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Kristen Panzo (15) TOWN CLERK

DRAFT

WALLINGFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

REGULAR MEETING

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

Thursday, August 8, 2024, 6:00 p.m.

MINUTES

Present: Acting Chair/Chair Conor Makepeace, Commissioner/Vice Chair Bruce Conroy (left at 7:38 p.m.), Commissioners Mike Miller, Jeff Borne (left at 9:10 p.m.), Dianne Saunders, Erik Severson, Jim Pyskaty, and Dianne Lendler, and Erin O'Hare, Environmental Planner

Absent: None

Note: *Italics used below represent action items.*

Acting Chair Makepeace called the Meeting to order at 6:04 p.m..

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Acting Chair Makepeace noted Minutes of July 11, 2024 Regular Meeting were not yet posted.

2. ELECTIONS

Acting Chair Makepeace called for nominations for the offices of Chair and Vice Chair as discussed at last Meeting.

MOTION: B. Conroy, nominates for Chair: Conor Makepeace

SECOND: M. Miller

VOTE: Unanimous

MOTION: M. Miller nominates for Vice Chair: Bruce Conroy

SECOND: J. Borne

VOTE: Unanimous

3. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

A. Fresh Meadows

1. Kiosk content & map

No action on this work item.

2. Graffiti, two areas - status

Commissioner Miller indicated will wire-brush the graffiti off soon.

3. Butterfly Loop Trail & Pond Trail

a. Mowing at key spots

Ms. O'Hare indicated she did not address the item yet with the Public Works Dept. but will do so.

b. Work project to restore 5-foot width

Ms. O'Hare indicated she did not yet address the item with Kenny Michaels, Parks & Recreation Director and the Public Works Dept. but will do so.

4. Glacial erratic signage – replacement

Ms. O'Hare indicated she did not yet order the signage but will do so.

5. Dead tree on erratic boulder

Scott Gray, Trails Work Group Coordinator, indicated the dead tree has been completely removed from the site.

B. Ferguson Woods

1. Trails maintenance

Mr. Gray indicated the trails maintenance has been completed by Trails Work Group.

2. Kiosk

Mr. Gray indicated the kiosk fabrication as well as the Yellow Trail re-route would be completed by the end of September. Chair Makepeace requested that kiosk be cemented in.

C. Beseck Mountain

1. Vandalism – flag pole installation

Chair Makepeace described the illegal flagpole installation on the ridge with guy wires located a few feet away from trail - as emailed previously to the members saying it is to be handled by the Mayor's Office.

Mr. Gray clarified that the location where he had installed New England Trail –National Scenic Trail signage on this trail to the right and to the left of where it meets Cliffside Trail.

MOTION: B. Conroy, Recommend to Mayor Cervoni, Kenny Michaels, Director, Parks and Recreation Department, and Kurt Treiber, Risk Manager, that the flag pole installation on ridge of Beseck Mountain be removed.

SECOND: M. Miller

VOTE: Unanimous

Commissioner Borne requested that Ms. O'Hare forward a copy of this Motion to Town Planner Kevin Pagini and Clair Cain, CFPA.

D. 155 Grieb Road

1. Trespass/dumping

Ms. O'Hare said she had not seen the recent reported issue but there is a history of such issues on this 7.19 acre site. Chair Makepeace noted that in years past developers would give a wetlands parcel such as this to the Town.

E. Bat box installations

Not taken up.

F. Mayoral Open Space Management Meeting – date tbd

Date not set.

G. Other Property issues

Chair Makepeace stated that copies of maps for pertinent open space properties, e.g. Ferguson Woods, are to be put on the Parks & Recreation website and on a future Conservation Commission website page. *Ms. O'Hare will follow-up stating that the maps will need to be updated as improvements are completed however.*

Chair Makepeace will forward his Marcus Cooke Park report and proposals Kenny Michaels, Director, Parks & Recreation and ask permission to remove the Girl Scout map signage as previously discussed.

4. PROPERTY MONITORING REPORTS

A. Beseck Meadow, M. Miller

Commissioner Miller reviewed the site's issues: sign warn, bamboo is robust, access road erosion was worsening, no dumping observed, no evidence of through traffic to the new England Trail, and the locked gate limits opportunities for public parking. *He will address issues at the next meeting of the Farmland Lease Committee.* Commissioner Saunders said that metal sheeting or concrete can be installed to block bamboo incursion from the abutting land. Consensus was to not keep applying chemicals but to keep cutting program. *Ms. O'Hare will convey to Rob Baltramaitis, Public Works Director.*

B. 205 Main Street, Yalesville, B. Conroy

Vice Chair Conroy said he will report at the next Meeting.

