

Final / Approved

MINUTES

WALLINGFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

REGULAR MEETING

**Thursday, June 9, 2022, 6:00 p.m.
Room 315, Town Hall
45 South Main Street
Wallingford, CT**

This Regular Meeting of the Wallingford Conservation Commission was held on Thursday, June 9, 2022, at 6:00 p.m. in Room 315 of Town Hall, 45 South Main Street, Wallingford, CT.

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

Absent: Commissioners Brad Sammis, Jared McQueen, and James Pyskaty.

Chair Miller called the Meeting to order at 6:12 p.m.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. May 12, 2022 Regular Meeting

Corrections proposed by Commissioner Saunders were:

- p. 1, at 2.A.1., paragraph 2, sentence 1, to say: “Commissioner Saunders listed the Stewards’ goals....”
- p. 2., at 2.A.5., paragraph 1, sentence 2, to identify Parks and Recreation Director Kenny Michaels “. . . acting as ‘Trails Administrator’ for the Town.”
- p. 4, at 3.D., sentence 2, to say: “The Commission’s consensus was that: 1) Part of the White Trail should be closed and allowed to revegetate;”
- p. 5, at 4. Trail Committee Report, sentence 2, to say: “Commissioner Lendler reported that taking care of downed trees/removing storm damage is needed at the Red Trail floodplain.”

Motion was made by Commissioner Borne to accept the May 12, 2022 Minutes as amended by the corrections by Commissioner Saunders; seconded by Commissioner Lendler, and approved by Commissioners Miller, Lathrop, Lendler, Borne, and Saunders.

2. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

A. Tyler Mill Preserve

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

Commissioner Saunders had sent a note to Parks and Recreation Director Kenny Michaels describing the Stewards’ activities at Tyler Mill Preserve. Commissioner Lendler stated that two work parties were held on the Red Trail since the May meeting.

Commissioner Carl Arsenault arrived at 6:22 p.m.

2. Proposals to Trails Administrator

Two activity proposals were submitted to Director Michaels recently as Trails Administrator. The Commissioners reviewed them tonight, a and b below. *Chair Mike Miller said that he will see these areas and speak with Director Michaels.*

a. Green Trail footbridge - On the Green Trail in Tyler Mill Preserve

In discussion, Commissioners' concerns were for: the natural site conditions before and after; materials (specify to use black locust and white oak because those last longer and the grain is easier to work with), construction methods, and the overall area to be disturbed during the construction activities; conveyance of materials to the site; footbridge width consideration for horses passing; maintaining minimum underneath passage(s) for salamanders, frogs, snakes; no cedar should be cut down within the Preserve due to concern for invasive plants; uniform log spacing (crown up) to accommodate running cleats, dog paws, bicycles, winter drainage, and sticks; proper disposition of old footbridge materials. Someone should be named to oversee this project on behalf of the Town. Also, the Trails Administrator should see a copy of the prior Conservation Commission proposal for this area.

Ms. O'Hare noted that Wetlands permitting had been obtained by the Commission for previous footbridges and other work within wetlands.

Chair Miller will give the Commission's recommendations to Parks and Recreation Director Kenny Michaels as Trails Administrator.

b. Boy Scout Trail (access off Tamarack Swamp Road, then south to Red "Jeep" Trail) in Tyler Mill Preserve

In discussion, Commissioners' concerns were for: the rights and responsibilities of the farmer/lessee for this field; uniformity of the leased field; uniformity and continuity of this trail to be used by bikes and horses; bike trail maintenance and mowing responsibilities plus cutting of brush at the edges, with designated disposition; avoiding the spread of invasives; this new trail color blazing done by or with the Conservation Commission to remain consistent with prior trail blazing; this new trail location to be added to the Tyler Mill Preserve Map.

Chair Miller will give the Commission's response to Director Michaels as Trails Administrator.

3. Kiosk modification with map, J. Lathrop

Vice Chair Lathrop showed photos of the kiosk with the main area and the new wing with the map. The wings he constructed were added to two kiosks, one at the Preserve main entrance and one at the Maltby Lane entrance. Chair Miller commended Vice Chair Lathrop's new installations as an improvement for users.

4. Other reports

Commissioner Lendler removed the Red Trail sign at the bridge, which was shredded. *Vice Chair Lathrop will replace this sign.*

B. Fresh Meadows

1. Aquatic invasive plant survey, Galko Pond

Ms. O'Hare said the Connecticut Agriculture Extension Station is working on this survey this June.

2. Other

It was noted that Public Works had mowed there last week.

C. Beseck Meadows

1. Bamboo - cutting, treatment, & private encroachment by bamboo

There has been no change on the encroachment. *Ms. O'Hare will write a memo to Steve Palermo, Assistant Superintendent of Public Works, advising to have the crew use a brush cutter there now to cut the bamboo to between 6 and 10 inches tall; and in August, the bamboo should be cut and treated again.*

2. Access road erosion, minor dumping, vegetation by gate

Chair Miller reported that nothing has changed at this location.

