



*Town of Wallingford, Connecticut*

WALLINGFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Wallingford Town Hall  
45 South Main Street  
Wallingford, CT 06492

DRAFT

WALLINGFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

REGULAR MEETING

Room 315, Town Hall

45 South Main Street, Wallingford, CT

Thursday, June 13, 2024, 6:00 p.m.

MINUTES

**Present:** Chair Mike Miller, Jeff Borne, Dianne Saunders, Erik Severson, Bruce Conroy, Jim Pyskaty (Arrived 6:24), Dianne Lendler (arrived 6:38), and Erin O'Hare – Environmental Planner

**Absent:** Vice Chair Conor Makepeace

Chair Miller called the meeting to order at 6:09 p.m.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Regular Meeting, May 9, 2024

**MOTION:** B. Conroy, To accept the Minutes of May 9, 2024

**SECOND:** J. Borne

**VOTE:** Unanimous

2. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

A. Fresh Meadows

1. Kiosk content & map

*Ms. O'Hare was directed to ask Scott Gray to submit a sketch of his idea to refurbish the existing kiosk built by Eagle Scout years ago. She handed out a revised map in better colors and will forward digital version to Parks & Recreation for them to print and distribute and to post.*

2. Graffiti, two areas – status

*Chair Miller will go check graffiti and clean-out bluebird boxes if necessary.*

3. Butterfly Loop Trail & Pond Trail

a. Mowing at key spots

*Ms. O'Hare will forward Dept. of Public Works a map with two small areas that she had observed to need mowing: at pond edge across from bench and 7-foot high canary grass by Butterfly Loop Trail edge that obscures view of pond from there.*

b. Work project to restore 5-foot width

*Ms. O'Hare indicated that trail bed is narrowing, in some spots to 1 and 1/2 feet wide – and this work will be on agenda of forthcoming Open Space Management Meeting.*

4. Glacial erratic signage – replacement

*Ms. O'Hare will order replacement for stolen signage.*

RECEIVED FOR RECORD 7/8/24  
AT 4:50 PM AND RECEIVED BY  
Kristen Longo (6) TOWN CLERK

5. Dead tree on erratic boulder

Doug Clark had indicated at last meeting that TWG would tackle this and was requested to leave tree parts at road edge for public works Dept. to pick up.

6. Eradication work

Ms. O'Hare indicated this contract work was awarded to All Habitat Services, LLC.

**B. Ferguson Woods**

1. Trails maintenance

It was not known if trails had been recently 'brushed-back'.

2. Eradication work

Ms. O'Hare indicated this contract work was awarded to All Habitat Services, LLC. Commissioner Saunders stated tarps should not be used as Japanese knotweed just sends out runners beyond tarp edge and that Contractor Bob Baker can be directed to pick up tarp pieces.

**C. Mayoral Open Space Management Meeting**

Ms. O'Hare forwarded suggestions for agenda to Mayor Cervoni but meeting has not been set yet.

**D. Other Property issues**

None reported.

**3. PROPERTY MONITORING REPORTS**

**A. Review of property assignments and re-assignments**

This list had been emailed by Ms. O'Hare so matter was not taken up.

**B. Ferguson Woods, J. Pyskaty**

Report will be given at next meeting.

**C. Cooke Road open space, 5A, D. Saunders**

Commissioners Saunders reported area is very overgrown and hard to access but may be accessible with permission through private land and that poachers hunt there. She noted the lessee has failed to cut Field 5A.

**D. Wharton Brook Corridor (at Doolittle Park), staff**

Ms. O'Hare reported DPW had apparently treated a 50-foot long swathe of mugwort, which was good and they had mowed or weed whacked to bank edges under saplings which is not preferable in a riparian corridor but at least the saplings remain affording bank integrity.

**4. FARMLAND LEASE PROPERTIES PROGRAM**

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

1. Next Committee Meeting

This Committee Meeting was set for July 18, at 5:00, Basement Conference Room.

2. Field 14A – field mowing & perimeter mowing encroachment

Ms. O'Hare indicated the management of this unbid field may be taken up at Open Space Management Meeting but the Commission's preference is requested as to "let the field go" or obtain mowing. Commissioner Conroy - recently assigned this open space property to monitor - stated it affords a variety of habitat for that side of Town and is a wildlife pathway and therefore should be kept open. All agreed. *Ms. O'Hare was directed to ascertain if farmer Andy Bozzuto would be interested in this field.*

**5. PROFESSIONAL NATURAL RESOURCES SERVICES**

**A. RFQ – Eradication of invasive plants on three Town properties**

Ms. O’Hare said this contract was awarded to All Habitat Services, LLC, to be completed by June 30.

