

MINUTES

WALLINGFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

SPECIAL MEETING

Thursday, February 17, 2022, 6:30 p.m.

Town Hall Council Chambers

45 South Main Street, Wallingford, CT

Note: The February 10, 2022 Regular Meeting was cancelled, and a Special Meeting was set for Thursday, February 17, 2022 in Room 315 of Town Hall, 45 South Main Street, Wallingford, at 6:30 p.m. On that date, Room 315 was not available and the Conservation Commission met in Town Hall Council Chambers at 6:30 p.m.

Present: Chair Mike Miller, Vice Chair John Lathrop, and Commissioners Jared McQueen, Carl Arsenault, Jeffrey Borne, Dianne Lendler, and Dianne Saunders.

Absent: Commissioners Brad Sammis and James Pyskaty, and Environmental Planner Erin O'Hare.

Chair Miller called the Meeting to order at 6:39 p.m.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Special Meeting, Dec. 9, 2021

One correction was made by Commissioner Saunders:

- p. 4 at 4.A. Committees, Trails Committee, second sentence: to delete "Dianne Saunders" and to insert "Dianne Lendler".

Motion by Vice Chair Lathrop to accept the Minutes of December 9, 2021 as amended; seconded by Commissioner Borne and approved unanimously.

B. Regular Meeting, Jan. 13, 2022 – This meeting date had been cancelled

2. **ANNUAL REPORT** - Item 2 was not taken up.

3. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Motion by Mike Miller to nominate and elect John Lathrop as Vice Chair; seconded by Dianne Lendler, and approved unanimously.

Motion by John Lathrop to nominate and elect Mike Miller as Chair; seconded by Dianne Lendler, and approved unanimously.

4. **BUDGET FY 22-23** – discussion. Item 4 was not taken up.

5. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

A. Tyler Mill Preserve

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

Commissioner Saunders said hunting is almost over. Illegal trails are still being made. She is working on an approximate map of those, and she notified Director of Parks and Recreation Kenny Michaels of the activity.

2. Bat boxes – installation. These will be installed soon.

3. Green Trail repair & footbridge

The broken corduroy must be dismantled and hauled away. Commissioner Saunders has the list of materials, and the contracted work should be done by the end of March.

4. Kiosk signage - *Ms. O'Hare is getting the quote information.*

5. Other reports

Commissioner Lendler asked to remove the White Trail here. It has been taped off, and it's narrow. *Chair Lathrop said the Trails Committee will see the White Trail.*

B. Fresh Meadows

1. Peninsula by southern parking area entrance - No information.

2. Trail stone dust restoration & storm Ida trail bed damage – update – No report.

3. Dogwood tree replacement – No report.

4. Aquatic invasive plant – request for study – No report.

5. Other - Commissioner Arsenault said that Public Works mowed only a portion there, not the entire area as usual.

C. 205 Main Street open space property

1. Trespass fencing – update

Chair Miller will ask about the progress here with Public Works Director Rob Baltramaitis.

D. Beseck Meadows

1. Bamboo – cutting & private encroachment by bamboo – update. The bamboo area remains the same.

2. Access road erosion, minor dumping, vegetation by gate - No change.

E. Beseck Mountain

1. Cliffside Drive trail – restrict ATVs – update

Commissioner Arsenault said there has been no movement.

2. Yard waste dumping - This situation has not changed.

F. Pragemann Park – fence repair. *Ms. O’Hare is working with Public Works on this.*

G. Grieb Trail/Spring Lake open space property – issues. No report.

H. Use of Professional Services – Natural Resources funds

1. Proposed Ecological Assessments

Ms. O’Hare already proposed using funds in this budget line to do Ecological Assessments for the newly acquired Stevens property. *Tonight, Commissioner Saunders suggested obtaining a King’s Mark endorsement as well.* Vice Chair Lathrop said obtaining that designation may require a Management Plan.

At Tyler Mill Preserve, Commissioner Lendler asked to add some trees in the bare spots where trees were lost in the microburst.

Chair Miller noted the request for Ecological Assessments above for Stevens and Scard Road. At the next meeting in March, Chair Miller asked the Commissioners to recommend other properties for this type of assessment.

