

**WALLINGFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING**

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

Thursday, May 9, 2024, 6:00 P.M.

**MINUTES**

*(Minutes scheduled to be considered and approved at the next meeting)*

**NOTE:** Meeting location was changed at the close of business day, May 9, from Room 315 to the Basement Conference Room, Ground Floor, Town Hall, and signs were posted accordingly in the Town Hall.

**Present:** Chair Mike Miller, Jeff Borne, Dianne Saunders, Dianne Lendler, Erik Severson and Erin O'Hare, Environmental Planner, and Vice Chair Conor Makepeace (arrived 7:50).

**Absent:** Bruce Conroy, Jim Pyskaty

Chair Miller called the meeting to order in the Basement Conference Room at 6:05 p.m.

**1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**A. Regular Meeting, April 11, 2024**

There were no corrections requested.

**MOTION:** J. Borne, To approve the Minute as presented.

**SECOND:** E. Severson

**VOTE:** Unanimous

**2. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT**

**A. Fresh Meadows**

**1. Kiosk content & map ,J. Borne**

Commissioner Borne said the Trails Work Group will refurbish the kiosk and the existing map will be made to size to fit. He advised there had been a small fire on the asphalt in the parking area near the port-o-let but felt it would not need repairs.

**2. Graffiti - status**

Two graffiti areas on the erratic boulder were discussed. *Chairman Miller stated he has the chemicals and will do the removal work.*

Doug Clark, in the audience, said the Trails Work Group can remove the dead tree that's up against the boulder. He was requested to leave the wood cut into logs by the road for removal by Public Works Department.

**3. Butterfly Loop Trail wash-out -**

Commissioner Borne stated the paths looked great on 5/8/24 but may possibly need a water bar at some point to stop run off. The fields were mowed and in great condition.

*Regarding the Pond Trail, Ms. O'Hare will ask Director of Public Works if his department or, perhaps volunteers, can remove weeds and put stone dust in to restore the 5 foot width of the trail which narrows to 1 or 2 feet in some areas. Commissioner Saunders said it would need a 4x4 wood trim edging, landscape fabric and stone dust to stop wash outs in bad areas only, and it would be a great volunteer project.*

**B. Ferguson Woods**

1. **Trails maintenance** - Ms. O'Hare asked if the trails at Ferguson Woods should be maintained soon as a priority for the Trails Work Group. Consensus was that it should. Mr. Clark will relay that to Scott Gray.

**C. Marcus Cooke Memorial Park**

1. **Revised map for proposal approved last month, C. Makepeace**  
NOTE: This item taken up later at close of meeting.

**D. Other Property issues - None.**

**3. PROPERTY MONITORING REPORTS**

- A. Review of property assignments and re-assignments** - Ms. O'Hare states monitoring reports are to be presented at the following meetings: April, May, June, September, October and November with members reporting twice in that time period at Meetings. *Commissioner Saunders will look at other properties that may need monitoring as well.*

Bertini Park - C. Makepeace

Beseck Meadow - M. Miller

Beseck Mountain & Cliffside Dr. - C. Makepeace

Tyler Mill Preserve - D. Saunders and D. Lendler

Wharton Brook Corridor, Doolittle Park - E. O'Hare, staff

Ferguson Woods - J. Pyskaty

Fresh Meadows - J. Borne

205 Main St., Yalesville - B. Conroy

Marcus Cooke Park - E. Severson

Cooke Rd. Open Space, 5A - D. Saunders

1254 Whirlwind Hill Rd. - D. Lendler

*Ms. O'Hare will email members the revised monitor assignment list with the schedule of reporting dates.*

**B. Ferguson Woods - J. Pyskaty**

*Chair Miller indicated this report will be given next month by Commissioner Pyskaty.*

**4. FARMLAND LEASE PROPERTIES PROGRAM**

**A. Farmland Lease Committee - D. Saunders, Chair**

**1. Special Meeting, May 2, 2024 - Chair report**

Committee Chair Saunders went over the revised spreadsheet of all fields, Committee assignments, and revised monitoring forms with the 5 new questions. *She will contact Lessee Ray Johnson regarding overgrown fields. She will go see Field 20A and action to be taken regarding issues, per consultant report, will be taken up at next Committee meeting. She is revising the Farmland Lease Properties Program summary document, last revised in 2017.*

**2. Next Committee Meeting - No date set yet.**

**3. Field 14A - mowing -** Committee Chair Saunders states it needs to be mowed. Commissioner Lendler suggests letting it go. *Ms. O'Hare said she will ask Director of Public Works if they can mow it and ask the Water Division its' preference.*

**5. BUDGET FY24-25**

Ms. O'Hare stated that all departments went to the April 29<sup>th</sup> Town Council Public Hearing and she was not asked any questions and there were no changes to the proposed Commission budget.

