

WALLINGFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

SPECIAL MEETING

Thursday, September 9, 2021, 6:00 p.m.

Marcus Cooke Park

9 Old Rock Hill Road, Wallingford, CT

Note: The September 9, 2021 Regular Meeting in Town Hall for 7:00 p.m. was cancelled and a Special Meeting was set to be held at Marcus Cooke Park, 9 Old Rock Hill Road, Wallingford, CT, at 6:00 p.m. due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The following Minutes are scheduled to be approved at the next Meeting.

Present: Chair Mike Miller, Vice Chair John Lathrop, and Commissioners Carl Arsenault, Jeffrey Borne, Dianne Lendler, Jared McQueen, Brad Sammis, Dianne Saunders, and Jim Pyskaty, and Environmental Planner Erin O'Hare.

Absent: None.

There was one person from the public addition to the Recording Secretary.

Chair Miller called the Meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

1. NEW COMMISSION MEMBER

Mr. Jim Pyskaty was welcomed by Chair Miller and the members as the new Conservation Commission member.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Special Meeting, August 12, 2021

This correction was made to the Draft:

- p. 1, at 2.A., in paragraph 1, Commissioner Saunders asked to delete sentences 4 and 5.

Motion by Vice Chair Lathrop to accept the Special Meeting Minutes of August 12, 2021 as corrected by Commissioner Saunders; seconded by Commissioner Sammis, and approved unanimously.

3. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

A. Tyler Mill Preserve

1. Stewards of Tyler Mill – report, D. Saunders & D. Lendler

Commissioner Saunders and Steward David Bedell put deer cages around the butternut seedlings planted in areas damaged by the microburst. Commissioner Lendler reported water damage on some trails from Storm Ida. Some trails need work, and there is some structural damage. Chair Miller said the Trails Committee has three projects: Work with Stewards of Tyler Mill; Work with Parks and Recreation Department on trails work; and Handle the trail work for the rest of Town. He and Commis-

sioners Arsenault and Lathrop are on the Trails Committee. Commissioner Saunders asked if one of them can accompany a Steward to assess a problem and then coordinate tasks. Chair Miller said Yes. *In October, Commissioner Lendler will report on two trails that need to be assessed in this way. Ms. O'Hare stated that all of the Committees, their roles and memberships will be revisited in October.*

Commissioner Lendler asked for action on illegal trails that have been created in the last months. Stormwater runs down them and causes damage. *Chair Miller will inquire with Parks and Recreation Director Kenny Michaels, and it will be on the next agenda.*

2. Bat boxes – installation

Commissioner Saunders said these are to be installed in the fall.

3. Green Trail repair – report

Commissioner Saunders said the stream shows standing water over the corduroy, and the cedar is rotting. Commissioner Arsenault recommended using pressure-treated wood that withstands being placed in water. *Commissioner Saunders asked Ms. O'Hare to get quote changes to the proposed bog bridges. If the job exceeds \$750, then Ms. O'Hare will need to obtain three quotes.*

4. Kiosk signage

Commissioner Saunders will do this next.

5. Mowing

First, the Stewards go in to trim up, and then the person on the mower can follow. *Commissioner Saunders will follow up.*

6. Other reports – None.

B. Fresh Meadows

1. Peninsula by southern parking area entrance

No action by Public Works yet.

2. Other

Ms. O'Hare reported Storm Ida water damage on the stone dust trail in six sections for 20 feet each, with ruts from 1" to 8" deep. *Ms. O'Hare will ask Public Works to redo this trail with a deeper bed of stone dust.* Also, Ms. O'Hare took photos of large invasive patches in bloom on the pond edge near Ken Ryan's tree. *Commissioners Saunders and Borne will identify that. Ms. O'Hare will have EarthTones look at the new tupelos, which are ailing.* Ms. O'Hare saw four wide patches of knotweed in bloom in the fields that should be treated next summer. She and Commissioner Saunders reported that the vendor could not treat the knotweed at Tyler Mill entrance as it was too high and the riverbank was too steep, so it was too hazardous to do.

C. 205 Main Street open space property

1. Trespass fencing

Ms. O'Hare said there has been no action by Public Works yet.

D. Beseck Meadows

1. Bamboo – cutting & private encroachment by bamboo

Ms. O'Hare will follow up.

E. Cliffside Drive trail – restrict ATVs

Commissioner Arsenault said Chair Heffernon had tried to arrange a meeting with Public Works Director Rob Baltramaitis, but no meeting has occurred. *Chair Miller will reach out to him.*

F. Grand Street Park – garden

Ms. O'Hare said that Public Works has not moved forward on this.

