

WALLINGFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

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

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

MINUTES

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

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

Absent: Vice Chair Bruce Conroy, Jim Loughlin

From the public: Margaret Kitson, Chair, Environmental Conservation Committee, Wallingford Garden Club, Doug Clark, TWG, and David Bedell, Wallingford Land Trust

Chair Makepeace convened the Meeting at 6:04 p.m..

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Regular Meeting, Sept. 11, 2025

Commissioner Saunders under 3.B, Beseck Meadow, regarding the giant boundary rock, correct "*was located to*" to "*was supposedly located*".

MOTION: M. Miller, To approve Minutes as corrected.

SECOND: J. Pyskaty

VOTE: Unanimous

2. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

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

Chair Makepeace encourages members to address their assigned tasks and deferred this item.

B. Beseck Meadow (Mountain)– Survey data for trail section re-route

Ms. O'Hare explained her typo, its "Beseck Mountain", not "Meadow", and the items to be discussed under item B. clearly all relate to Beseck Mountain.

Ms. O'Hare passed photos of the issue area which is the lower portion of the Cliffside Trail below the talus slope where the Engineering Dept. had surveyed some property line issues but, in the field, Ms. O'Hare could not locate on section of the trail on its north side. Chair Makepeace stated as metal pins show the actual property lines these can be located with the new GPS unit.

Chair Makepeace set a Special Meeting for that purpose for Nov. 22, 9:00 a.m. to convene at the trail head area off Cliffside Drive. When appearing on the agenda this area shall be referenced as 'Cliffside Drive/Beseck Mountain'.

C. Fresh Meadows

1. Proposed trail connection, presentation by D. Bedell, Wallingford Land Trust

David Bedell, Board Member, Wallingford Land Trust (WLT) presented a proposal for a trail connection between the WLT's Jeremy Woods-Rosick Road Trail and Fresh Meadows from the sidewalk to the cul-de-sac of Rosick Road across the field to Cheshire Trail near the glacial erratic area to the west of the area delineated as wetlands. It would be a mowed trail. Ms. O'Hare had met with David and had shown him the 2010 Mowed Trails System Plan. Commissioner Borne mentioned the gas easement traverses that field. Chair Makepeace will set a Special Meeting to walk the area after the field has been mowed by Public Works and conditions can be observed better.

2. Kiosk

Ms. O'Hare stated the kiosk fell down due to rot and Public Works refurbished and re-installed it and cleaned the plexiglass.

3. Replacement trail signage

Ms. O'Hare will follow-up to order signage.

4. CT Trailfinder, CT Trails Program, UConn's College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources (CAHNR)

Ms. O'Hare reported this program has completed a Trailfinder page for Fresh Meadows which she was asked to 'proof'. *It needs some good photos which she will forward on.*

D. Ferguson Woods – blaze work

Ms. O'Hare showed photos of the completed bog bridge and of the original trail blazes that have been superseded by the revised trails system plan which will need to be better 'disappeared'. Commissioner Saunders said "Rustoleum" tan color works great for this task. Doug Clark, TWG, will relay this to TWG.

E. Other property issues

Chronic dumping on 155 Grieb Road property was discussed. It was agreed fence installation was not a good idea, the Police can enforce fines for dumping, and a "No Dumping" sign is to be installed on edges of Town land. *Ms. O'Hare will follow-up regarding these two tasks.*

3. PROPERTY MONITORING REPORTS

A. Fresh Meadows, J. Borne

Commissioner Borne reported 'Lucky Pond' was super low due to the Drought and he saw no issues on the site. He would like to see a clump of plantings installed in the R.O.W. to screen Cheshire Trail from the roadway, with mountain laurel and red cedar, etc. Commissioner Saunders stated road salt may be an issue.

B. Beseck Meadow, M. Miller

Commissioner Miller deferred to next time.

C. 1254 Whirlwind Hill Rd., J. Loughlin

Commissioner Loughlin, not present, will present next time.

D. Bertini Park, C. Makepeace

Chair Makepeace reported blazing is needed on the spur trail and a few trees are down on the Blue loop on the Blue Trail. Doug Clarke, Trails Work Group (TWG), indicated the TWG will take a look.

E. Beseck Mountain, C. Makepeace

Chair Makepeace stated Cliffside Trail issues were discussed above. Ms. O'Hare reported an email from Claire Cain, CFPA, asking for assistance/attention/ideas from the Town in protecting the National New England Trail for its length traversing Wallingford.

F. Wharton Brook at Doolittle Park, staff

Ms. O'Hare deferred to next time.

G. Ferguson Woods, J. Pyskaty

Commissioner Pyskaty reported no issues but there are a ton of ticks all of a sudden at the site.

H. 205 Main Street, Yalesville, B. Conroy

Commissioner Conroy, not present, will present next time.

I. Marcus Cooke Park, E. Severson

Commissioner Severson stated a new name sign/map needs to be installed but can wait until the Red Trail issue is fixed.

