

Final / Approved

WALLINGFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

SPECIAL MEETING

Thursday, August 13, 2020, 6:00 p.m.

**Pavilion, Marcus Cooke Park
9 Old Rock Hill Road, Wallingford, CT**

Note: The August 13, 2020, Town Hall meeting of the Commission was cancelled so that the meeting could be held outdoors at Marcus Cooke Park due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Present: Chair Mary Heffernon, Vice Chair John Lathrop, Commissioners Jeffrey Borne, Dianne Saunders, Dianne Lendler, Brad Sammis, and Environmental Planner Erin O’Hare. Commissioners Carl Arsenault and Mike Miller arrived as noted below.

Absent: Commissioner Jared McQueen.

Chair Heffernon called this Special Meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Regular Meeting, March 12, 2020

Motion was made by Vice Chair Lathrop to approve the Minutes of March 12, 2020, as presented; seconded by Commissioner Sammis, and approved unanimously.

B. Special Meeting, July 9, 2020

Motion was made by Commissioner Sammis to approve the Minutes of July 9, 2020, Minutes; seconded by Commissioner Saunders, and approved by all Commissioners except Commissioner Borne who abstained.

2. PROPERTY REPORTS – J. Borne & C. Arsenault

Fresh Meadows Open Space – Commissioner Borne saw Fresh Meadows after Storm Isaias on August 4th. He submitted his report with a map depicting trail blockages from tree falls. *Ms. O’Hare will ask Public Works not to ding tree trunks along Cheshire Road and Schoolhouse Road while mowing.* Commissioner Borne made 10 maintenance recommendations. *At the Butterfly Loop, Ms. O’Hare will ask the contractor to remove weeds growing in the stone dust trail.* Chair Heffernon restated that no chemicals can be used on weeds at Fresh Meadows.

Commissioner Mike Miller arrived at 6:21 p.m., and Commissioner Carl Arsenault arrived at 6:25 p.m.

Beseck Mountain Trails (Cliffside Trail and National Scenic Trail) – Commissioner Arsenault reported that some trees are down and some are leaning over Cliffside Trail. Orange blazes are fading going up the trail. The trail surface is loose and hard to walk on. He saw two ATV’s parked at 47 Cliffside Drive which appear to be using the trail illegally. Riders have been on the Orange and Blue trails, including south of the power lines. *Chair Heffernon will contact the police and CT Forest and Park Association.*

Commissioner Arsenault saw invasives including mugwort, Trees of Heaven and barberry behind houses on Wisk-Key Wind Road. He said there has been dumping of lawn clippings at the end of the cul-de-sac on Town property behind 35 Wisk-Key Wind—a 250-gallon tank also was dumped. *Ms. O’Hare said that must be reported to the Health Department. She will do so.*

3. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

A. Tyler Mill Preserve

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

Commissioner Saunders said work parties have been in Tyler Mill daily since Storm Isaias. There are many trees down. A person was seen dumping brush. He went, leaving what he had dumped. Also, someone has been cutting fallen trees illegally. Chair Heffernon said she contacted the two mountain bikers who spoke with the Commission in July, and she also contacted the Police Department.

2. Storm damage

Commissioner Lendler reported that the sign at the entrance to the lower Pink Trail fell down. *Commissioner Lathrop will put it back up.* Commissioner Saunders said a tree fell on the wide-plank bridge by the yellow house near Woodhouse Avenue fell down, and it is partly in the water. That is the horse crossing and a fishing spot. Water is deep there.

3. Other reports

Commissioner Saunders said Commissioner Lendler’s Tyler Mill Stewards are working hard. A new pastime in the Preserve seems to be carving trees, which is damaging to them.