G. Other properties

All Commissioners and Ms. O'Hare will report on their properties in October. Right now at Ferguson Woods, Ms. O'Hare will ask Public Works to fix the damaged dirt road portion of Dibble Edge Road washed out by Storm Ida.

Ms. O'Hare showed the photos of Doolittle Park storm damage and the rutted paths at Fresh Meadows; also, photos of the Quinnipiac River Trail and Fireworks Island showing flooding damage from the river. *Ms. O'Hare will ask Public Works to see whether the trails are undermined.*

4. EXECUTIVE SESSION

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

Commissioner Sammis suggested that Executive Session could be deferred until the end of the Meeting. All Commissioners concurred.

5. FARMLAND LEASE PROPERTIES PROGRAM

A. Bids: Fields 5A, 7A & 8B - bid opening Sept. 15, 2:00 p.m.; award, Sept. 25

Ms. O'Hare will attend the bid opening. Bids will be awarded by the Town Council.

B. Farmland Lease Committee

1. Monitoring Reports

Commissioner Sammis reported on Fields 2C, 4B, 6D, and 8A. Commissioner Saunders explained the process for qualified and non-qualified bids. Commissioners do go out to the properties every year to evaluate each farmer lessee.

Commissioner Saunders reported that parts of Fields 1B and 1C need to be mowed in winter. On 1C, the farmer used the telephone poles provided to mark the bottom of the field, and he put a boulder at the other end. Field 1A looked good. At Field 4A, the farmer mowed it properly; at 4C, the farmer restored the field.

Chair Miller reported on 11 fields that were only mowed once and no maintenance work was done. The erosion remains on access to Field 20A.

Commissioner Arsenault will report on his fields at the next Meeting.

2. Compliance with lease terms

Compliance has varied from lessee to lessee.

3. Lessee conference – Sept. 10

Ms. O'Hare, Chair Miller, Commissioner Saunders, and the Lessee will attend.

4. Conservation management in farm fields

Commissioner Sammis asked for an explanation of conservation practices. The practices are particular to each field. It has become difficult for a number of farmer lessees to do those. So the Commission is transitioning to take conservation practices out of the leases and to assign those to vendors.

C. Field 7A, Northford Rd. – hunter parking proposal

There has been no update from Public Works on installation requested. *Commissioner Saunders will check on the status of the telephone pole in accessway.*

D. Fields 7B, 7C, 7D – gate

Ms. O'Hare said no action has been taken by Public Works yet.

E. Field 7F – mow

Ms. O'Hare will get a contractor to mow Field 7F. Commissioner Saunders is writing the winter mowing specifications for that.

F. Field 18A – Eversource Transmission Upgrade Project

Ms. O'Hare will provide a copy of the lease plus a map to Commissioner Arsenault, who will speak with the lessee.

G. Other – No items.

6. REPORTS / CORRESPONDENCE

A. Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) – regulation changes

Ms. O'Hare stated that a Freedom of Information complaint was made by someone from the public that the Draft Minutes were not posted on the Town website in time, in accordance with state law. Ms. O'Hare and other staff attended an FOI training. A List of Motions must be available in the Department office by two days after the meeting. The Draft Minutes must be filed and posted on the Town website within seven days. The Draft Minutes can state: "To be Approved or Corrected at the next Meeting." At the following Meeting, the Draft Minutes are corrected and voted as "Final/Approved", and that set can be posted on the Town website. Separately, a "hybrid" meeting is allowed, where most of the Commissioners meet together and one or more Commissioners could also attend by telephone. Commissioner Saunders suggested using a larger meeting room, possibly at the Parks and Recreation Department. *Ms. O'Hare will ask Parks and Recreation for a room.*

B. DEEP magazine, CT Wildlife, July-August 2021 was noted.

4. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion by Vice Chair Lathrop to go into Executive Session; seconded by Commissioner Lendler, and approved unanimously.

Both the Recording Secretary and the person from the public left the meeting at this time, 7:25 p.m.,

and did not return, and Ms. O'Hare took over recording for the remainder of the Meeting.

At 8:06 p.m., the following Motion was made:

Motion by Commissioner Lathrop to come out of Executive Session; seconded by Commissioner Borne, and approved unanimously.

7. NEXT MEETING – October 14, 2021

8. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Commissioner Pyskaty to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Commissioner Borne, and approved unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen L. Burns, Recording Secretary