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WALLINGFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

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

Thursday, June 12, 2025, 6:00 p.m.

MINUTES

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

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

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

Chair Makepeace Conroy convened the Meeting at 6:08.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Regular Meeting, March 13, 2025

MOTION: J. Pyskaty: To approve as presented

SECOND: J. Borne

VOTE: Unanimous

B. Regular Meeting, May 8, 2025

MOTION: J. Pyskaty: To approve as presented

SECOND: J. Borne

VOTE: Unanimous

2. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

A. Outstanding Task List (excel sheet), C. Makepeace

Commissioners and staff reported on task status. Commissioner Borne cleaned plexiglass in kiosk. *Ms. O'Hare was requested to order signage (several, 6"), "Trail Closed" and she will follow-up.*

B. Other property issues

Karen Ciosek President, Wallingford Garden Club, reported that the spotted water hemlock has spread now much larger area at Vietnam Veterans Memorial Park. *Ms. O'Hare will report that to the Health Department.*

3. PROPERTY MONITORING REPORTS

A. Beseck Meadow – M. Miller

Commissioner Miller will give report next month.

B. Ferguson Woods – J. Pyskaty

Commissioner Pyskaty will give report next month.

C. Tyler Mill Preserve, D. Saunders & J. Loughlin
Commissioner Saunders handed in her report and stressed how climate change is benefitting the growth of the invasive plants.

D. 205 Main Street, Yalesville – B. Conroy
Commissioner Conroy will give report next month.

E. Marcus Cooke Park, E. Severson
Commissioner Severson will give report next month.

F. Cooke Rd. Open Space (5A), D. Saunders
Commissioner Saunders will give report next month.

G. 1254 Whirlwind Hill Rd., J. Loughlin
Commissioner Loughlin will give report next month.

4. PROFESSIONAL NATURAL RESOURCES SERVICES

A. Invasive plant mechanical removal work - ongoing
Ms. O'Hare and Commissioner Saunders reported on progress on removal of invasive plants, primarily Japanese knotweed, using contractor Bob Baker. Commissioner Saunders will assess health status of treated and untreated Trees of heaven in TMP to see if mechanical removal work is necessary for access for the chemical treatment work.

B. Contract proposals
Ms. O'Hare said she is considering a contract for completion of the climate resiliency section of the anticipated update to the Open Space Plan noting that grant awards are keen on this topic.

5. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT – TYLER MILL PRESERVE

A. Stewards of Tyler Mill, Monthly Report, D. Saunders
Commissioner Saunders noted her Stewards report was distributed via email to save meeting time.

B. Trail mapping with GPS, C. Makepeace & E. Severson
The final Trails System Maps completed by Cahir Makepeace for Ferguson Woods, Beseck Mountain, and Marcus Cooke Park, with minor revisions per Ms. O'Hare, were approved by the Commission. *Chair Makepeace will see that Kenny Michaels, Director, Parks & Recreation, receives them and makes them available to the public. Vice Chair Conroy will obtain keys to kiosks and then will install new maps into the three TMP kiosks when the maps are enlarged by Engineering Department and then provided to him by Ms. O'Hare.*

C. CFPA CT Trails Day Event, June 8, Parks & Recreation – reports
Ms. O'Hare reported that she and Kenny Micaels had met with the Mayor on June 8 to discuss the unauthorized posting of this Trails Work Group event on the CFPA website on May 14 as part of the state-wide CT Trails Day annual event. She had notified Director Michaels and he later approved and promoted the event on social media but not on the Town or Parks & Recreation websites. Ms. O'Hare's concerns were: one, that use of Town property for group events needs to go through the Director primarily to coordinate usage of the 1,000 acre area; two, public events should not be advertised as sponsored by the Town if they were not, and, three, the most salient, that given the many issues relative to mountain biking in TMP that the Town wrestles with, the sport should not be actively promoted to attract out-of-town bikers thus broadening mountain bike usage and associated adverse impacts on the already popular multi-use trail system. She will report next month on the number of registrants attending the hiking part and the biking part of the event.

D. Other reports

None.

6. REPORTS / CORRESPONDENCE

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

TWG Coordinator(s) were not present to discuss the TWG May Report emailed to all earlier.

B. DEEP CT Recreational Trails Grant, staff

Ms. O'Hare reported the Mayor held a meeting of pertinent department heads to discuss possible grant proposals eligible for CT DEEP Recreational Trails Grant Program funding with the extensions of the existing Quinnipiac River Trail Linear Trail, north, west, south, and lateral connections with the Senior Center being the central focus. It was agreed that rather than pursuing funding now relative to a selected single trail, work should be completed on a comprehensive trail planning effort. Development of pedestrian and bike ways downtown were also discussed.

C. CT Butterfly Association, newsletter

7. NEXT MEETING – July 10, 2025, 2025

8. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Makepeace adjourned the meeting at 8:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Erin O'Hare, Environmental Planner
Acting Recording Secretary