

## MINUTES

### WALLINGFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION Regular Meeting Thursday, August 10, 2023 Room 315, Town Hall 45 South Main Street, Wallingford, CT

A Regular Meeting of the Wallingford Conservation Commission was held on Thursday, August 10, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. in Room 315 of Town Hall, 45 South Main Street, Wallingford, CT.

**Present:** Chair Mike Miller, Vice Chair Brad Sammis, and Commissioners Dianne Lendler, Colin Makepeace, new Commissioner Erik Severson, and Commissioner Saunders.

**Absent:** Commissioners Jeffrey Borne and James Pyskaty. Environmental Planner Erin O'Hare did not attend.

Also present was Mr. Scott Gray of the Trails Work Group.

Chair Miller called the Meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

#### 1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

**A. June 8, 2023** - These Minutes were accepted at the July 20, 2023 Special Meeting.

The Minutes of the July 20, 2023 Special Meeting, which was held due to lack of a quorum for the July 13 Regular Meeting, will be considered at the September 14th Regular Meeting.

Commissioner Dianne Saunders entered the Meeting at 6:05 p.m.

#### 2. COMMISSION MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

Chair Miller introduced and welcomed new Commissioner Erik Severson tonight. Commissioner Lendler acknowledged Mr. Severson's prior service as a Steward of Tyler Mill Preserve.

#### 3. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

##### A. Tyler Mill Preserve

##### 1. Stewards of Tyler Mill, Co-Chairs Monthly Report, D. Saunders & D. Lendler

Commissioner Saunders said the trail brushing at Tyler Mill Preserve is completed. We're starting to clean and re-stain the kiosks. The kiosk at Vietnam Veterans field has a window of plexi-glas or Lexan, which is discolored and there are wasps. Commissioner Lendler thought it should be replaced. *Commissioner Saunders will ask Ms. O'Hare what the window material is.*

Commissioner Lendler said most of the trails are in good shape now. Rains have eroded trails recently. Someone made a rain gutter to divert water off the Blue Trail.

**2. Boy Scout Trail - 'brush-back', M. Miller**

Mr. Gray stated he did the brush-back here, and he trimmed the tree limbs to 8 or 9 feet above the trail (for horseback riders' safety).

**3. Blue/Black Trail - erosion controls on trail edge on slope by Muddy River - status**  
Commissioner Lendler said the cribbing has been completed on the Blue/Black Trail.

**4. Contracted Work, D. Saunders**

Commissioner Saunders described three recent jobs. Contractor Anthony Zemba did a survey of the old red maple swamp. Contractor Todd Mervosh has the purchase order for the Japanese knotweed. He was supposed to see that area last week. Contractor Bob Baker resumes work tomorrow. He will check along the ridge for the bad patch of Japanese honeysuckle vines. *Bob Baker and Commissioner Saunders will check the Trees of Heaven at the Green Trail and at the Pink Trail.*

Commissioner Saunders continued, At the back of Vietnam Veterans field where the cul-de-sac is, two trails almost come together: Yellow comes in from the east, and Green comes in from the west. Steward Larry Stowe will cut Autumn olive by the fence. But a speckled alder bush there grows fast and it spreads clonally, which will fill in and block the view of the field and probably block sightlines for people coming down to there. Do we want that tree out or in? *Commissioner Saunders asked to discuss this in September.*

**5. Other reports.**

Chair Miller reviewed the following four proposals. *The Commission was in favor of all four proposals below but still needs to get advice and feedback from Environmental Planner Erin O'Hare, who has not yet been forwarded the proposals.*

- a. An extension of the south end of the Pink Trail down to the Tyler Mill Bridge
- b. A new kiosk at the Tyler Mill Bridge
- c. Elimination of a trail portion at Moss Rock

Chair Miller read about removal of a trail on Moss Rock. Scott Gray said the Trails Work Group wants to do that and rehab it. Chair Miller advised to get it closed and to have it stay closed. *Chair Miller asked the Commissioners for consensus approval to close the trail on Moss Rock. The Commissioners agreed.*

- d. Elimination of references to the Interpretive Trail

Commissioner Saunders stated that the last two items (c., d.) can be done as maintenance without a proposal.

**B. Fresh Meadows**

- 1. Mowing - status.** No report.
- 2. Contracted work, staff.** No report.

**C. Ferguson Woods**

- 1. Japanese knotweed removal project - contracted work, staff.** No report.

**2. Re-blazing to eliminate 'piggy-backing' - status of work**

Mr. Gray said that he and Commissioner Makepeace did this re-blazing in July.

**3. Proposal submitted to Parks & Recreation Director by S. Gray for kiosk - location, design, cost of materials, revised map - status**

Chair Miller said we are still getting input from Ms. O'Hare and the Engineering Department. Commissioner Saunders reported the Engineering Survey Group went out and found that Mr. Gray's proposed kiosk flags were located on Town property but close to private property. Public Works Director Rob Baltramaitis has not gone out, so Ms. O'Hare needs Town approval here.

