas the day before using an OREC flail brush cutter. The students did well.

Four project teams planted shagbark hickory nuts, green ash, sassafras and aspens. Commissioner Saunders spent \$41.63 for supplies and \$94.05 for the cutter rental, coming to \$135.68.

Motion was made by Vice-Chair Lathrop that the Commission should pay \$135.68 to reimburse Commissioner Saunders for her expenses incurred for the Choate Rosemary Hall Environmental Sustainability Project out of the Town's Open Space Resource Management Fund account; seconded by Commissioner Borne, and passed unanimously.

B. Spring Farm Day event

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

C. Grand Street Park

Chair Heffernon has been talking with the Parks and Recreation Commission about adding an urban oasis as part of the park's renovation. It is small and sunny.

D. Guided Geology & Botany Walk (See report above at A.5.Tyler Mill Preserve.)

5. Other Topics

A. Pollinator Pathways, SCRCOG program, 9/24/19 – report, staff

Commissioner Saunders heard Mr. Peter Piccone's talk about invasive plants and native plants. Ms. O'Hare reported on the SCRCOG program she attended.

B. Other

Chair Heffernon asked the Commissioners to go into Executive Session.

Executive Session

Motion was made by Commissioner Borne to waive Rule 5 and to go into Executive Session; seconded by Commissioner McQueen, and approved unanimously by Commissioners Borne, McQueen, Heffernon, Lathrop, Saunders, Arsenault and Sammis.

The Recording Secretary left the room. The Commissioners entered into Executive Session at 9:00 p.m.

At 9:07 p.m. the Commissioners recalled the Recording Secretary to the room.

Motion was made by Vice-Chair Lathrop to come out of Executive Session; seconded by Commissioner McQueen, and approved unanimously by Commissioners Lathrop, McQueen, Heffernon, Borne, Saunders, Arsenault and Sammis.

No action was taken as a result of Executive Session.

6. Reports/Correspondence

A. CACIWC Annual Environmental Conference, Cromwell, CT, Sat., Nov. 23, 2019 – Notice & Registration forms were received.

B. CACIWC newsletter, *The Habitat*, Summer/Fall 2019, emailed copy received 10/3/19.

C. DEEP magazine, *Connecticut Wildlife*, July/August 2019, received Sept. 18.

D. Other correspondence/reports

Commissioner Saunders has details on a program by CIPWG (Connecticut Invasive Plant Working Group) about Asian jumping worms. It will be held on October 24th in Vernon from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. Commissioner Saunders will attend.

7. Next Meeting – November 14, 2019.

8. Adjournment

Motion was made by Vice-Chair Lathrop to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Commissioner Borne, and approved unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen L. Burns
Recording Secretary