2. Proactive studies for future grant application opportunities

Commissioner Borne proposed seeking a grant for an inclined base/small boat launch at Lucky Pond in Fresh Meadows.

3. Other – None.

I. Bluebird Nesting Boxes – installations & locations

Bluebird boxes were replaced at Fresh Meadows a while ago. Commissioner Arsenault said that any more boxes should be spaced out in a field that is not to be mowed, in order to protect the birds from coyotes.

J. Other properties – None.

6. TRAIL COMMITTEE REPORT, J. Lathrop

Chair Lathrop said the Committee will examine the trails for any new posts needed plus signage. The Pink Trail needs more posts. At Tyler Mill Preserve, Chair Lathrop proposed that the sign by the kiosk at Northford Road could use an attached plywood 2’ x 3’ wing, roofed and with plexiglass, and set at an angle to show the larger map and trail rules. People could see it easily. *Chair Lathrop will recheck the available area by Northford Road and draw it up—possibly also see a similar installation at Maltby Lane. And he will check the Red Trail sign by the bridge. Chair Miller will assist.*

The Trails Committee has not met yet, but individuals have done field assessments.

7. COMMITTEES

A. Committees – No action.

B. Committee roles

Chair Miller said the Committees are waiting for advice from Corporation Counsel Janis Small.

8. PROJECTS FOR VOLUNTEERS

Chair Miller asked that one Commissioner would serve as Volunteer Coordinator—to receive volunteers' names and refer them to the Committees that need help with Town open space projects. For now, Chair Miller will receive volunteers' information and relay it.

9. FARMLAND LEASE PROPERTIES PROGRAM

A. Farmland Lease Committee

1. Compliance with lease terms

Commissioner Saunders reported that Ms. O'Hare had met with a number of lessees.

2. Conservation management by contractors - No report.

B. Field 1A, No. Branford Rd. – conservation maintenance issue

Commissioner Saunders and Ms. O'Hare conferred with the lessee, who will pull the Autumn olive and pile it on either side of the field. Commissioner Saunders noted that this invasive frequently snaps off, but mowing would get most of the rest. What holes are left would be filled in.

C. Field 7A, Northford Rd. – hunter parking proposal. No action.

D. Fields 7B, 7C, 7D, off Anderson Rd. – gate

Commissioners believe that Public Works is now ordering a number of gates to put up.

E. Field 18A, 995 C East Center St. – Eversource Transmission Upgrade Project. No report.

F. Extensions: 1A, 1C, 1D, 6A, 6B, 13A & 20A - These extensions have been granted.

G. Other - None.

10. OFFICIAL OPEN SPACE MAP – review revised/updated map

Commissioner Saunders is making a separate spreadsheet that lists the property addresses and map aspects. Chair Miller said Ms. O'Hare will send this map revision stage plus the spreadsheet to the Commissioners for review.

11. QUINNIPIAC UNIVERSITY STUDENT VOLUNTEERS, 'The Big Event', April 9, 2022 – proposal

Vice Chair Lathrop is the contact person with Quinnipiac University staff. *Vice Chair Lathrop asked the Commissioners to decide on project(s) and the tools needed.* Suggestions were to: re-blaze a trail; install trail posts/signs; work on invasive species; make a trail down to Lucky Pond; clear a trail;

stain old guardrails; repair and stain a kiosk. *Chair Miller asked the Commissioners to suggest projects to Vice Chair Lathrop.*

12. REPORTS / CORRESPONDENCE

- A. Climate change relative to recent grant application**, staff. - No report.
- B. Open Space Resources Management Fund** – account status, staff. - No report.
- C. Farm River Greenway** – notice, staff. No report.
- D. CFPA magazine, CT Woodlands**, Winter 2022 – Received.
- E. CT Farmland Trust**, news alert re: webinars, “Ask An Expert” – Received.

Commissioner Saunders mentioned the thank-you note received from the family of Harry Hubbard for the State conservation book.

Commissioner Lendler left the meeting at 8:03 p.m.

13. NEXT MEETING – March 10, 2022

14. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Commissioner McQueen to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Vice Chair Lathrop, and approved unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen L. Burns, Recording Secretary