

WALLINGFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

REGULAR MEETING

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

Thursday, December 11, 2025, 6:00 p.m.

MINUTES

NOTE: Bulleted italicized text below denotes a member or staff “action item”.

Present: Chair Conor Makepeace, Vice Chair Bruce Conroy, Erik Severson, Dianne Saunders, Jim Pyskaty, and Erin O’Hare, Environmental Planner

Absent: Jim Loughlin, Mike Miller, Jeff Borne

From the public: Margaret Kitson, Chair, Environmental Conservation Committee, Wallingford Garden Club

Chair Makepeace convened the Meeting at 6:17 p.m..

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Regular Meeting, Sept. 11, 2025

Commissioner Saunders suggested, under D. Ferguson Woods, regarding deleting blaze markings, “Rustoleum” spray paint, tan color, correct to: “Rustoleum” textured spray paint, tan color.

MOTION: Dianne Saunders, To approve Minutes as corrected.

SECOND: J. Pyskaty

VOTE: Unanimous

B. Special Meeting, Nov. 22, 2025

MOTION: Dianne Saunders, To approve Minutes of Committee Meeting

SECOND: J. Pyskaty

VOTE: Aye all except B. Conroy abstained

2. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

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

Upon Chair’s request, Ms. O’Hare reported on all tasks completed since last Meeting and reported that the Water Division work at the Tyler Mill entrance to TMP is planned to occur in spring. *She will follow-up on these tasks:*

- *To forward Assessor’s parcel map of Cliffside Trail area to the Chair,*
- *To complete narratives for the ordinance proposals per Law Dept. request (noted that the DEEP has a defined ‘sunset’ time regarding hunting) to be forwarded to Kenny Michaels, Director, Parks and Recreation, for input*

B. Beseck Mountain/Cliffside Trail

1. Committee site walk, Nov. 22 – report

Ms. O'Hare indicated that the Special Meeting, per the Minutes submitted, became a Committee Meeting (due to lack of a full quorum) and the alignment of the corrected trail section was laid out using GPS operated by Chair Makepeace per the Minutes discussed and approved above.

2. Proposal for re-route of trail section of Cliffside Trail

- *Chair Makepeace will forward Ms. O'Hare the re-route for proposed new section of trail with wetlands delineation to be submitted to Kenny Michaels, Director, Parks and Recreation, as a Commission proposal.*
- *Ms. O'Hare will submit the proposal document.*

Ms. O'Hare read a portion of the CFPA magazine about a book being completed on the indigenous populations history of the original trails and land features that became today's New England Trail, part of the National Scenic Trail System.

C. Other property issues

Commissioner Saunders reported that when the Fresh Meadows kiosk was entirely rebuilt, the change to the plexiglass results in moisture affecting the map, so map will need to be laminated.

- *Commissioner Saunders will obtain laminated map.*

Commissioner Saunders requested that Public Works mow Fields 7F, 8B, and the top of 7A - the latter two areas will be bid soon.

- *Ms. O'Hare indicated DPW has a full load but she will follow-up.*

3. PROPERTY MONITORING REPORTS

A. Marcus Cooke Park, E. Severson

Commissioner Severson indicated there was nothing new to report.

B. Beseck Meadow, M. Miller

- *Commissioner Miller will report at next Meeting.*

C. 1254 Whirlwind Hill Rd., J. Loughlin

- *Commissioner Loughlin will report at next Meeting.*

D. Wharton Brook at Doolittle Park, staff

- *Ms. O'Hare will give her site report at next Meeting.*

Ms. O'Hare reported yesterday Kenny Michaels indicated interest has resurfaced about the possibility of restoring a wet meadow area in the park floodplain for winter use as a skating pond which may possibly involve the removal of a low dam in that vicinity.

E. 205 Main Street, Yalesville, B. Conroy

- *Commissioner Conroy will report at next Meeting.*

4. PROFESSIONAL NATURAL RESOURCES SERVICES - Contract proposals

Obtaining potential contractors for removal of unpermitted trail bed alterations was discussed.

- *Ms. O'Hare will follow-up.*

Ms. O'Hare's idea to have a consultant complete a vernal pools inventory for the Town open space properties and an ecological assessment of the former Stevens property was discussed.

5. PUBLIC OUTREACH - Proposed Programs

Ms. O'Hare proposed hiring a consultant to do a program at the Library on how and why open space is important for climate change resiliency (using GIS data) which would dovetail with conservation in the upcoming POCD.

Chair Makepeace stated GIS familiarity should be made a requirement of the Environmental Planner job position.

- *Ms. O'Hare will pass that point on to the Mayor.*

6. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT – TYLER MILL PRESERVE

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

Commissioner Saunders gave a brief report including that even though Public Works had installed a berm on east edge of Tamarac Swamp Road to protect against vehicles entering the fields, someone had driven over Field 12A to Field 9C, and then to Field 9B; that the invasive vine, Porcelain berry, she is now finding in spots around the town; and that she saw a dead coyote in Field 7E. Commissioner Conroy indicated that its legal to hunt them and legal to leave the carcass as well.

Commissioner Seversen offered to restore/re-install the Town's damaged white hunting sign at Maltby Lane asap as it is hunting season.

- *Commissioner Saunders will email Ms. O'Hare a photo of this signage.*
- *Ms. O'Hare will have a new replacement sign fabricated and installed on the gate there on Maltby Lane.*

Ms. O'Hare indicated that Kenny Michaels had requested she provide information on vernal pools as this aspect will play a part in his decision relative to Doug Clark's proposal to retain the two unpermitted trail sections located near a vernal pool in TMP.

- *She will do so.*

Chair Makepeace stated the Commission voted to deny this proposal a year ago and the area should be remediated. All agreed.

Chair Makepeace would like to obtain the documented information on the species or communities of concern that coordinate with the Natural Diversity Database 'blobs' delineated in the TMP by the DEEP.

- *Commissioner Saunders will follow-up on this request.*

7. PLAN OF CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT (POCD)

A. Suggestions

Ms. O'Hare encouraged the Commission to make recommendations all along during the drafting process of the POCD which can be funneled to the Steering Committee by Commissioner Borne and to attend the public hearing held on the proposed Draft POCD document as a full commission and present testimony to underscore the importance of conservation efforts especially in the face of climate change.

B. POCD Steering Committee Meeting, Dec. 8, J. Borne (report next Meeting)

Ms. O'Hare reported that Commissioner Borne could not be here as he is representing the Commission at the PZC POCD Kick-Off Meeting at the Library tonight and that conservation of open space will play a big part in POCD.

- *Commissioner Borne will report on POCD updates at the next Meeting.*

8. REPORTS / CORRESPONDENCE

A. Trails Work Group – TWG Report

As no TWG representative was present to discuss, the report was not taken up.

B. CT Land Conservation Council – membership dues

MOTION: B. Conroy, To pay dues

SECOND: J. Pyskaty

VOTE: Unanimous

- *Ms. O'Hare will follow-up.*

C. POCD – Public Outreach ‘Kick-Off’ Meeting, by Planning Dept.,
Wallingford Library, Thurs., Dec.11, 6:00 p.m.

Discussed above.

D. DEEP CT Recreational Trails Program – Town’s QRLT Master Plan
Grant application – status

Ms. O’Hare stated the Town intends to make Dec. 18 grant application deadline.

9. NEXT MEETING – Jan. 8, 2025, 6:00 p.m.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Makepeace adjourned the Meeting at 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Erin O’Hare, Environmental Planner
Acting Recording Secretary