



*Town of Wallingford, Connecticut*

WALLINGFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Wallingford Town Hall  
45 South Main Street  
Wallingford, CT 06492

**WALLINGFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING**

**Room 315, Town Hall  
45 South Main Street, Wallingford, CT**

**Thursday, November 9, 2023, 6:00 p.m.**

**MINUTES**

*[Minutes scheduled to be considered and approved at the next meeting, Dec. 14<sup>th</sup>]*

**Present:** Chair Mike Miller, Vice Chair Brad Sammis, Jeff Borne, Dianne Saunders, Jim Pyskaty (entered at 6:13), Conor Makepeace, Eric Severson, and Erin O'Hare, Environmental Planner

**Absent:** Dianne Lendler

Chair Miller called the Meeting to order at 6:05 p.m..

**1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**A. Regular Meeting, Oct. 12, 2023**

Page 3, '10. Other reports': Chair Miller suggested deletion of the first paragraph and all agreed.

**MOTION:** J. Borne, To approve the Minutes as corrected.

**SECOND:** B. Sammis

**VOTE:** Unanimous

**2. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT**

**A. Tyler Mill Preserve**

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

Commissioner Saunders reported the Public Works Department mowed the sides of closed portion on Tyler Mill Road and took the pile of Japanese knotweed away that Contractor Baker had cut. A new invasive plant has been observed, *Viburnum dilitatum*, located growing at the rear of Field 11B, off Tamarac swamp Road. She sent a sample to CIPIWG. *She will place a large poster board with a photo of porcelain berry vine in Town Hall in the spring to spread the word about this invasive plant that is spreading here.*

- 2. Daily Permit Hunting - season opened, Oct. 21, report, D. Saunders  
Commissioner Saunders reported no issues.

- 3. Graffiti on bollards

Ms. O'Hare passed a photo of graffiti on bollards from this week and reported that the Parks & Recreation Dept. has taken care of it upon request, painting them white.

4. Approved kiosk near closed bridge

a. Location

Ms. O'Hare went to the proposed site and determined the kiosk installation activity is out of the 50-foot distance from wetlands and so no IWWC permitting is required.

b. Fabrication & installation

Chair Miller asked Doug Clark, in audience, to present his revised design sheets for the kiosk was discussed so that materials can be obtained. Commissioner Saunders indicated the type of plexiglass to be used should be UV-treated and said Kenny Michaels, Parks & Recreation Dept. Director, has the specifications for the green metal roofing material used on our kiosks and extra of the stain used. Mr. Clark indicated Lowe's sells "Optics" brand with a 10-year non-yellowing guarantee.

Commissioners agreed all open space property kiosks should be uniform in size, design, and materials as an emblem of Town property, Treks will be used in place of treated lumber for posts, and panels can be screwed instead of hinged. Mr. Clark agreed to re-submit revised design drawing and the cost changes, accordingly.

Chair Miller read from a copy of Scott Gray's monthly Trails Work Group (TWG) report (submitted by Doug Clark) as agenda items pertaining to this work were taken up below.

5. Removal of Interpretive Trail markers – status of approved work

This TWG work has not been completed.

6. Closure of unpermitted trail on Morris Rock - status of maintenance work

This maintenance activity has been completed by the TWG.

7. Extension of Pink Trail by installation of blazing on existing unnamed trail - status of approved work

This TWG work has been completed.

8. Boy Scout Trail – permanent blazing

Ms. O'Hare passed photos of the temporary blazing on metal stakes on edge of hayfield that need to be replaced with permanent blazing. Chair Miller indicated that blazes (2' x 6' plastic) on 4' x 4' wooden posts will be installed after the edge is 'brushed-back' off the edge of the hayfield; this work, previously approved, is not a 'proposal'. All agreed blaze colors should be yellow and dark blue (not the light blue currently in place) as these are the Boy Scouts of America colors.

9. Repair of wooden plank bridge – status of work

Chair Miller indicated Mr. Gray's report states this TWG has been completed.

10. Mapping, staff

Ms. O'Hare indicated mapping work is in progress. *Commissioner Saunders will submit mapping of horseback-crossing locations before next Meeting.*

11 Proposal from K. Michaels, Director, Parks & Recreation, submitted by Doug Clark regarding two existing unnamed trails that connect to the 'Boy Scout Trail'

Chair Miller apologized to Mr. Clark that this proposal would need to be tabled as the Commissioners have not received a copy to review.

