

Final / Approved

WALLINGFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

SPECIAL MEETING

Thursday, November 4, 2021, 6:00 p.m.

Parks & Recreation – Room 7

6 Fairfield Boulevard, Wallingford, CT

Note: The November 4, 2021 Regular Meeting in Town Hall for 7:00 p.m. was cancelled and a Special Meeting was set at Parks & Recreation – Room 7, 6 Fairfield Boulevard, Wallingford, CT, at 6:00 p.m. due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Present: Chair Mike Miller, Vice Chair John Lathrop, and Commissioners Carl Arsenault, Jeffrey Borne, Dianne Lendler, Brad Sammis, Dianne Saunders, and Jim Pyskaty, and Environmental Planner Erin O’Hare.

Absent: None.

Note: There was one person from the public in attendance in addition to the Recording Secretary.

Chair Miller called the Meeting to order at 6:15 p.m.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Special Meeting, Oct. 14, 2021

Corrections were made by Chair Miller, Vice Chair Lathrop, Commissioner Saunders, and as submitted by Commissioner McQueen, as follows:

- p. 2, item 3.A.1., paragraph 3, to correct that notification of work signs were posted “at the entrance to Northford Road.”
- p. 2, item 3.A.4., paragraph 1, sentence 1, to say “public information displays are being prepared”; in sentence 2, to say, “Maps are available at”; and in sentence 5 to join the spelling of Commissioner”; also, to delete the single sentence in paragraph 2.
- p. 2, item 3.A.5. paragraph 1, sentence 2, to add “possibly” to say “will possibly mow” the Green Trail; and in the same sentence to add “and possibly” before “the Pink Trail”.
- p. 2, item 6., sentence 1, to delete “several” and to correct that “Vice Chairman John Lathrop and Commissioner Saunders attended.” In sentence 3, to fix “Commissioners” and to correct the name “Tyler Mill Users Group” to “Tyler Mill Users Committee.”
- p. 3, item 3.G., under Bertini Park, to correct sentence 2 to read: “He suggested adding blazes on the Green Trail at both knolls to lead users through there.”
- p. 3, at Marcus Cooke Park, Commissioner McQueen had submitted his request to add a second sentence: “There is tree down blocking the Purple Trail.”
- p. 3, at Ferguson Woods, in sentence 1, to delete “Purple” and to insert “the trail is clean”.
- p. 4, top paragraph, after Trees of Heaven are mentioned, to end sentence 5 with “—to be addressed next spring (too late in the year now).”, and to delete sentences 6-11.
- p. 4, item 4, Trails Committee, to indicate “Chair John Lathrop” and to delete the second sentence.
- p. 4, item 4, Farmland Lease Committee, to indicate “Chair Dianne Saunders”.

- p. 5, at B., second paragraph, to delete the second sentence.

Motion by Commissioner Pyskaty to accept the October 14, 2021 Minutes with the corrections made tonight; seconded by Commissioner Saunders, and approved by Commissioners Miller, Lathrop, Arsenault, Borne, Lendler, Sammis, Saunders and Pyskaty.

2. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

A. Tyler Mill Preserve

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

Commissioners Lendler and Lathrop are working on a list of what the Trails Committee should do.

2. Bat boxes – installation

No report.

3. Green Trail repair & footbridge – report

Ms. O'Hare reported quotes have been requested. *Ms. O'Hare and Commissioner Saunders will review those. Ms. O'Hare will report as to which account will be charged for this work.*

Commissioner Jared McQueen arrived at 6:28 p.m.

4. Kiosk signage

Commissioner Saunders said another town's kiosk shows the large area map, trail descriptions, and rules. Details could be shown on the kiosk large map, with less-complicated smaller maps available for hikers. The large map could be installed lower for people to walk around and study. *Ms. O'Hare will ask Rokap for pricing regarding use of multiple colors. She will obtain catalogues of pedestal or overhang styles to support a larger map, plus preliminary pricing.*

5. Hunting map, staff

Ms. O'Hare distributed copies of maps of the DEEP Daily Permit Hunting areas. Hunters are supposed to stay 500 feet away from residences.

6. Other reports – None

B. Fresh Meadows

1. Peninsula by southern parking area entrance

Chair Miller reported there has been no action.

