



Town of Wallingford, Connecticut

WALLINGFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Wallingford Town Hall
45 South Main Street
Wallingford, CT 06492

DRAFT

WALLINGFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

REGULAR MEETING

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

Thursday, December 12, 2024, 6:00 p.m.

MINUTES

Note: *italicized text below denotes action items.*

Present: Vice Chair Bruce Conroy, Commissioners Jeff Borne, Dianne Saunders, Erik Severson, Jim Pyskaty, Mike Miller, and Erin O'Hare, Environmental Planner
Absent: Chair Conor Makepeace, Jim Loughlin

Vice Chair Conroy, acting as Chair, convened Meeting at 6:04.

1. MEMBER CHANGE

Acting Chair Conroy announced today's resignation of Commissioner Dianne Lendler, who unfortunately could not be at the Meeting tonight to say goodbye. He thanked her on behalf of the Commission for her service forwarding Commission work for over fourteen years and the wealth of knowledge she shared along the way.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Acting Chair Conroy called for consideration of the Nov. 14, 2024 Minutes

MOTION: D. Saunders, To table consideration of the Minutes until next Meeting.

SECOND: M. Miller

VOTE: Unanimous

3. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

A. Fresh Meadows

- 1. Kiosk content & map

Commissioner Borne reported he will install the map soon.

- 2. Graffiti, two areas – status

Commissioner Miller will remove graffiti with a battery-operated wire brush soon.

- 3. Butterfly Loop Trail & Pond Trail

- a. Vine eradication

Ms. O'Hare indicated she will contract this work out in the spring.

RECEIVED FOR RECORD 11/8/25
AT 9:35 AM AND RECEIVED BY
Kristen Conroy, TOWN CLERK

b. Work project to restore 5-foot width

Ms. O'Hare indicated this work will be contracted out in the spring with input from several Town departments.

4. Glacial erratic signage – replacement installation

Ms. O'Hare indicated the sign has been fabricated.

B. Ferguson Woods

1. Kiosk – status

Acting Chair Conroy stated that as the kiosk was approved to be fabricated over a year ago the Commission needs a commitment for its completion or alternatively it can be contracted out.

Regarding TWG Coordinator Scott Gray's submitted request for reimbursement for supplies used to fabricate the completed bog-bridge, the appropriateness of use chicken wire rather than grip-tape used was discussed in terms of damage to dogs' feet. Due to a few questions and Mr. Gray not here to answer them, Acting Chair tabled approval.

2. Revised map –status

Ms. O'Hare indicated she will schedule map completion with GPS information for recent trail changes from Chair Makepeace.

C. Beseck Mountain

1. Improvement plan proposal – staff

Ms. O'Hare will prepare the proposed plan in the spring (when invasive plants can be best identified) for the work which may involve several departments and a contractor in the execution.

2. Fencing - status

Ms. O'Hare will schedule first the survey-related task followed by the fence contract regarding the effort to curtail trespass/encroachment.

D. Marcus Cooke Park

1. Signage for closed trails

Ms. O'Hare will obtain quotes and obtain signage. Commissioner Severson will purchase yellow paint for re-blazing and can get reimbursed.

2. New Trails Map - status

Ms. O'Hare will complete this task with Engineering Dept.

E. Other property issues

There were none.

4. PROPERTY MONITORING REPORTS

A. New assignments

Commissioners were asked by Acting Chair Conroy to consider existing properties and other open space parcels to be monitored for discussion next month.

B. Revision of report presentation schedule

Commissioners were asked by Acting Chair Conroy to consider suggestions for discussion next month.

C. 205 Main Street, Yalesville, B. Conroy

Acting Chair Conroy presented his report which included identification of an entry off Ridge Road used by residents which evidenced minor trash and the need for better access on the Main Street side to park. Commissioner Borne requested from Ms. O'Hare the history of the

trespass/encroachment issue involving the abutting property owner which continues to a lesser degree currently.

MOTION: J. Borne, To erect a fence along that portion of the Town property line where encroachment and trespass has previously occurred.

SECOND: M. Miller

VOTE: Unanimous

Consensus to schedule a site walk there in February. *Ms. O'Hare will email scanned map beforehand. Ms. O'Hare will pursue the fence installation for Engineering Dept. to re-survey it with monuments and stakes and Public Works or Engineering to measure specifications relative to contract.*

5. Farmland Lease Properties Program

A. Farmland Lease Committee – revisions to certain lease requirements & field maps

Committee Chair Saunders reported the Committee did not convene but she met with Ms. O'Hare and then she reported the proposed changes to the lease requirements and lease areas of certain fields that are to be re bid soon. The rear half of Field 7A will be 'let go', not to be part of lease area. Field 5B's lease was recommended to be extended and Field 18A to waive the bid (see below). Commissioner Severson reported lessee did not trim edge of Field 7H.