**4. Proposal submitted to Parks & Recreation Director by S. Gray and Commissioner Makepeace for re-routing of portion of trail off private property with associated relocation of proposed bogbridge - C. Makepeace & S. Gray**

Commissioner Makepeace said the wetland here is pretty long, and there is no good way to go around it. The trail goes in and almost immediately goes off Town property. Scott Gray and I went out, and he found a good crossing that incorporates the trail higher in the middle, where the Yellow Trail would be a corner to it. So we picked a better place for the Yellow to diverge from the Blue Trail where there is an upland island. We submitted a proposal to Parks and Recreation Director Kenny Michaels to get onto the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission agenda because the bridge would span the wetland here. Commissioner Severson asked, How long is the bridge? Mr. Gray said it would be in two sections: 45 feet long and 30 feet long. No vote was taken on this proposal.

Commissioner Saunders said, Ms. O'Hare has said she is going to check a section of land here that abuts private property. Ms. O'Hare and the Law Department want to talk to the family beforehand in order to notify them as to what we want to do.

**D. Fresh Meadows** - This is a duplicate of 3.B. above.

**E. Bertini Park**

**1. Proposal regarding correction of various trail issues, C. Makepeace**

Commissioner Makepeace described four suggestions for trail changes at Bertini Park. There were no objections from the Commissioners. *So Commissioner Makepeace will submit these proposals to Parks and Recreation Director Kenny Michaels.*

Commissioner Lendler noted that there is no heading on the agenda for Trails Work Group, but many of the things done by the Trails Work Group are already accomplished. Chair Miller acknowledged Commissioner Lendler's suggestion and said that their activities are reported under the particular property headings.

**F. Beseck Mountain** - No report. This item was not discussed.

1. **Contracted work**, staff
2. **Discuss proposal for kiosk**, staff

**G. Wharton Brook/Doolittle Park** - No report. This item was not discussed.

1. **Proposal for contracted work (Wharton Brook floodplain)**
2. **Discuss proposal for kiosk**, staff

#### **4. PROPERTY STEWARDSHIP**

##### **A. Property Monitoring Reports**

**1. Fresh Meadows, J. Borne** - No report.

**2. Marcus Cooke** - stewardship assignment

Commissioner Erik Severson will take on this Stewardship Assignment. Commissioner Saunders described it briefly. *Commissioner Severson will report at the September meeting on this property.*

#### **5. FARMLAND LEASE PROPERTIES PROGRAM**

##### **A. Field Monitoring Reports**

Commissioner Saunders said that Vice Chair Sammis is taking over reporting responsibilities for Fields 18A, 9B, 9C, 11A, 11B, and 12A, which were formerly done by Commissioner Arsenault. Chair Miller stated that he will begin reporting on the Bozzutto leased fields in September. *Commissioner Saunders will go out to orient Vice Chair Sammis and Chair Miller and to answer any questions.*

**B. Field 2A - recent illegal accessway across eastern edge of field, D. Saunders**

*Commissioners Saunders and Makepeace will look at Field 2A to check on recent vehicle trespass.*

**C. Field 6B - spotted water hemlock issue (also at Vietnam Veterans Memorial Park)**

Commissioner Saunders did look at Field 6B recently, and she found spotted water hemlock, which is toxic to animals and humans. She told the lessee, and she brought samples to the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES) in Windsor for verification. It's a wetland-area plant, which should be in senescence right now. Commissioner Saunders alerted all the other farmer-lessees of this occurrence.

Commissioner Saunders also informed Ms. O'Hare and Parks and Director Kenny Michaels, who then informed the Health Director, who is working with other departments. Mr. Michaels also informed the Risk Manager. Commissioner Saunders shared the printed CAES Caution Advisory on this plant with the Commissioners tonight. Also, she made training materials for the Stewards to recognize spotted water hemlock. If this plant is found on private property, the Owner should contact CAES in Windsor, Ms. Rose Hiskes.

#### **6. PURCHASED SERVICES - NATURAL RESOURCES FY 23-24**

These items were tabled to the September 14th Meeting.

**A. Invasive plant species eradication - several properties**

**B. Wharton Brook floodplain informational signage/brochure**

**C. Other**

#### **7. REPORTS / CORRESPONDENCE**

These items were deferred to the September 14th agenda.

**A. CFPA magazine, *The Woodlands*, Summer 2023**

**B. CFPA newsletter, *Rock Root & Trail*, June 2023**

At this time, Chair Miller asked Mr. Gray for his report. Mr. Gray handed out the Trails Work Group Monthly Report to each Commissioner. Commissioner Lendler said there have been increased work parties at Tyler Mill Preserve in the last month, and the Stewards work along with the Trails Work Group members. Mr. Gray reported that Tyler Mill Preserve is almost completely done. *Chair Miller said he would like to know how many person-hours have been completed lately by the Trails Work Group and the Stewards.* Commissioner Lendler stated that she keeps the hours log for everyone. Mr. Gray noted that Trails Work Group members do workshop time as well.

**8. NEXT MEETING** - Sept. 14, 2023

**9. ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion was made by Commissioner Lendler to adjourn the Meeting; seconded by Vice Chair Sammis and approved unanimously.**

The Meeting was adjourned at 7:39 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen L. Burns  
Recording Secretary