**6. MEMBERSHIP DUES**

**A. CT Butterfly Association**

**MOTION: D. Lendler, To pay the dues (\$100.00)**

**SECOND: J. Borne**

**VOTE: Unanimous**

**B. Other -** *Ms. O'Hare will process and will check the status of the dues for CACIWC and the CLCC dues.*

**7. PROFESSIONAL NATURAL RESOURCES SERVICES**

**A. Status report, staff**

Ms. O'Hare indicated the best use of funds is knotweed eradication at 3 sites: Tyler Mill entrance, Fresh Meadows, and Ferguson Woods. Consensus was to go ahead. Ms. O'Hare will follow-up with an RFQ. Regarding the GPS-ing work, Ms. O'Hare met with the Mayor and he did not object to using the Open Space Resources Management Funds for this project.

**8. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT - TYLER MILL PRESERVE**

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

Commissioner Lendler went out on the trails and had nothing specific to report. Commissioner Saunders said invasives and bittercress have gotten worse. Garlic Mustard was checked on as well. Looking for early signs of knotweed and it is time to watch for turtles. Work started on invasives by Field 8A.

**B. Comprehensive review of attributes and management concerns, staff**

Ms. O'Hare states that the integrity of Tyler Mill has to be preserved: it is a designated future water shed/water supply source, has diverse habitats, wildlife and a variety of

things to enjoy, 13 farmland fields, a hunting program through DEEP, several designated Critical Habitats, areas identified by DEEP for protection of plants and animals species of concern, local educational instruction projects, a multi-use trails system, historical sites, and archeological sites. This summary of assets can be useful regarding future discussions and grants.

### **C. DEEP CT Recreational Trails Grant Program - Preserve plan grant, D. Saunders**

Commissioner Saunders said that State Rep. Mary Mushinsky suggested a professional should determine where trails should go. Commissioner Saunders feels it should be an independent person. She re-visited the 2018 plan that was halted by the microburst event. There are three goals:

1. Preserve and enhance resources in biological diversity while accommodating sustainable agricultural, recreational, and educational uses based on recommendations from present and future land management. The last state study was done in 2001 and made recommendations. This has been used since then.
2. Address the burdens created by weather and climate such as invasives, the damage the micro-burst caused which opened up a lot of the area to sunlight.
3. The recommended changes to trail systems based on the outcome of the public process (very important), and recommendations based on climate issues and the state of the forest - trail re-routes & closures, creation of new trails, means to cross the river at the Pink Trail. An RFP should be completed by June this year and then the management plan is created. The Town submits the grant in September and the grant will be awarded in February 2025 and we match 25% of the total of the grant. She asked what direction we would like to go.

Ms. O'Hare would like to hear from a professional who deals with the density of trails in a forest. Chair Miller says the purpose of the grant should be an environmental/multi-recreational assessment for sustainability.

*Commissioner Saunders will revise her draft and send it out to members. She will call the DEEP Forester about the free assessment of TMP offered to schedule.*

## **9. REPORTS/CORRESPONDENCE**

### **A. Trails Work Group - TWG information/matters not discussed above, D. Lendler**

Mr. Clark said the TWG distributed gravel by the bridge and on trails where needed and also cleared two blow-downs. He said that even with the recent rain, the trails are dry.

### **B. CT Land Conservation Council Conference members report, D. Saunders & D. Lendler**

Commissioner Lendler said one conference session she attended was about pollinators and the chemicals that are killing them. Commissioner Saunders said she went to the climate sustainability conferences and they were both very good and there is grant money out there for farmland and there actually aren't enough applicants.

Commissioner Makepeace entered the meeting at this time, 7:50 p.m.

Chair Miller requested to take up agenda item 2.C.1., from above in the agenda.

### **2. C. Marcus Cooke Memorial Park**

**1. Revised map for proposal approved last month, C. Makepeace**

Last month Vice Chair Makepeace had presented the proposal but a consensus had not been reached regarding the loop portion of this proposal.

**MOTION: C. Makepeace, To connect two ends of the Yellow Trail connected in a loop design so that it is all on Town Property.**

**SECOND: J. Borne**

**VOTE: Unanimous**

*Ms. O'Hare will forward this proposal to Director of Parks & Recreation Dept. along with recently approved proposals.*

**10. NEXT MEETING - June 13, 2024 6:00 p.m.**

**11. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION: Chair Miller, To adjourn.**

**SECOND: J. Borne**

**VOTE: Unanimous**

Chair Miller adjourned the meeting at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Allen  
Recording Secretary