2. Trail restoration – Storm Ida damage – update

Ms. O'Hare showed a photo on the Butterfly Loop Trail. About three 20-foot-long sections need to be restored. *Chair Miller will talk with Public Works Director Rob Baltramaitis about the trail damage. Ms. O'Hare will speak with Parks and Recreation Director Kenny Michaels about it.*

3. Tupelo health – report

Ms. O'Hare said EarthTones said that young trees with oddly-spaced, naked twigs is a symptom of last year's drought. Ms. O'Hare asked EarthTones to replace the dogwood tree.

4. Other

Commissioner Saunders reported Ken's tupelo tree has filled out.

A Wallingford resident stopped in at the meeting to say that her dog is lost in Tyler Mill Preserve. She has put out flyers, and she talked with the Commissioners.

C. 205 Main Street open space property

1. Trespass fencing – update
No movement.

D. Beseck Meadows

1. Bamboo – cutting & private encroachment by bamboo - update

Ms. O'Hare went out there yesterday, and she found the bamboo is flourishing. *Ms. O'Hare will report the maintenance issues she observed to Public Works Director Rob Baltramaitis.* Also, adjacent property owner has continued to use the access road. Ms. O'Hare and Chair Miller reported the previously eroded steep portion of the access road is much worse, with millings washing into the stream.

E. Beseck Mountain

1. Cliffside Drive trail – restrict ATVs – update

Commissioner Arsenault had reported on this in October. Suggestions were to install bollards or alternating posts, but not to impede emergency access. *Ms. O'Hare will speak with Public Works Director Rob Baltramaitis about the dumping situation. (See 2. below.)*

2. Yard waste dumping – See 1. above.

Ms. O'Hare will write to area property owners.

F. Pragemann Park – fence repair

Ms. O'Hare forwarded a memo to Parks and Recreation Director Kenny Michaels and Public Works Director Rob Baltramaitis about the two tears in the fence there to be repaired.

G. Property Reports: Beseck Meadow/M. Miller; Doolittle Park/staff; Fresh Meadows/J. Borne; 205 Main St., Yalesville/B. Sammis

Beseck Meadow – Chair Miller said there are erosion issues. Also, he reported that the 12-acre hay field and the 13-acre conservation management area are growing into each other. *Chair Miller will go out there with the Lessee and a Commissioner from the Farmland Lease Committee to inspect and instruct.*

Doolittle Park – *Ms. O'Hare was there on September 2nd, so she will report in December.*

Fresh Meadows – *Commissioner Borne will report in December.*

205 Main St., Yalesville – *Commissioner Sammis will e-mail the report he completed.*

H. 155 Grieb Road – trespass, dumping

Commissioner Saunders thought the Water Division had worked in there recently. Also, she suggested that the Town may have conveyed property to the homeowners' association around June 7, 1965. Since Wallingford enacted its dumping ordinance this past summer (see I. below), Ms. O'Hare

did call to request the Engineering Department to mark the Town boundary. *And Ms. O'Hare will pursue the matter with the Police Department, if warranted, after she sees the site conditions.*

I. Dumping ordinance relative to Town open space properties

The Town passed a dumping ordinance in June 2021.

J. Proposed Ecological Assessments – Professional Services-Natural Resources

Ms. O'Hare asked the Commissioners to suggest where Ecological Assessments can be completed.

K. Open Space signage installations

The State requests that signage be put up to identify Town “public access properties” which have been purchased using DEEP funds. *Ms. O'Hare reported installation of two new signs.*

L. Other properties – None

3. TRAILS COMMITTEE REPORT

Chair Lathrop said the Committee will report monthly. It cooperates with the Stewards of Tyler Mill Committee.

4. COMMITTEES

A. Committee memberships and meetings

Committee Chair Lathrop said Trails reports are being done. He is interested to see the purpose for each committee. Ms. O'Hare reported she had not received a response yet on her October 14 memo regarding quorums.

B. Committee roles

Chair Miller requested that members of each committee should prepare a brief purpose statement next month for the Commission as a whole to evaluate.