Commissioner Saunders asked input on what to do about the knotweed at the Northford Road entrance to Tyler Mill Preserve. Chair Heffernon asked if it could be cut. *Ms. O’Hare will call the contractor to have it treated, and Chair Heffernon, as always, expressed dismay at the use of chemicals.*

B. Fresh Meadows

1. Plant installations – report

Environmental Planner Ms. O’Hare said the Commission’s plants from EarthTones are doing well, except for heat stress. The contractor applied a product, “Stress-X,” to those plants most impacted by the drought and heat.

2. Trees by glacial erratic

Chair Heffernon asked Commissioner Arsenault’s thoughts on the citizen’s request to the Mayor that trees by the glacial erratic on the north side should be removed. *Commissioner Arsenault asked to see that citizen’s letter and any photos.* Vice Chair Lathrop had suggested only some trees should be limbed up.

Commissioner Arsenault will look at the area, and there will be further discussion.

3. Addition of name on Town Open Space property signage

Ms. O'Hare is working on this.

4. Graffiti – Discussed with Commissioner Borne's report.

5. Private memorial request & bench relocation

Ms. O'Hare said the family is going ahead with their bench, and the Town must relocate the existing one. Commissioner Arsenault suggested putting it by the Butterfly Loop, facing the pond. Ms. O'Hare said that location would be best, but moved into the shade of the large tree on the Trail. This was acceptable to the Commissioners. *Ms. O'Hare will inform Parks and Recreation and Public Works.*

C. Marcus Cooke – Purple Trail

Chair Heffernon and Vice Chair Lathrop cleared the Purple Trail. There is a tree blockage on this trail. Commissioner McQueen notified Chair Heffernon that three trees are down on the Yellow Trail.

D. 205 Main Street Open Space property

1. Encroachment

Ms. O'Hare is pursuing this matter with the Law Department.

2. Repair of Town open space property signage

Ms. O'Hare is following up on this sign repair.

E. Beseck Meadows

1. Encroachment – No report.

2. Bamboo – encroachment & management

Ms. O'Hare said Steve Palermo, Superintendent, Public Works Department, had mowed the bamboo. She advised him not to put chemicals on it yet. Commissioner Arsenault recommended to let it regrow, spray it, then one month later, mow it again. *Ms. O'Hare will follow up.*

F. Other Properties

1. Grand Street Park garden – Chair Heffernon said there is no report.

4. FARMLAND LEASE PROPERTIES PROGRAM

A. Farmland Lease Committee

1. Bid proposals: Fields 5A, 7A, & 8B. Ms. O'Hare said there has been no movement on these.

2. Field 7A, Northford Rd. – hunter parking proposal & vehicle trespass issue

Ms. O'Hare had asked Public Works twice about making a pull-off on Field 7A. She has not heard back.

3. Several fields – compliance with lease terms

Ms. O'Hare asked the Commissioners to continue monitoring their fields with an eye toward compliance with certain terms in the lease and to report. Ms. O'Hare and Commissioner Saunders may meet with one lessee to discuss compliance.

5. **PUBLIC EVENTS** – History Hike in Tyler Mill Preserve -June 2021

Chair Heffernon is waiting to hear the confirmed date for the History Hike.

6. **REPORTS/CORRESPONDENCE**

A. **CFPA** – membership dues

Motion was made by Commissioner Borne that the Commission should pay CFPA dues of \$75.00 for this year; seconded by Commissioner Miller, and approved unanimously.

B. **DEEP magazine, CT Wildlife**, May – June 2020 – was noted.

C. **CT Butterfly Association** – Late spring 2020 newsletter & membership dues

Motion was made by Commissioner Miller that the Commission should pay the Connecticut Butterfly Association dues of \$25.00; seconded by Commissioner Borne, and approved unanimously.

Ms. O'Hare gave a brief report on a Lyman Hall Agricultural Science student's project on the Quinnipiac Linear Trail on pollinators and animals. She gave a brief report on a Floodplain Forest remediation project proposal for 21 Toelles Road at Wharton Brook.

7. **NEXT MEETING** – September 10, 2020

8. **ADJOURNMENT**

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

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen L. Burns, Recording Secretary