

Final / Approved

MINUTES

WALLINGFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

REGULAR MEETING

Thursday, August 11, 2022, 6:00 p.m.

Room 315, Town Hall

45 South Main Street, Wallingford, CT

This Regular Meeting of the Wallingford Conservation Commission was held on Thursday, August 11, 2022, at 6:00 p.m. in Room 315 of Town Hall, 45 South Main Street, Wallingford, CT.

Present: Mike Miller, Chair, Dianne Lendler, Brad Sammis, Jeffrey Borne, Carl Arsenault, Erin O’Hare, Environmental Planner,

Absent: John Lathrop, Vice Chair, Jim Pyskaty, Jared McQueen, Dianne Saunders

Also present were Scott Grey and Doug Clark from the public.

Chair Miller called the Meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Regular Meeting, July 14, 2022

Chair Miller requested the following correction: Page 2, Item #3, Contracted Work: change the word, “illegal”, to “unauthorized”, (referring to a trail cut along east side of the Preserve).

MOTION: Carl Arsenault, To approve the Minutes with the correction.

SECOND: Brad Sammis

VOTE: Unanimous

2. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

A. Tyler Mill Preserve

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

Commissioner Lendler presented the Stewards Report, indicating the trails are in good shape and have continued to be weed-whacked and hedge-trimmed; it has been too hot for weeding; there are no trees down; on the Green Trail, the bogbridge conditions are dangerous as it is in disrepair and grass is growing through the corduroy section of the trail; it is unknown if bogbridge pieces to be removed will be removed offsite or stacked; Commissioner Saunders and others are helping to keep the tupelos and other saplings watered through this drought; and, Vice Chair Lathrop is working on a sign for the bridge. She advised that the Commission should blaze the Boy Scout Trail using gold and blue, the colors of the

Boy Scouts of America. Chair Miller inquired about a tarp on ground covering knotweed at the entrance area. A copy of the written report prepared, by Commissioner Saunders, was submitted for the file.

2. Proposals to Trails Administrator – status

a. Green Trail footbridge

b. Boy Scout Trail

Chair Miller indicated the two Tyler Mill User Group proposals submitted previously to Kenny Michaels, Trails Administrator, for his approval (*above*) were discussed last month.

First, he asked Scott Grey tell the Commission about a proposal for a new blazing system for the Preserve trails following the CT Forest & Park and State & Federal standardized blazing system, which utilizes two colors on a plastic blaze sign with the lower color indicating a smaller trail that branches off the main trail (the upper color). Mr. Grey felt this system would reduce confusion and be more visible to hikers. He passed around actual blaze samples used on the Blue-blazed Trails System. He indicated he was appointed to oversee the footbridge construction project and that the hardware will be purchased at the Town's expense. Ms. O'Hare spoke about tax exempt requirements in that regard. Mr. Grey indicated wood for the stringers would be from 'dead fall' cedar.

Commissioner Arsenault felt that cedar was not suitable; he cautioned not to trample the surrounding habitat when felling and collecting cedars; and he felt nailing blazes to tree trunks could possibly introduce disease organisms.

Chair Miller suggested Mr. Grey submit his blazing system proposal to Mr. Michaels per the new protocol.

The two trail proposals were discussed again. The Chair indicated there had been no written approval notification forwarded. Commissioner Lendler noted that a written approval should be issued with this new administrative system. Ms. O'Hare indicated that Trails Administrator Kenny Michaels told her a few weeks ago the Boy Scouts Trail was approved and he submitted a wetlands permit application on July 26 for the activities proposed on the Green Trail which he had approved as well. She noted the proposal is being held up by no August IWWC Meeting, action will be taken at the Sept. 7 IWWC Meeting, and that the Commission obtained a dozen IWWC permits in the past, two of which were for bogbridges/footbridges.

Ms. O'Hare noted she had forwarded Environmental Planner comments upon review of the proposals to Mr. Michaels and Chair Miller previously but Chair Miller indicated he had not received his copy. *Ms. O'Hare will provide copies via email to all.*

3. Contracted work – report

Ms. O'Hare reported on completed and proposed contract work:

- Eric Hansen, Ferrucci & Walicki, completed a report on conditions and assessment of the 1.3-mile unauthorized trail constructed on the east side of the Preserve (which he had GPS-ed in a previous contract) which she emailed to Commissioners today. She encouraged the

Commission to walk the trail to determine possible need for erosion control and safety concerns to be implemented under a proposal to the Trails Administrator. *Ms. O'Hare will request better quality report photos from the Mr. Hansen.*

- Bob Baker, completed cutting of Japanese knotweed plants by mechanical means in vicinity of Preserve entrance off Northford Road and removal of other invasives under the oversight of Commissioner Saunders. He will be cutting back vegetation to afford access to a colony of invasive Trees of Heaven off the Pink Trail that are proposed to be treated by another vendor in the fall.
- Todd Mervosh has been contracted to treat the Japanese knotweed this week as done in previous years.

4. Other reports

B. Fresh Meadows

1. Aquatic invasive plant survey, Galko Pond – report

Ms. O'Hare reported she had spoken to the aquatic botanist from the CT Agricultural Experiment Station who had attempted to launch her 14-foot boat at Galko Pond but could not due to no boat ramp however she had indicated she would return in September when the unidentified invasive plant will be in flower. She reported observing Eurasian Milfoil there - an aquatic invasive.

2. Kiosk status

Chair Miller reported he has completed some research on kiosk types, and kits, and prices, etc., and that Vice Chair Lathrop will report on kiosk condition next month.

