



Town of Wallingford, Connecticut

DRAFT

WALLINGFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Wallingford Town Hall  
45 South Main Street  
Wallingford, CT 06492

WALLINGFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

REGULAR MEETING

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

Thursday, November 14, 2024, 6:00 p.m.

MINUTES

Note: *Italics used in text below represent action items.*

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

**Absent:** Vice Chair Bruce Conroy, Dianne Lendler, and Mike Miller

Attendees from the public arrived at 7:05 p.m.: Scott Gray, Trails Work Group Coordinator, and Doug Clark, Trails Work Group Coordinator

Chair Makepeace convened Meeting at 6:04. He welcomed the Mayor’s new appointment, member Jim Loughlin, and called for consideration of the Minutes

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Saunders requested correction under Item 6.A., bottom of page 3, “bike race event” to “bike event”, and, under B.3., top of page 5, to add the word “vehicles” to read “to remain in place as a deterrent to vehicles”.

**MOTION:** J. Pyskaty, To approve the Minutes as amended.

**SECOND:** E. Severson

**VOTE:** J. Loughlin abstained, rest voted “Yes”

2. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

A. Fresh Meadows

1. Kiosk content & map

Ms. O’Hare brought a copy of the property map sized for the existing kiosk. *Chair Makepeace indicated Commissioner Borne will be asked to see that this map is installed as soon as possible and not to wait until the time that the kiosk gets re-furbished.*

2. Graffiti, two areas - status

As Commissioner Miller was not here, there was no report.

3. Butterfly Loop Trail & Pond Trail

RECEIVED FOR RECORD  
AT 4:55 PM  
12/2/24  
AND RECEIVED BY  
Kristen Ramo  
TOWN CLERK

- a. Vine eradication
- b. Work project to restore 5-foot width
4. Glacial erratic signage – replacement contracted

Ms. O'Hare reported the sign has been ordered.

#### **B. Ferguson Woods**

1. Kiosk – status

No report.

2. Revised map -status

Ms. O'Hare indicated the Map was not yet revised.

#### **C. Beseck Mountain**

1. Improvement plan proposal – staff

Ms. O'Hare reported her recent visit to Cliffside Trail area underscored the need for a complete improvement of the entranceway to Beseck Mountain including removal of invasive vines and trees, installation of a permanent pathway at Cliffside Drive R.O.W., installation of fencing to deter encroachment, and better signage. *She would like to get a plan prepared which could be effected using funds from the Open Space resources Management Fund.* Consensus was favorable.

2. Fencing - status

*Ms. O'Hare will request the Engineering Dept. install fencing along the problem encroachment area.*

Commissioner Borne arrived at this time, 6:30 p.m. and was updated as to the action item for Item A.1., above.

#### **E. Mayoral Open Space Management Meeting – date**

Chair Makepeace asked for this to be taken off the agenda moving forward.

#### **F. Marcus Cooke Park**

1. Signage for closed trails

*Ms. O'Hare was requested to order signage (20), "Limit of Town Property", to be taxi yellow with black writing. Two of these signs Chair Makepeace and Commissioner Severson will install by the trail at end of Town land.*

Chair Makepeace reported the approved new trail has been completed and that no wetlands were involved.

2. New Trails Map - status

Chair Makepeace reported Kenny Michaels approved the proposed re-do of the old sign

**MOTION:** E. Severson: To repair existing signage using existing infrastructure and Lexan over map to be replaced later on with a revised map and a kiosk once approved.

**SECOND:** J. Borne

**VOTE:** Unanimous

#### **G. Wallace Dam/DEEP fishway – fishway brochures**

Ms. O'Hare distributed many copies of the promotional/informational brochure completed under contract last year – available at Town Hall and soon, at the Library.

**H. 320 Washington Street (site of former Choate boathouse) - Town proposal**  
Ms. O'Hare gave a brief description of this new Town initiative for affordable housing development which may involve several Town parcels some of which are currently open space land where trails near the former Community Lake can connect to existing trails at the Senior Center (per email message of the plan forwarded earlier).

**I. 1364 Scard Road (former Neal property) – illegal tree cutting**  
Ms. O'Hare reported on the tree-cutting trespass issue that took place on the subject property wherein the police stopped a neighbor hauling off firewood logs from a tree he had just felled there. As the police indicated the penalty for the offense is discretionary, she asked the Commission to consider what the penalty should be for illegal activity of this kind on Town open space. The act was treated as a Trespass and a fine was issued. Commissioner Saunders stated that when John Gawlak was Director, Parks and Recreation, individuals would be arrested for tree-cutting.

**J. Other property issues**  
Not taken up.

### **3. PROPERTY MONITORING REPORTS**

**A. 205 Main Street, Yalesville, B. Conroy**  
Not taken up.

Scott Gray and Doug Clark, TWG Coordinators, arrived at this time, 7:05 p.m.