D. FY 21-22 Professional Services – Natural Resources – contracted work

Ms. O'Hare reported that she has let out five contracts this month at \$750.00 each under this budget line, all for work to be done soon. Three quotes are not needed for work up to \$750.00, and the Commissioners acknowledged these:

- 1) Creation of enhancements of wood turtle early successional habitats along the Muddy River by Dennis Quinn.
- 2) Eric Hansen will complete GIS mapping of a recently created trail on the east side of Tyler Mill Preserve using GPS.
- 3) Mr. Bob Baker will work with Commissioner Saunders to cut back Japanese knotweed and other invasives in Tyler Mill.
- 4) Mr. Anthony Zemba, ecologist/biologist, will do a Pond Habitat Survey at Ferguson Woods.
- 4) Quinnipiac River Advocates will do complete user-friendly content for a pamphlet about the Quinnipiac River Fishway in Wallingford.

E. Other properties

Ms. O'Hare has ordered a lucite wall map to be put up in the main hall of the Environmental Planning Office. *If enough supplies budget money remains, Ms. O'Hare will order a bench and various tools.*

Ms. O'Hare said the Town will obtain a plaque that credits the State DEEP's involvement in acquiring a parcel at Fireworks Island in 2009.

Ms. O'Hare announced that yesterday the Town was awarded the grant to acquire the Stevens land, approximately 95 acres at 264 Williams Road, as open space water company land. A Connecticut DEEP grant will assist in Wallingford's purchase, at 65% of cost, \$487,500. Corporation Counsel Janis Small will advise on the DEEP grant requirements to be met. The Water Division will maintain this property. Chair Miller acknowledged Ms. O'Hare's efforts: first, for assisting in preparing the grant application; second, in continuing with Wallingford's compliance over time; third, for her role to create future conservation uses there.

3. PROPERTY MONITORING REPORTS

A. Fresh Meadows – J. Borne. *Commissioner Borne will report in July.*

B. Marcus Cooke – J. McQueen. No report.

C. Cooke Road property – D. Saunders. No report.

D. Whirlwind Hill Rd./Scard Rd. – D. Lendler. No report.

4. TRAIL COMMITTEE REPORT, J. Lathrop

Chair Lathrop said that he and Commissioner Lendler had cut down a tree in Bertini Park. Commissioner Arsenault said he removed the uprooted tree by the Red Trail.

5. PROJECTS FOR VOLUNTEERS

Chair Miller needs referrals for projects. Commissioner Saunders is trying to find a civic group who might take on the late summer/early autumn watering of new trees at Fresh Meadows.

Commissioner Lendler left the meeting at 8:22 p.m.

6. PUBLIC OUTREACH PROGRAMMING

Ms. O'Hare stated that the various work tasks accomplished by the Commission, currently and in recent years, should be made better known to the public.

7. FARMLAND LEASE PROPERTIES PROGRAM

A. Farmland Lease Committee

1. Monitoring Reports – status. Chair Saunders said that the Committee has not met recently. *Chair Saunders will send out Monitoring Report forms.*

2. Review of compliance with lease terms – No report.

Chair Miller contacted the lessee for Field 13A, requesting that it be mowed in June. Also, Commissioner Saunders noted that the Water Division had put a lock on Field 8B at the Lilac Trail. *Commissioner Saunders will notify the lessee for 8B.*

3. Conservation management by contractors – No report.

Commissioner Saunders asked the Commissioners to think of a way to honor Mr. Warren Williams, who recently passed away.

B. Several recent trespass issues & signage

Trespass and signage issues have occurred, which will be addressed.

C. Field 1C & 1D, No. Branford Rd. – vehicle trespass issue - No report.

D. Field 7A, Northford Rd. – hunter parking proposal in R.O.W. & vehicle trespass - No report.

E. Fields 7B, 7C, 7D, off Anderson Rd. – gate - No report.

8. REPORTS / CORRESPONDENCE

A. Memorandum to Town Commissions from Janis Small, Corporation Counsel, re:

Freedom of Information Act Requirements, dated 5/9/22. This memorandum was sent to all Commissioners.

B. Meriden Land Trust Hiking Trails – brochure. Ms. O’Hare showed several trail color brochures created by Bob Pagini, who provided the office with many copies.

C. Yale School of the Environment Student Research Report at Fresh Meadows, received 6/2/22.

Ms. O’Hare will e-send this report to all Commissioners: “Co-Occurring Effects of Climate Warming and Plant Invasion on Trophic Interactions” by Stanley Gosliner, Yale School of the Environment, in connection with his Master of Environmental Science degree.

D. Kiosks – *At Ms. O’Hare’s request, Commissioners are to consider ordering hand-built, or pre-built, or finished informational kiosks needed for three open spaces in the future.*

9. NEXT MEETING – July 14, 2022

10. ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen L. Burns, Recording Secretary