3. Contracted work – report

Commissioner Arsenault reported on locations of Trees of Heaven at the top of the knoll and also two trees at Cliffside Trail, one at Wisk Key Wind cul-de-sac, and 20 or so behind the homes on Town land in that vicinity. Ms. O'Hare reported that Bob Baker will continue his contract work removing Japanese knotweed at the park mechanically.

4. Other

C. Beseck Meadow

1. Bamboo treatment

Ms. O'Hare reported conferring with All Habitat Services on treatment who indicated chemical treatment would not be advised as the abutter's bamboo would keep invading Town land regardless and so repeated cutting was the best option.

2. Private bamboo grove encroachment

Ms. O'Hare reported drafting a letter to be sent to the Durham property owner however corrective action by the owner is unlikely.

3. Access road erosion, minor dumping, vegetation by gate

Chair Miller indicated Commissioner Arsenault had removed the vegetation as reported last month but there has been no other corrective action taken by Public Works Department on the road erosion.

D. 1364 Scard Road & 40 Geo. Washington Trail – signage

Vice Chair Lathrop will report back on signage next month.

E. Ferguson Woods

1. Proposal for second contract on pond

A second contract will be discussed more next month. *Vice Chair Lathrop was to visit the site last month and his report on a fallen tree at the pond will be next month, per Chair Miller.*

2. Kiosk proposal

Chair Miller indicated: *Vice Chair Lathrop will report back on kiosk options next month.*

F. FY 22-23 Prof. Services - Natural Resources – contracted work completed & proposed work

Ms. O'Hare reported above on future work. She mentioned a kiosk with informational material for Doolittle Park at Wall Street regarding the Wharton Brook Floodplain and the river is being considered.

H. Other properties

(Not taken up)

3. PROPERTY MONITORING REPORTS

A. Fresh Meadows, J. Borne

Commissioner Borne indicated he will report next month.

B. Whirlwind Hill Rd. & Scard Rd., D. Lendler

Commissioner Lendler indicated she will report next month on the Scard Road property. She said that Mr. Termini, owner of abutting land, mows the edge of the Whirlwind Hill Road property and there is nothing else to report.

C. Upcoming September monitoring reports: Bertini Park, Beseck Mountain, Tyler Mill Preserve, Cliffside Drive

Chair Miller reminded all to check their properties to report next month.

4. TRAIL COMMITTEE REPORT, J. Lathrop

Chair Miller indicated: *Vice Chair Lathrop will report next month.*

5. PROJECTS FOR VOLUNTEERS

Chair Miller reported he has reached out to a Choate representative and to State Rep. Mary Mushinsky, and River Advocates, about volunteer work.

6. PUBLIC OUTREACH PROGRAMMING

A. Information dissemination: Library, Parks & Recreation Dept. & other locations

Chair Miller indicated: *The Commission is to think about exactly which information to disseminate and where.* Commissioner Lendler suggested a PowerPoint for the Town Council as was done in the past by Commissioner Saunders, hand-outs at farmers' markets and at the Preserve. *She will go look at the childrens' area at the Library for options.*

B. Website information

Ms. O'Hare reported on her discussion with Mayor Dickinson on the idea for a page on the Town website to expand on the Commission's work and activities for the public's view. She indicated the Commission should provide a sample page for the Mayor's consideration. Commissioner Borne indicated a big role of the Commission to be recognized is the seeking of land acquisition opportunities.

Chair Miller requested: *Commissioners to think about a web page and other informational display options for next month.*

7. FARMLAND LEASE PROPERTIES PROGRAM

A. Farmland Lease Committee

1. Monitoring Reports - status
2. Review of compliance with lease terms
3. Conservation management by contractors

B. Several recent trespass issues & signage

C. Field 1C & 1D, No. Branford Rd. - vehicle trespass issue

D. Field 7A, Northford Rd. - hunter parking proposal in R.O.W. & vehicle trespass

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

F. Field 5A – mowing

Item #7, above, not taken up.

8. REPORTS / CORRESPONDENCE

A. Memorandum to Town Commissions from Janis Small, Corporation Counsel, Re: Freedom of Information Act Requirements, dated 5/9/22 – (not discussed)

B. Hazard Mitigation Plan Update –South Central Regional Council of Governments (SCRCOG) – Survey - received 6/30/2022

Ms. O’Hare reported she participated in a SCCROG zoom this morning on this topic. There have been four Natural Disasters Declarations in the last five years in Wallingford per FEMA making the importance of this Plan more timely and relevant than ever. *She will email the SCCROG survey link to all.*

C. DEEP Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Program Grant - application deadline, 9/30/22

D. Record Journal article, 8/4/22, re: Monarchs listed as federally endangered & pollinators

Ms. O’Hare reported she had conferred with the article’s author about the Commission’s efforts and the ‘shout out’ to homeowners to keep ‘scruffy’ natural areas on portions of their property, etc., and the Pollinator Pathways in town, and was very pleased with the excellent piece.

E. CT Land Conservation Council, Program updates, 7/19/22

The Commission agreed to expend funds for annual membership dues for the three organizations listed below.

F. CT Butterfly Association - approval for membership dues

G. CACIWC – approval for membership dues

H. CT Forest & Park Association - approval for membership dues

9. NEXT MEETING – Sept. 8, 2022

10. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Brad Sammis

SECOND: Jeff Borne

VOTE: Unanimous

Individuals in need of auxiliary aids for the effective communication in programs and services of the Town of Wallingford are invited to make their needs and preferences known to the ADA Compliance Coordinator at 203-294-2070 five days prior.

Respectfully submitted,

**Erin O’Hare, Environmental Planner
Acting Recording Secretary**