

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

Thursday, February 13, 2025, 6:00 p.m.

MINUTES

NOTE: Italicized text below denotes member "action item".

Present: Chair Conor Makepeace, Vice Chair Bruce Conroy, Commissioners Jeff Borne, Dianne Saunders, Jim Loughlin, and Erin O'Hare, Environmental Planner

Absent: Erik Severson, Jim Pyskaty, and Mike Miller

Public attendees: Karen Ciosek, President, Wallingford Garden Club, and Margaret Kitson, Chair, Environmental Conservation, Wallingford Garden Club.

Chair Conor Makepeace convened Meeting at 6:02.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Regular Meeting, Jan. 8, 2025

Chair Conor Makepeace called for consideration of the Minutes of Jan. 8, 2025.

Commissioner Saunders requested these corrections: - 2. Property Management. D. 3.-"spray paint" corrected to "latex paint", 3. Property Monitoring Reports, B., correct third sentence to read, 'Commissioner Saunders will orient Commission Loughlin to property monitoring and he will be co-monitor for Tyler Mill Preserve'. Also, Minutes to note attendance of Margaret Kitson, Chair, Environmental Conservation, Wallingford Garden Club.

MOTION: B. Conroy, To approve as corrected

SECOND: J. Loughlin

VOTE: Unanimous

2. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

A. Outstanding Task List – Excel sheet, C. Makepeace

Chair Makepeace presented his 'Outstanding Task List' as a way to track member assignment completions over the months. He went down the list checking off tasks completed to date.

Commissioner Saunders suggested the Quinnipiac University volunteer students for trimming the hedgerow along the Boy Scouts Trail on Field 11A in April. *Commissioner Severson will make the arrangements with the University and regarding tools, etc..*

B. 205 Main Street, Yalesville - Special Meeting site walk, March 8, 1:00 p.m.

Ms. O'Hare will post a Special Meeting notice regarding the March 8 site walk on this property for the purposes of observing area for a possible parking area and the proposed fencing location.

C. Shadowboxes, B. Conroy

Commissioner Conroy showed nine 12”-long cedar boards he had fabricated. Commission agreed they would have trail names painted on them and QR codes and be nailed to trees at respective trailhead locations. *He will bring samples to March meeting.*

D. Other property issues

Commissioner Borne reported people had shoveled Peanut Pond, at Fresh Meadows, and were skating and birdhouses were installed, one at former Cuneo residence area and one at the glacial erratic.

Ms. O’Hare reported she will complete an ‘Open Order’ to procure signage for the properties moving forward.

3. PUBLIC OUTREACH

A. Proposed events

Chair Makepeace reported the Mayor had granted him permission for a Facebook page and he had to sign regarding the rules for use of same. He proposed a Mushroom Program for public participation. Commissioner Saunders indicated there are 30,000 ‘foragers’ in CT.

The Commission welcomed the two attendees from the Wallingford Garden Club, Margaret Kitson, Chair, Environment & Conservation, and Karen Ciosek, President, who said the group’s mission statement it to promote conservation so we are interested in promoting the Commission’s activities.

4. PROFESSIONAL NATURAL RESOURCES SERVICES

A. GPS equipment – usage policy

Chair Makepeace reported we are going to use Town Planner Kevin Pagini’s software online for the GPS unit on order, the Law Dept. is developing a policy for member usage of the equipment. *Erin will order a tablet. He will get a hard-shell case to use in the field.*

B. Contract proposals

Use of remaining funds was discussed, including the rental of mowers, the eradication of invasive plants, and purchase of chain saws. Commissioner Saunders then explained the rules and training regarding permitted use of chain saws by members and volunteers that are certified. *She will submit a list of tools owned by the Commission*

A contractor could be retained to remove stunts and jumps, in particular the Black Diamond Trail, and to remove the illegal stone crossing in the Muddy River. *Ms. O’Hare was directed to obtain permission from the Mayor and Kenny Michaels, Director, Parks and Recreation in this regarding this trail remediation and the crossing.*

5. BUDGET FY 25/26 - discussion

The proposed budget was agreed to be the same as current fiscal year budget.

6. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT – TYLER MILL PRESERVE

A. Stewards of Tyler Mill, Monthly Report, D. Saunders

This item was tabled.

B. Proposed trail blazing for recent Trails work - request from Kenny

Michaels

Commission discussed the email message with attached map to the Chair about Mr. Michaels' request however it was not clear if this was an actual proposal plus there were inaccuracies and map confusion. Commissioner Saunders reported a new unapproved loop portion of a trail had been made as part of the Orange Trail and that several hikers indicated they do not understand the field markers. Karen Ciosek, President, Wallingford Garden Club Commissioner, said the new blazing is confusing. Commissioner Conroy stated the trail density is too much. Commissioner Borne reported he had learned that other representatives of the Club were concerned about confusion over recent trail changes as well.

MOTION: B. Conroy, To not approve the proposed map for re-blazing at this time.

SECOND: J. Loughlin

VOTE: Unanimous

Chair Makepeace will explain to Kenny Michaels the action taken in response to map inaccuracies and confusion

7. MEMBERSHIP DUES

A. CT Association of Conservation & Inland Wetlands Commissions, Inc. (CACIWC) - \$60

B. CT Land Conservation Council (CLCC) - \$100

C. CT Butterfly Association (CBA) - \$75

MOTION: B. Conroy, To approve all the above three membership dues payments.

SECOND: J. Loughlin

VOTE: Unanimous

Ms. O'Hare will follow-up.

8. REPORTS / CORRESPONDENCE

A. Trails Work Group – TWG Reports & information/matters not discussed above, TWG Coordinator(s)

No one was present to give the report.

B. CT Bar Assoc. Conference: Connecticut Land Use Law for Municipal Land Use Agencies, Boards, and Commissions – Virtual (Zoom), Mar. 22, 2025, 9- 4:30 p.m.

C. CT Land Conservation Council Conference (CLCC), Wesleyan University, Mar. 22, 2025, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

9. NEXT MEETING – April 10, 2025

10. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Makepeace adjourned the meeting at 8:05.

Respectfully submitted,

Erin O'Hare, Environmental Planner
Acting Recording Secretary