

WALLINGFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

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

Thursday, January 8, 2026 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 (arrived 6:15 pm), Erik Severson, Dianne Saunders, Jim Pyskaty, Jeff Borne, Mike Miller.

Absent: Jim Loughlin; Erin O'Hare, Environmental Planner/

From the public: 7 people

Chair Makepeace convened the Meeting at 6:05 p.m. Commissioners introduced themselves for the benefit of the members of the public in attendance.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Regular Meeting, Dec. 11, 2025

Commissioner Saunders suggested, under item 6A, to add to the end of the 5th line, so that it reads, 'Field 7E, in a non-hunting area.'

MOTION: J. Pyskaty, To approve Minutes as corrected.

SECOND: E. Severson

VOTE: Unanimous

2. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

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

One item was noted, that in preparing to have the Fresh Meadows map laminated due to the new kiosk design, the map needs to be resized and reprinted, as it cuts off the north section.

~ After Ms. O'Hare has the map reprinted, Commissioner Saunders will get it laminated for the kiosk.

~Chair Makepeace asked Commissioner Saunders to bring the large full-size open space map to future meetings for reference during meeting discussions.

B. Discussion of hunting on Town open space properties

All 7 people from the public agreed they were present for this topic. Commissioner Conroy presented a suggestion to allow bow hunting on Town properties, with no change to the current firearms Daily Permit Required hunting program as currently operating in Wallingford. There

was considerable discussion and information-sharing/brainstorming about the topic, with all present giving opinions, asking questions, etc. Discussion included issues such as: types of bows; possible days; timing for a bow season (calendar dates); locations; boundary setbacks vs. no setbacks; use of stands; hunter requirements for orange clothing vs. no requirement for orange clothing (consensus to apply statewide rule, i.e. bow hunters also wear orange upon arrival and exit from stand); consideration of how the program might be administered (preferably CT DEEP, and to administer the program by daily permits); prior considerations about adding a bow season for deer hunting; safety; eligible hunters; consideration of how many deer could be taken (consensus for CT DEEP to determine that); consideration of other users (non-hunters); consideration of animals to be hunted by bow. Acknowledged: that any proposal would need to go to the Town administration for follow-up with relevant departments, and follow administrative process, i.e. Conservation Commission can only make recommendations to the Town). Following discussion, Chair Makepeace polled all commissioners for opinions.

MOTION: B. Conroy, that the Conservation Commission recommend that the Town allow bow hunting at current Town of Wallingford Daily Permit-Required hunting areas from September 15th to December 31st, for Wallingford residents only, following all State of CT regulations, with the additional requirement that hunting stands are to be removed within one week of the end of the bow hunting season.

SECOND: M. Miller

VOTE: Unanimous

At the end of this discussion, at 7:25 p.m., all members of the public left the meeting.

C. Beseck Mountain – Re-route drawing of trail section of Cliffside Drive – no activity

D. Other property issues – none for this meeting

3. PROPERTY MONITORING REPORTS

A. Wharton Brook at Doolittle Park – staff – no report (Ms. O'Hare on vacation)

B. Beseck Meadow – Commissioner Miller reported he visited the property a week ago. There was considerable snow track evidence of wildlife. Hedgerows need to be brushed back by the lessee in the Farmland Lease areas, and a few small trees have fallen into the field. He will contact the lessee. He reported no other issues of concern were observed.

C. 1245 Whirlwind Hill Rd – no report (Commissioner Loughlin not present)

4. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT – TYLER MILL PRESERVE

A. Stewards of Tyler Mill – Commissioner Saunders reported no work parties (snow, ice, holidays). A new, apparently unpermitted, footbridge was reported to Ms. O'Hare and Chair Makepeace. Two commissioners reported that considerable unpermitted trail creation is still taking place.

B. Natural Diversity Database Information – Commissioner Saunders reported a reply was received from CT DEEP.

~ Chair Makepeace asked Commissioner Saunders to inquire whether Mr. Pagini (Town Planner) can answer about the file requirements to implement DEEP's suggestions.

C. Other – n/a

5. PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT (POCD) – Commissioner Borne reported on the kickoff meeting and progress to date. Colliers Engineering and Design has been hired and Kevin Pagini, Town Planner, is the Town's project manager for the POCD. So far, the town has been divided into 6 areas to determine desirable uses/needs, etc. There is a target date of November, 2026, and drafts of POCD elements are expected before that, to offer residents to learn and give input. Commissioner Borne will keep the Conservation Commission informed along the way.

6. REPORTS/CORRESPONDENCE

A. Trails Work Group - no one present from TWG; their December report was emailed

B. DEEP CT Recreational Trails Program – QRLT submission – not taken up

7. NEXT MEETING – Feb. 19, 2026, 6:00 p.m.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Makepeace adjourned the meeting at 8:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dianne Saunders, Commissioner