B. Field 14A – plan for field mowing & perimeter mowing encroachment
Ms. O'Hare will ascertain determination from Water Division on mowing of this field which is not to be bid anymore.

C. Field 20A – bamboo work
Commissioner Saunders will report back on most effective protocol schedule for Town's bamboo.

D. Bid proposals: Field 4A, 4C, 5A, 7A, 8B, 19A
Discussed above under B.

E. Bid waiver proposal, Field 18A

FLC Chair Saunders explained why a bid waiver - approved in prior years for Field 18A - was a good idea.

MOTION: M. Miller, To recommend to the Mayor that the Town Council approve a bid waiver for Field 18A, 995 C East Center Street

SECOND: J. Borne,

VOTE: Unanimous

Ms. O'Hare will follow-up.

6. PROFESSIONAL NATURAL RESOURCES SERVICES

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

Ms. O'Hare reported that three quotes received were all over \$16,000 which exceed the limit so the project would need to be put out to bid, however Chair Makepeace told her that the purchase of GPS unit was the way to go. Commissioner Severson reported approximate cost of unit and software.

7. PUBLIC OUTREACH

Ms. O'Hare relayed that Chairman Makepeace would like members to think about their vision for the Commission moving forward and how best to convey that vision. *Acting Chair Conroy asked members to bring ideas for programs or events to the next meeting.*

8. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT – TYLER MILL PRESERVE

A. Stewards of Tyler Mill, Chair, Monthly Report, D. Saunders
Commissioner Saunders gave a verbal report. In response to certain recent acts of vandalism she reported, Acting Chair Conroy directed her to email members for any needed assistance to protect the resources and appointed Commissioner Severson for help with maintenance. Commissioner Saunders noted she had participated in a Streamwalk Event led by the Southwest Conservation District this month on the Muddy River which focused on identification of eroded conditions.

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

Ms. O'Hare reported there has been no action from the Town to date in response to this issue. Acting Chair Conroy directed Ms. O'Hare to draft a letter to the Law Dept. that should the Town not act to remove the installation in a timely manner, then a contractor will be retained to do so.

C. Draft Revised Town of Wallingford Official Trails System Map

Ms. O'Hare brought the Draft update map with mark-ups for Engineering Dept. to finalize. *She will follow-up.*

D. DEEP CT Recreational Trails Grant Program – Preserve plan grant, D. Saunders
(see next item)

E. DEEP Forestry consultation, D. Saunders
Commissioner Saunders and Ms. O'Hare will try to work with the DEEP to get past its problematic website registration issue. The TMP grant-assisted plan cannot proceed without the forestry analysis (root compaction, climate changes to forest, trail density assessment, user impact on wildlife, etc.) and GPS data.

F. Graffiti, D. Saunders
No change reported.

G. Removal of stumps and jumps – status, staff
Acting Chair Conroy recommended that Kenny Michaels be advised that a contractor may remove the stumps and jumps and thus remove the Town's responsibility for potential for injuries. (Discussed more below, under 9.A.)

H. Water Division water main upgrade work, (IWWC application)
Ms. O'Hare reported on this Town application work to take place by the stream near the Entrance parking lots this spring.

9. REPORTS / CORRESPONDENCE

A. Trails Work Group – TWG Reports & information/matters not discussed above

A surprising entry in the TWG report was discussed that described significant trail work reported to have been completed by the TWG that has not yet been proposed nor approved; excerpt: *"Yellow north was reblazed Orange, as will be portions of Red north.*

The Blue/Red is being extended west and south, and will be a major trail in the northern section of Tyler Mill, continuing to Tamarack Swamp Road.” The reported posting of TWG notices in the Preserve was also discussed. Commissioner Saunders also reported a new unapproved trail loop that had been constructed that does not appear in the TWG Report.

In response, Acting Chair Conroy requested Ms. O’Hare write a letter to the Mayor and Kenny Michaels about these two new concerns and recommending that the TWG be dissuaded from pushing forward with new ideas for proposed work until the previously approved proposed trail work is implemented, the kiosks installed, and the stumps and jumps and other illegal installations are removed from the trails. The Commission has repeatedly asked for an organized overall plan for trail improvements as opposed to being asked to review random suggestions and blazing color changes not tied to an overall scheme. *Ms. O’Hare will follow-up.*

- B. Open Space Users Group Meeting, Parks & Recreation Dept. – date tbd**
- C. Mayoral Open Space Managers Meeting – date tbd**
- D. CACIWC, Annual Conference, Nov. 16 – member reports**

No reports.

10. NEXT MEETING – Jan. 9, 2024

11. ADJOURNMENT

Acting Chair Conroy adjourned the Meeting at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Erin O’Hare, Environmental Planner
Acting as Recording Secretary