**B. Doolittle Park/Wharton Brook corridor, staff**  
Ms. O'Hare reported on the robust riparian growth along Wharton Brook which upon closer inspection is dominated by invasive shrub and tree species. The restoration of this corridor supporting native species is a manageable project which should be pursued by the Town with volunteers or with grant options.

**C. Cooke Road & Open Space #5A, D. Saunders**  
Commissioner Saunders reported on a few issues. *Ms. O'Hare was directed to have the Engineering Dept. post the boundaries with "No Hunting" signage which Commissioner Saunders will seek out.*

### **4. FARMLAND LEASE PROPERTIES PROGRAM**

**A. Farmland Lease Committee - D. Saunders, Chair**  
1. Schedule Meeting regarding bid proposals  
*Commissioner Saunders will schedule.*

**B. Field 14A – plan for field mowing & perimeter mowing encroachment**  
*Ms. O'Hare has not received an answer back yet from Water Division and will follow-up again.*

**C. Field 20A – bamboo work**  
*Commissioner Saunders will research best time to treat/cut bamboo.*

**D. Bid proposals: Field 4A, 4C, 5A, 7A, 8B, 19A**  
*Ms. O'Hare will meet with the FLC soon on changes to these leases.*

**E. Other updates**  
Not taken up.

**5. PROFESSIONAL NATURAL RESOURCES SERVICES**

**A. RFQ – GPS trails and features in TMP - status**

Ms. O'Hare reported the RFQ had gone out on the Town Portal system for quoting.

**6. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT – TYLER MILL PRESERVE**

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

Commissioner Saunders gave a brief verbal report indicating hunting signage was checked for the season.

**B. Muddy River – Unauthorized installation of crossing comprised of stones at Pink Trail**

Ms. O'Hare reported that notice of the subject illegal activity with photo documentation she had forwarded to the Mayor, Kenny Michaels, Parks & recreation Director, Kurt Treiber, Risk Manager. Besides violating park Rules & regulations, the installation is a FEMA violation and would require IWWC permitting. She passed photos around.

**MOTION: J. Borne, To request an opinion from the Law Department on how to deal with this kind of impoundment of the Muddy River**

**SECOND: J. Loughlin**

**VOTE: Unanimous**

*Ms. O'Hare will follow-up with Law Dept.*

**C. TMP parcel assemblage**

Ms. O'Hare reported that for State documents accurate tax parcel information is required and so she completed a tax parcel assemblage for the area termed "Tyler Mill Preserve" which is a composite of 15 parcels if Bertini Park – comprised of two parcels - is included, and found out that Dayton Pond's ownership is unclear but it is apparently not owned by the Town.

**D. Draft Revised Town of Wallingford Official Trails System Map**

Ms. O'Hare reported on the current progress with bringing the Trails map up to date and displayed the map changes that Scott Gray helped with in an office meeting last week. *Once updates are made by Engineering Dept., the existing maps will be replaced.*

**E. DEEP CT Recreational Trails Grant Program – Preserve plan grant, D. Saunders**

**F. DEEP Forestry consultation, D. Saunders**

**G. Graffiti**

Commissioner Saunders reported she had painted over the most offensive words but not the rest as the police had requested not to.

Chair Makepeace took Agenda item I. up, out of order, at this time.

**I. Proposal #5, Blue South Trail re-route (tabled Oct. 10)**

Item was discussed. Commissioner Saunders stated that due to the colony of lady slippers growing there it is important that the new trail bed follows the existing trail bed just though this sensitive stretch.

**MOTION: J. Borne, To recommend the change proposal #5 "Reroute on the Blue South Trail**

**SECOND: J. Pyskaty**

**VOTE: J. Loughlin abstained, rest voted "Yes"**

**H. Proposal #4 –Mustard Trail (tabled Oct. 10)**

Item was discussed.

**MOTION: J. Borne, To recommend approval of Proposal #4, Mustard Trail re-route.**

**SECOND: J. Pyskaty**

**VOTE: D. Saunders, No; E. Severson and J. Loughlin abstained; C. Makepeace, J. Borne, and J. Pyskaty, Yes**

**J. Proposal from K. Michaels, Director, Parks & Recreation, submitted by Scott Gray regarding installation of kiosk at Blue/Black Trail near Woodhouse Avenue**

Scott Gray presented the proposal and the item was discussed.

**MOTION: J. Loughlin, To recommend approval of installation of kiosk at Blue/Black Trail near Woodhouse Avenue**

**SECOND: J. Borne**

**VOTE: Unanimous**

## **7. REPORTS / CORRESPONDENCE**

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

Mr. Gray presented his TWG Report for October.

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

**C. CFPA – membership dues**

Consensus was to pay membership dues.

**D. CACIWC, Annual Conference, Nov. 16, 2024**

## **8. NEXT MEETING – Dec. 12, 2024**

## **9. ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Makepeace adjourned the Meeting at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Erin O'Hare, Environmental Planner, Acting as Recording Secretary