5. FARMLAND LEASE PROPERTIES PROGRAM

A. Farmland Lease Committee

1. Monitoring Reports – C. Arsenault

Commissioner Arsenault reported most hay fields are in good shape. He found the invasive “horse nettle” is in some fields. It is poisonous. He found evidence of horse riding around the edges of some fields, which is allowed. Behind Field 10D, people are making a bike trail in the back, which is not allowed. Regarding traffic, Commissioner Arsenault did ask for “No Parking in Front of Gate” signs to be placed on the roads to warn the public before gates to fields. Having these signs posted would help the lessees, who must enter in there with equipment to work. *Ms. O'Hare will ask with the Police Department, which has the authority to make and install those signs.*

2. Compliance with lease terms – No report.

3. Lessee conference, Sept. 10 – report

Chair Miller reported that he, Commissioner Saunders, and Ms. O'Hare met with representatives from 3B Ranch regarding maintenance of eleven fields. He will report again on this in December.

4. Conservation management in farm fields.

Chair Miller will continue discussions with the lessees. Also, Ms. O'Hare will send the list of fields eligible for lease extensions to Farmland Lease Committee Chair Saunders.

B. Field 1A – conservation maintenance issue.

Leases are not up yet, but the Committee is preparing for them. *Ms. O'Hare said that she expects all the Lessees to make progress on maintaining these fields by December 31st. The Farmland Lease Committee agreed and will follow up.*

C. Field 7A, Northford Rd. – hunter parking proposal.

No report.

D. Fields 7B, 7C, 7D – gate. Not done yet.

E. Field 7F – mow

Ms. O'Hare will ask the Public Works Department to mow Field 7F between now and January 31st.

F. Field 18A – Eversource Transmission Upgrade Project.

Commissioner Arsenault said the lessee affected by Eversource work has met with the field supervisor. This work is progressing. The Lessee moved the cows to 18A recently. But the cows will stay on the field here while the work is being done.

G. Field 19A - fence issue

Commissioner Saunders said the fence has not been repaired yet, but no cattle are in there. It was agreed it can remain this way for now.

H. Proposed bids or extensions: 1A, 1C, 1D, 6B, 13A & 20A - recommendations

Chair Miller and Commissioner Saunders reported current lessees are interested in extensions of lease for another five years. *Ms. O'Hare will follow up with the Law Department.*

I. Other – No issues

The one person from the public left the meeting at this time.

6. EXECUTIVE SESSION

A. Executive Session pursuant to CT General Statutes Sect. 1-225(f) and Sect. 1-200(6) for the discussion of the selection of real estate for possible purchase

Motion was made by Vice Chair Lathrop to go into Executive Session; seconded by Commissioner Borne, and approved unanimously.

The Recording Secretary left the room at this time, 8:20 p.m.

The Recording Secretary was called back into the room at 8:30 p.m.

Motion was made by Vice Chair Lathrop to come out of Executive Session; seconded by Commissioner Lendler, and approved unanimously.

7. OFFICIAL OPEN SPACE MAP – review revised/updated map
This was not taken up tonight.

8. REGULAR MEETING SCHEDULE 2022

Motion was made by Commissioner Sammis to approve the 2022 Regular Meeting Schedule; seconded by Commissioner Borne, and approved unanimously.

Motion was made by Commissioner Borne to set the Regular Meetings time as 6:00 p.m.; seconded by Commissioner Sammis, and approved unanimously.

9. REPORTS / CORRESPONDENCE

A. Stevens property – acquisition of Class I and II watershed land / open space – M. Miller, staff
Ms. O’Hare and Chair Miller described the property and status of the acquisition and status of the grant application.

Commissioner McQueen left the meeting at 8:50 p.m.

B. FOI Complaint, dated 10/22/21; received 10/27/21

Ms. O’Hare said that the Law Department has charge of this item, which is a second complaint issue.

C. Pedestal signage – promotional correspondence, received 10/27/21.

Discussed above under Tyler Mill Preserve.

D. CACIWC Annual Meeting & Environmental Conference (virtual), Sat., Nov. 6, 2021 –
email notice from staff. Noted.

E. DEEP Magazine – *CT Wildlife, Sept.-Oct. 2021*

10. NEXT MEETING – December 9, 2021

11. ADJOURNMENT

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

The Meeting was adjourned at 9:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen L. Burns, Recording Secretary