*Chair Miller will discuss a systematic routing procedure for new proposals with Mr. Michaels to help avoid delays and miscommunications moving forward and suggest that funding source for proposed project/activity, if applicable, should be included.*

12. Other reports

Not taken up.

**B. Fresh Meadows**

1. Mowing – status, staff

*Now that it is November, Ms. O'Hare will notify Public Works Dept. to mow.*

2. Tessa's Trail – maintenance, M. Miller

Tabled.

3. Proposal for update to kiosk content, staff

Ms. O'Hare explained that the kiosk content material – in the kiosk fabricated ten years ago by a Boy Scout - is faded and out-of-date and needs to include the Trails Map that is currently available in Town Hall. *Commissioner Borne will inspect the kiosk and report back with suggested changes.*

4. Proposal regarding maintenance of stone dust trail beds, staff

Ms. O'Hare indicated the Section of Pond Trail from edge of northern parking area down to junction with Butterfly Trail has grown in such that the trail bed is 2 feet in width and should be restored. *She will discuss with Mr. Michaels.*

5. Proposal for signage and kiosk at western drive/parking area, staff

Ms. O'Hare reported that this area is a lovely spot and could benefit from signage as it is easy to drive by it not knowing it is actually a Town facility.

**MOTION:** J. Borne, Pursuant to Ms. O'Hare's suggestion, a Town of Wallingford Open Space sign to be fabricated and installed near the western driveway at Fresh Meadows such that it is visible from Cheshire Road.

**SECOND:** C. Makepeace

**VOTE:** Unanimous

*Ms. O'Hare will follow-up on sign fabrication and installation.*

**C. Ferguson Woods**

1. Proposal submitted to Parks & Recreation Director by S. Gray for kiosk – location & funding – status, staff

Ms. O'Hare reported Public Works Director has not approved location in Right-Of-Way yet. *She will follow-up.*

2. Approved re-routing a portion of trail off private property & bog-bridge – status of existing trail de-blazing, new trail section creation and blazing & bogbridge installation work

Chair Miller indicated this TWG work has not been completed yet.

3. Updated Trails Map, staff

Ms. O'Hare indicated the final revised mapping awaits the approved re-routing of the trail.

**D. Bertini Park**

1. Map revisions

Ms. O'Hare indicated these revisions are part of the overall Tyler Mill Preserve Trails Map revisions work in progress.

2. Approved signage - fabrication & installation

*Ms. O'Hare will follow-up.*

**E. Beseck Mountain**

1. Information from geological hike, Nov. 2, with Randolph Steinen, DEEP CT Geological Survey Geological Survey – reports, E. Severson, D. Saunders, staff

Ms. O'Hare indicated that a Special Meeting had been posted for this hastily proposed hike with the State geologist, however, as there was not a quorum as only Commissioner Saunders and Severson were available to attend the mid-workday event, there are no Minutes. Also in attendance was former Conservation Commissioner/former Beseck Mt. property steward, Carl Arsenault, Town Planner Kevin Pagini, Bob Pagini (who completed contract work on Beseck Mt.), Ron Severson, Jim Heilman, IWWC Commissioner/former Sheehan science teacher, and Alison Goff, geologist. Ms. O'Hare passed photos of "new talus" (recently fallen pieces of basalt), wild ginger along the trailside, and trespass issues, etc.

2. Boundary re-marking, encroachment & vegetation removal

Issues were discussed.

**MOTION:** J. Borne: That the following improvements to be effected to address the issues raised concerning the lower vicinity of Cliffside Trail:

- o Installation of a stone-dust trail from Cliffside Road R.O.W. into the wooded area to serve to direct hikers and clarify existence of the Town property facility.
- o Installation of a low wooden fence along the residential lot's northern border to curb trespass and mowing there
- o Installation of pins or monuments by Engineering Dept. to deter removal of Open Space markers placed on trees and other boundary markers easily removed.
- o Mileage indicated on New England Trail sign (that someone affixed to the bottom edge of the Town Open Space Signage) to be corrected from 0.3 mi, to 0.6 mi.

**SECOND:** C. Makepeace

**VOTE:** Unanimous

3. Cliffside Trail – maintenance

As the recent hike evidenced much bittersweet, Chair Miller proposed to put a bid out for bittersweet control on this property. *Ms. O'Hare to follow-up.*

4. National Scenic Trail signage – status

*Ms. O'Hare needs to follow-up.*

5. Trail signage (Town property boundaries) – status

*Ms. O'Hare needs to follow-up.*

**F. Marcus Cooke Memorial Park**

1. Proposal for re-blazing

*Commissioners Makepeace and Severson will GPS existing trails. Will and prepare a proposal for 1) re-blazing existing trails, 2) the creation of a loop trail to address the trail that currently leads hikers onto private property on the south end, and 3) installation of Trail head signage.*

2. Trails map

Ms. O'Hare indicated that the Engineering Dept. cannot locate the Trails Map it had completed a few years ago. Commissioner Saunders reported that there is a property line fence that she helped blaze a few years ago. Tabled for now.