4. ORDINANCE PROPOSALS

Ms. O'Hare reported she sent the Commission's request for four proposed ordinances to the Law Dept. today.

5. PROFESSIONAL NATURAL RESOURCES SERVICES

A. Invasive plant mechanical removal work

Commissioner Saunders reported on the work by Bob Baker, contractor, at Fresh Meadows: cut back pine boughs, cut canary grass, cut knotweed down to ground but did not dig it out.

B. Contract proposals

Not taken up.

Chair Makepeace took up Item #9 at this time.

9. 2026 REGULAR MEETING SCHEDULE - approval

MOTION: M. Miller, to approve 2026 Schedule as presented except change Feb. 12 (Lincoln's Birthday) to Feb. 19.

SECOND: J. Borne

VOTE: Unanimous

Chair Makepeace took up Item #7 at this time.

7. PUBLIC OUTREACH

A. Proposed Programming Committee

There was no committee created. **From the audience**, Margaret Kitson, Chair, Environmental Conservation Committee, Wallingford Garden Club, stated that the Garden Club is teaching an Adult-Ed program on the invasive plants in Tyler Mill Preserve.

B. Facebook - content, e.g. maps & rules

Not taken up.

Chair Makepeace took up Item #8 at this time.

8. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT – TYLER MILL PRESERVE

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

Steward Chair Saunders, reported she is putting patches on vests for identification during fieldwork and the invasive plant ‘drop-spot’ on Field 7E, previously approved by the Water Division, will now need to be re-authorized now that the bridge work is completed. *Ms. O’Hare will follow-up.*

B. Maltby Lane/Tyler Mill Roads - wash-out & on-going erosion – staff

Ms. O’Hare reported previously that Public Works Dept. was not going to take it on and there has been no movement from the Town to address this issue and erosion worsens. Several members expressed concern over inaction.

MOTION: J. Pyskaty, To recommend to the Mayor that the root cause of this severe erosion problem, which is a significantly undersized pipe, be addressed as soon as possible.

SECOND: J. Borne

VOTE: Unanimous.

Ms. O’Hare will follow-up and will add a photo to show how as well as being a water pollution and public safety issue, the face of TMP is degraded by this deferred maintenance.

C. DEEP assessment of forest health and climate change, D. Saunders & staff

Nothing to report.

D. DEEP data request - staff

Ms. O’Hare reported the Law Department had her assemble information on TMP and FLPP for a DEEP inquiry.

E. Other reports

Commissioner Severson reported use of hayfield on Field 7A, Maltby Lane, for some kind of dog photography event for two Saturdays in October that drew “hundreds of cars”. *Ms. O’Hare will inquire with Parks & Recreation to report it and/or see if they got a permit for use of this leased area.*

Commissioner Saunders reported she has put up the DEEP Hunting signage supplied by DEEP. And drills them in to discourage vandalism – red “No Hunting in this area”, and Yellow, “Permit Required Hunting Area”. She would like the former Barrett properties to be open to hunting. *Ms. O’Hare will follow-up on this and if granted then change Town mapping accordingly. Ms. O’Hare will research information on waterfowl hunting, pheasant hunting, crow hunting, and the hunting of bobcats as may be allowed by DEEP in TMP and North Branford Road Permit Required Areas. Ms. O’Hare will ask Police Dept. about use of trail cams.*

6. FARMLAND LEASE PROPERTIES PROGRAM

A. Farmland Lease Committee

1. Monitoring Reports

B. Access gate locks - report

C. Field 5A – proposed revision

D. Fields 7B, 7C, & 7D - gate and trespass issues

E. Field 8B – gate replacement

F. Proposed bids

G. DEEP data request - staff

Item #6 - Not taken up.

10. PLAN OF CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT (POCD)

A. Suggestions

B. POCD Steering Committee

Commissioner Borne was asked to represent the Commission on the Steering Committee. *He will keep the Commission posted.*

11. REPORTS / CORRESPONDENCE

A. Trails Work Group – TWG Report

Doug Clarke, TWG, said the TWG Report was sent and he reported on several blow-downs, with two of them in Marcus Cooke.

B. Native Plants & Pollinators Fifth Annual Conference, UCONN, Nov. 13 - reports

C. CACIWC - Annual Conference, Nov. 15, 2025 – (registration full)

D. CT Butterfly Association – membership dues

MOTION: J. Pyskaty, To approve.

SECOND: J. Borne

VOTE: Unanimous

E. CFPA request for protection of New England Trail beyond Town property, email forwarded from Mike Hughes, Health Dept. 10/29/25

Discussed above.

F. DEEP CT Recreational Trails Program - Grant application, due Dec. 18 – QRLT Master Plan proposal, staff

Ms. O'Hare reported several department heads met regarding the proposed application to be assembled by Sheila Dravis-Cosgrove, Grants Coordinator, and submitted by the Town to DEEP.

12. NEXT MEETING – December 11, 2025

13. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: J. Pyskaty, To adjourn.

SECOND: J. Borne

VOTE: Unanimous

Chair Makepeace adjourned the Meeting at 7:40 p.m..