

WALLINGFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

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

Thursday, January 9, 2025, 6:00 p.m.

MINUTES

NOTE: *Italicized text below denotes member "action item".*

Present: Chair Conor Makepeace, Vice Chair Bruce Conroy, Commissioners Jeff Borne, Dianne Saunders, Erik Severson, Jim Pyskaty, Mike Miller, Jim Loughlin, and Erin O'Hare, Environmental Planner

Chair Conor Makepeace convened Meeting at 6:02.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Regular Meeting, November 14, 2024

Chair Conor Makepeace called for consideration of the Minutes of the Nov. 14, 2024. Commissioner Saunders correction on page 3, item 2.I., when John Gawlak was Director of Parks & Recreation, "*individuals would be arrested for tree-cutting*" to: "*his opinion was that individuals should be arrested for tree-cutting.*"

MOTION: B. Conroy, To approve as corrected

SECOND: E. Severson

VOTE: M. Miller abstained; all other members, Yes

B. Regular Meeting, December 12, 2024

Chair Conor Makepeace called for consideration of the Minutes of Dec. 12, 2024.

MOTION: M. Miller, To approve as presented..

SECOND: J. Borne

VOTE: J. Loughlin abstained; rest, Yes

2. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

A. Fresh Meadows

- 1. Kiosk content & map

Commissioner Borne will install map in kiosk before Feb. Meeting.

- 2. Graffiti, two areas – status

Commissioner Miller will take care of this.

- 3. Glacial erratic signage – replacement installation

Commissioner Borne will review signage installation.

B. Ferguson Woods

- 1. Kiosk – status

Chair Makepeace noted kiosk is not yet done.

- 2. Revised map –status

RECEIVED FOR RECORD 2/1/25
AT 10:00am AND RECEIVED BY
Kristen Lange (16) TOWN CLERK

Chair Makepeace noted he sent digitized revised trails data to Ms. O'Hare. *She will get mapped by Engineering Dept.*

C. Beseck Mountain

1. Fencing - status

Ms. O'Hare was directed to have Engineering Dept. re-survey the two areas to be fenced (cyclone for border at rear of 47 Cliffside Drive parcel and split-rail for West-east trail entrance bordering 45 Cliffside Drive parcel, to locate or install a pin at the corner, to not use spray paint to mark boundary, to have fencing installed when ground thaws out, and install Town Open Space markers.

Chair Makepeace will furnish her the GPS location of property lines in this above vicinity relative to proposed fencing.

Chair Makepeace noted he sent digitized revised trails data to Ms. O'Hare. *She will get it mapped for this property by Engineering Dept.*

D. Marcus Cooke Park

1. Signage for closed trails

Ms. O'Hare will order signage.

2. New Trails Map - status

Chair Makepeace noted he sent digitized revised trails data to Ms. O'Hare. She will get mapped for this property by Engineering Dept.. Commissioner Severson will install a copy of map in pavilion under Plexiglass. Another map will be placed inside a shadow box to be installed near beginning of trail near the pavilion. Commissioner Conroy will obtain a shadow box and replicate it for use in other locations.

MOTION: E. Severson: To buy one shadowbox

SECOND: B. Conroy

VOTE: Unanimous

3. Blaze painting

Commissioner Severson will blaze with spray paint in March.

E. 205 Main Street, Yalesville

1. Background

The history of trespass and encroachment by abutter was discussed at last Meeting. Ms. O'Hare reported that she conducted a site investigation this month with Water Division personnel and the Division has agreed to annual mowing of the former lease area hayfield. *Ms. O'Hare will ask the Town Council to remove this lease area from the Farmland Properties Lease Program.*

2. Proposal for installation of parking area

Commissioner Conroy suggested a parking area to accommodate 5 vehicles. Chair Makepeace set a Special Meeting for March 8, 1:00 p.m. for the purpose of observing the site. *Ms. O'Hare will email all a scanned map of site.*

3. Fence installation

Ms. O'Hare will pursue this with OSRMF funding.

4. Signage

Ms. O'Hare reported the large Town open space wooden sign is standing.

F. Bertini Park

1. New trail by Dayton Hill Pond

Chair Makepeace will investigate and GPS the new trail reported by Commissioner Saunders.

Chair Makepeace also noted he sent digitized revised trails data to Ms. O'Hare. *She will get it mapped for this property by Engineering Dept..*

G. Other property issues

None.

3. PROPERTY MONITORING REPORTS

A. New assignments

Taken up under next item.

B. Revision of report presentation schedule

Chair Makepeace requested consistent reporting on scheduled dates and two reportings completed per year for each site. Commissioner Severson took over former Commissioner Lendler's two sites. *Commissioner Saunders will train Commissioner Loughlin onsite as to what and how to monitor a site starting with Tyler Mill Preserve and will send him the Monitoring Form, Biotic Reporting form, and 8 pertinent pages from the Environmental Review Team Report.*

New Monitoring Schedule set as follows:

April & September: Beseck Meadow; Bertini Park; Beseck Mountain

May & October: Wharton Brook at Doolittle Park, Fresh Meadows, Ferguson Wood; 205 Main Street

June & November: Marcus Cooke, 1254 Whirlwind Hill Rd.; Tyler Mill Preserve; Cooke Road-5A

4. FARMLAND LEASE PROPERTIES PROGRAM

A. Farmland Lease Committee

B. Field 14A – plan for field mowing & perimeter mowing encroachment, staff

Discussed above under item 2.E.