3. Trail signage

Taken up above.

**G. Wharton Brook/Doolittle Park**

1. Proposed kiosk location, staff

Not taken up.

2. Riparian corridor vegetation management

Ms. O'Hare reported that she had met on site with Kenny Michaels, Parks & Recreation Dept. Director, at his request, regarding 'vegetation management work' planned by the Parks & Recreation Commission to improve appearance and open up views of the brook. Both native and invasive plants were observed to have grown significantly due to all the rain. A swathe of mugwort should be removed. While she stressed the value of riparian plants she approved of keeping open a few spots already open to the water, the removal of certain invasive plants, and removal of one exceptionally fecund Black walnut tree which has populated the banks with saplings with the help of squirrels. The large Black Willow has died, however a smaller Black Willow persists near it that she requested should remain. Checking today, the work has not commenced.

**3. PROPERTY STEWARDSHIP & MONITORING REPORTS**

**A. Cooke Rd. (#5A), D. Saunders**

Commissioner Saunders gave a brief report.

**B. Whirlwind Hill/Scard Rd & 1254 Whirlwind Hill Rd., D. Lendler**

Not taken up.

**C. 205 Main St., Yalesville, B. Sammis**

Commissioner Sammis reported no issues at the site.

**D. Wharton Brook/Doolittle Park, staff**

Taken up above under Item G. Ms. O'Hare submitted photos.

#### 4. FARMLAND LEASE PROPERTIES PROGRAM

##### A. Field 20A - Contractual work, staff

Chair Miller suggested putting out an RFQ for bittersweet vine control on several properties. *Ms. O'Hare will follow-up.*

##### B. Farmland Lease Committee

###### 1. Committee Meeting, Oct. 12, 5:00 p.m. - report, D. Saunders

Chair Saunders gave a brief report.

###### 2. Committee Meeting, Oct. 18, 5:00 p.m. - report, D. Saunders

Chair Saunders gave a brief report. *Farmland Lease Committee will meet to discuss means to secure lessee compliance regarding field edge maintenance work in the long-term, as requested by Chair Miller. Ms. O'Hare was directed to send a letter that the laneway from Anderson Road to Field 7B, and from there to Field 7C and from there to Field 7D must be maintained.*

###### 3. Field Monitoring Reports

*Commissioner Saunders will walk the site after close of hunting season. Ms. O'Hare will ask Engineering Dept. to install "No Hunting" signage.*

###### 4. Proposals for fall bids (20 hay fields)

*The Committee reviewed the fields to be bid and the work entailed. Ms. O'Hare will follow through and submit to Purchasing Dept. once the Engineering Dept. revises field maps as needed, and revisions to bid document are made, etc.*

#### 5. 2024 REGULAR MEETING SCHEDULE

Chair Miller asked Commissioner to review and approve circulated Schedule of Meeting Dates.

**VOTE: Unanimous**

#### 6. EXECUTIVE SESSION

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

**Chair Miller requested a Motion to enter Executive Session.**

**MOTION: C. Makepeace to go into Executive Session**

**SECOND: E. Severson**

**VOTE: Unanimous**

Commission went into Executive Session at 8:35 p.m.

**MOTION: J. Pyskaty to come out of Executive Session**

**SECOND: B. Sammis**

**VOTE: Unanimous**

Commission went into Executive Session at 8:45 p.m.

**7. REPORTS / CORRESPONDENCE**

**A. Trails Work Group – TWG information/matters not discussed above, D.**

Lendler

Not taken up.

**8. NEXT MEETING – Dec. 14, 2023**

**9. ADJOURNMENT**

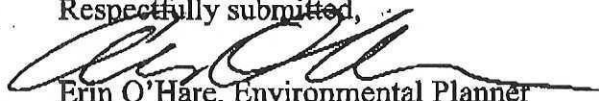
**MOTION: C. Makepeace**

**SECOND: J. Pyskaty**

**VOTE: Unanimous**

Chair Miller adjourned the meeting at 8: 52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Erin O'Hare, Environmental Planner  
Acting Recording Secretary