5. FARMLAND LEASE PROPERTIES PROGRAM

A. Farmland Lease Committee - D. Saunders, Chair

1. Committee Meeting, Basement Conference Room, Aug. 12, 5:00 p.m.
2. Field 14A – plan for field mowing & perimeter mowing encroachment

Committee Chair Saunders said Open space Resources Management Fund could be used to brush-hog this field. Chair Makepeace stated a fence must be installed to deter chronic encroachment by abutter. *Ms. O'Hare will calculate length of fencing needed and will bring copies of all memorandums forwarded regarding requests for fence installation to next Meeting as requested by Chair.*

6. PROFESSIONAL NATURAL RESOURCES SERVICES

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

Commissioner Saunders indicated that much of the contracted work was insufficiently or inadequately completed. *Ms. O'Hare will follow-up with contractor, All Habitat Service, LLC.*

B. RFQ – GPS trails and features in TMP

Ms. O'Hare indicated she has not sent the RFQ for this contract work out but will do so.

MOTION: B. Conroy, For Chair Makepeace to request that Kenny Michaels, Director, Parks & Recreation Department, place maps of Tyler Mill Preserve, Ferguson Woods, and Fresh Meadows on the Parks and Recreation Department website.

SECOND: M. Miller

VOTE: Unanimous

7. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT – TYLER MILL PRESERVE

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

Co-Chair Saunders gave report including work clearing the horse crossings, completing ‘soft trail’ work on sunny trail edges, and graffiti issues. *She will contact DEEP for vendors who deal with work by the water with toxic substances such as turpentine as recommended to her by former State Historian Nick Bellantoni.* She proposed that the five trails the Stewards have used soft trail edge work on be managed under the responsibility of the Stewards going forward. *She will forward Chair Makepeace the proposal with a corresponding map of the pertinent trail locations.*

Vice Chair Conroy left the Meeting at this time, 7:38 p.m.

B. Mayor’s Memorandum to Commission Re: Review of Proposed Trail Work at Tyler Mill, 7/18/24

Mayor Cervoni’s Memorandum, forwarded to the Commission, Mr. Michaels, Ms. O’Hare, and Mr. Gray, Trails Work Group, dated 7/18/24, was discussed. *Chair Makepeace will seek clarification on when the 60-days for Commission decision on proposals commences as the Memorandum indicated if no comments are received the proposal shall be deemed acceptable to the Commission.* Commissioner Saunders questioned how incomplete information, e.g. location maps, or lack of clarity would be handled given the timeframes. Ms. O’Hare brought up the timing regarding cancelled Meetings as well. The Memorandum indicates that comments are to be submitted to Mr. Michaels and the Trails Work Group within two days of the Meeting.

Chair Makepeace indicated that he was emailed a Memorandum from Mayor Cervoni, dated Aug. 6, but sent after 5:00 p.m., which had not been received by staff before the posting of tonight’s agenda and so technically the matter should not be discussed. Attached to this memorandum were copies of several trails proposals submitted previously by Mr. Gray which Mr. Gray thought had not been approved by the Commission.

Commissioner Saunders presented a suggested “application form” which was revised to a “proposal form”.

Status of updating the TMP Trails Map was discussed and Mr. Gray stated the map revisions had not been made. Ms. O’Hare stated that at the April Commission Meeting the Draft updated map she presented had reflected all changes to the trails completed in the field to that date. *Ms. O’Hare was directed to scan that draft version and forward to all for comments.*

C. Eradication work

Commissioner Saunders explained issues with the contracted work and she and Ms. O’Hare will follow-up with All Habitat Services in this regard.

D. DEEP CT Recreational Trails Grant Program – Preserve plan grant, D. Saunders *Commissioner Saunders will address this at next Meeting.*

E. DEEP Forestry consultation, D. Saunders *Commissioner Saunders will address this at next Meeting.*

Commissioner Borne left the Meeting at this time, 9:10 p.m..

F. "Black Diamond" - new unauthorized ravine trail – status

Ms. O'Hare reported that to date there had been no action taken on this unauthorized trail.

MOTION: M. Miller, After review of the unauthorized Black Diamond Trail's potentially dangerous sections viewed in the field by Town officials in May, the Conservation Commission recommends that the Town take action to remove it post haste.

SECOND: D. Lendler

VOTE: C. Makepeace abstained (as he has not seen it), all others, Yes

8. REPORTS / CORRESPONDENCE

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

B. Open Space Users Group Meeting, Parks & Recreation Dept. – meeting date tbd Ms. O'Hare indicated a date has not been set.

9. NEXT MEETING – Sept. 12, 2024

10. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: M. Miller, To adjourn the Meeting.

SECOND: E. Severson

VOTE: Unanimous

Chair Makepeace adjourned the Meeting at 9:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Erin O'Hare, Environmental Planner
Acting Recording Secretary

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.