C. Field 20A – bamboo work – Not taken up.

D. Bid proposals: Field 4A, 4C, 5A, 7A, 8B, 19A

These lease areas were terminated by Lessee in December and will go out for bid soon with certain adjustments to lease areas.

E. Bid waiver recommendation to Town Council - Field 18A

This is on Town Council's Jan. 14 agenda.

F. Field 5B –extension

Ms. O'Hare will request renewal of this lease when the six other lease areas to be awarded go to Town Council.

5. PUBLIC OUTREACH

A. Proposed events

Discussion took place on what the Commission hopes to showcase through public events which got to its given mission. Commissioner Loughlin requested to learn about the role the Commission and the basis for its work. All agreed an orientation packet would be important to aid in clarifying, re-visiting and re-affirming the mission and duties: Charter,

CGS enabling statute, original mission statement, open space properties list, Open Space Plan – 1999, map list). *Ms. O'Hare will provide.*

Commissioner Borne explained how in the 1990's the Commissions' focus was on open space acquisition which then shifted to property management of acquired lands, in 1999, the Commission crafted and adopted the Open Space Plan designating priority areas. He felt we should show the public how these open space areas make Wallingford "a desirable community". Commissioner Conroy's idea was for an informative walk in TMP. Chair Makepeace stated all maps need to be publically available. All agreed the Commission needs a megaphone for events (Facebook page, Town Website page, Flyers, Library (boards in halls & digital), Town Hall (pamphlets/notices).

MOTION: B. Conroy, To ask Mayor for Facebook (with no comments) and Commission's own web page.

SECOND: M. Miller

VOTE: Unanimous

Commissioner Saunders wanted a focus on TMP history with a presentation at library followed next month by a hike in TMP. Commissioner Conroy suggested an earth day Clean-Up Event. Chair Makepeace explained about a workshop on growing mushroom. Chair Makepeace said the Commission acts as an advisory resource for the Town. He asked for ideas for next Meeting.

B. Open space videos - Town Government Access TV

Ms. O'Hare reported she just learned of four "open space videos" posted on the Town website under GovTV site produced by GovTV – two of Fresh Meadows (titled "Cheshire Road") and two of TMP. They are very well done and inviting to potential users.

MOTION: B. Conroy, To ask Mayor for Facebook (with no comments) and Commission's own web page.

SECOND: M. Miller

VOTE: Unanimous

C. Ways to showcase open space properties

Taken up above under item 5.A.

6. PROFESSIONAL NATURAL RESOURCES SERVICES

A. Account status

In July we had a contract for \$750.00 with Bob Baker for non-chemical invasive plant removal work. There is a balance of \$5,250.00 in account.

B. GPS equipment – purchase & planned use

Chair Makepeace suggested purchase an Eros GPS GNSS 2000 C – a satellite receiver with antennae to transmit to a tablet and software. He explained possible uses by staff and members and as DEEP uses it we can import DEEP data. *Ms. O'Hare will order using OSRMF after obtaining Mayor's authorization to do so.*

MOTION: J. Borne, To purchase the device and one-year's software subscription and a tablet device to store the data

SECOND: M. Miller
VOTE: Unanimous

C. Contract proposals

Ms. O'Hare suggested another \$750 contract with Bob Baker for non-chemical invasive plant removal work in other site locations.

7. BUDGET FY 25/26 - discussion

8. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT – TYLER MILL PRESERVE

A. Stewards of Tyler Mill, Monthly Report, D. Saunders

B. Water Division water main upgrade work, (IWWC application)

C. Muddy River – Unauthorized installation of crossing comprised of stones at Pink Trail – recommendation letter

Chair Makepeace requested Ms. O'Hare write Kenny Michaels, Director, Parks & Recreation, informing of the Commission's recommendation that the unauthorized installation of a stone crossing installed across the channel of the Muddy River located at the north and south ends of the Pink Trail where the trails meet the river be removed immediately as it constitutes a violation of federal, state, and local law as detailed in the 11/13/2024 email message to your office and the 11/25/24 opinion from the Law Department advising its removal.

D. Draft Revised Town of Wallingford Official Trails System Map

Ms. O'Hare reported no further progress.

E. DEEP Forestry consultation, D. Saunders

Commissioner Saunders reported no further progress as DEEP website is faulty and Ms. O'Hare needs to contact the department directly.

(Item F. was inadvertently omitted in Agenda)

G. Stumps and jumps

Chair Makepeace requested Ms. O'Hare write Kenny Michaels, Director, Parks & Recreation regarding the Commission's recommendation that all stumps and jumps be removed from TMP.

H. Comprehensive trail improvement plan recommendation

This task awaits GPS data collection.

I. Other issues

Not taken up.

9. REPORTS / CORRESPONDENCE

A. Trails Work Group – TWG Reports & information/matters not discussed above, TWG Coordinators

Not taken up as there were no TWG Coordinators in attendance.

B. Open Space Users Group Meeting, Parks & Recreation Dept. – date tbd

Not scheduled.

C. Mayoral Open Space Managers Meeting – date tbd

Not scheduled.

D. CT Bar Assoc. Conference: Connecticut Land Use Law for Municipal Land Use Agencies, Boards, and Commissions – Virtual (Zoom) Sat., March 22, 2025, 9- 4:30 p.m.

10. NEXT MEETING – Feb. 13, 2025

11. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Makepeace adjourned the Meeting at 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Erin O'Hare, Environmental Planner
Acting Recording Secretary