**B. RFQ – GPS trails and features in TMP**

Ms. O’Hare said this RFQ has not been sent up to Purchasing Dept. yet.

**6. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT – TYLER MILL PRESERVE**

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

Commissioner Saunders gave the report and discussed Stewards trail management style wherein edges are “edited” resulting in a soft trail edge comprised of native plants affording natural appearance to trail users while eliminating incursion by invasive plants. They follow the protocol of first removal of invasive plants as developed by CIPIWG and CFPA. She reported a trails work party had mowed some of these trail edges which were ‘off-limits’ using a DR mower and a 10-inch high string mower. At her request, Commissioner Conroy had gone out and collected some of the cut invasive plant debris including rose bush parts that had been found left in the mowed trail sections and brought them in to show the Commission. Commissioner Saunders explained the many reasons behind these widely-accepted protocols.

**MOTION: D. Saunders, That no further trail ‘brushing’ be done by the Trails Work Group until they participate in a formal in-service training by an independent professional, or follow the established protocols of the Stewards of Tyler Mill Preserve.**

**SECOND: B. Conroy.**

There was no vote. Discussion followed.

**MOTION: B. Conroy, To amend the Motion, as follows: No further trails ‘brushing’ (clearing, cutting, or trailside work) to be done by the Trails Work Group until they participate in a formal in-service training by an independent professional, or follow established protocols of the Stewards of the Tyler Mill Preserve.**

**SECOND: D. Saunders**

There was no vote. Discussion followed.

**MOTION: B. Conroy, To table the above Motion to the next Meeting so that Chair Miller can discuss this issue with Scott Gray, Dianne Lendler and Dianne Saunders and for the Trails Work Group to notify Bruce Conroy of its work times.**

**SECOND: D. Saunders**

**VOTE: Unanimous**

**B. Eradication work**

Contract work had been completed by Bob Baker working with Commissioner Saunders. All Habitat Services, LLC was awarded the contractwork to be completed by June 30.

**C. Foraging activities**

Commissioner Saunders described the growing popularity of group foraging activities conducted, and classes offered in public open space lands. Whole plant colonies can be cleaned out she said.

**MOTION:** J. Borne, To recommend to Parks & Recreation Department that foraging (the collection or removal of plants or parts of plants) is prohibited on Town open space properties and this should be enforced.

**SECOND:** B. Conroy

**VOTE:** Unanimous

*Ms. O'Hare was directed to email the Commission's recommendation to Kenny Michaels, Director, Parks & Recreation Dept.*

**D. DEEP CT Recreational Trails Grant Program** – Preserve plan grant, D. Saunders

Commissioner Saunders reported her progress on background work for a possible fall grant application under the CT Recreational Trails Grant program for a management plan that will make recommendation regarding setbacks from private property, density of trails, public input, electric bike use, etc.. She had sent an email to members for comments. *Chair Miller requested she try to assess the cost of such a plan.*

**E. DEEP Forestry consultation**

Commissioner Saunders said she will meet with Ms. O'Hare regarding filing this request with the DEEP for a consultation.

**7. REPORTS / CORRESPONDENCE**

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

Commissioner Lendler talked about the TWG Report by Scott Gray (handed out) and said she feels the Trails Work Group needs its own equipment rather than sharing equipment with Stewards. She reported that Doug Clark and Larry Stowe were appointed by the Mayor as Trail Work Group Coordinators and that Chair Miller has resigned from the TWG.

**B. Open Space Users Group Meeting, Parks & Recreation Dept.**

Ms. O'Hare said she was told that this Meeting will be held later in late summer. Commissioner Saunders requested that the horseback riders be notified by Parks & Rec. Dept. of the meeting date.

**8. NEXT MEETING – July 11, 2024**

**9. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:** M. Miller, To adjourn the Meeting.

**SECOND:** J. Borne

**VOTE:** Unanimous

Chair Miller adjourned the meeting at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Erin O'Hare, Environmental Planner / Acting Recording Secretary