

Final / Approved

WALLINGFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

REGULAR MEETING

Thursday, November 14, 2019

MINUTES

Present: Vice-Chair John Lathrop and Commissioners Dianne Saunders, Jeffrey Borne, Jared McQueen, Brad Sammis, Carl Arsenault and Environmental Planner Erin O'Hare.

Not Present: Chair Mary Heffernon and Commissioner Dianne Lendler.

Vice-Chair Lathrop, as Acting Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. in the Town Hall Basement Conference Room.

Commissioner Mike Miller arrived at 7:07 p.m.

1. Approval of Minutes – Regular Meeting, October 10, 2019

These corrections were made:

- p. 2 at 2.A.7., second sentence, to delete "Commissioner Saunders will tell Director of Parks and Recreation Kenny Michaels that signs are needed to warn people about these areas" and to replace that with "*Commissioner Saunders will write a memo to Parks and Recreation and Steve Palermo about requesting level spreaders to be used near the Maltby Lane entrance at Tyler Mill Preserve.*"
- p. 2 at 2.C.2., first paragraph, to delete the first sentence "*Commissioner Saunders will write a memo to Chair Heffernon requesting two level spreaders to be used near the Maltby Lane entrance at Tyler Mill Preserve.*" and to insert only "*Ag students may help with the removal.*" And in the second paragraph to delete the last sentence of "Earlier, the trails were done and kept beautiful by Public Works."
- p. 2 at 2.C.3., fifth sentence, to delete the second use of "*discussion*".
- p. 3 at 2.G., first sentence, to delete "to Ms. O'Hare and" and to replace with "to the Commission". And in the second sentence to delete "*any remaining*" and to insert "*their October*".
- p. 3 at 2.H., to delete "*Commissioner Borne will follow up on that.*"
- p. 4 at 3.L., first paragraph, to delete the entire third sentence of "Commissioner Saunders asked whether setting up apparatus in the fields for dog training is actually not permitted."
- p. 4 at 3.L., third paragraph, to delete the first four sentences of "Ms. O'Hare said presently the Town uses a two-envelope system for bids. Bidders submit one envelope with their qualifications and the other envelope with their bid amount. Ms. O'Hare asked, Does the Commission want to continue the two-envelope system or return to a one-envelope system? The Commissioners' consensus was to return to the one-envelope system just for fields 7A and 8B."
- p. 5 at 4.A., to clarify the Motion by inserting that it is "*the Town's*" Open Space Resource Management Fund account.

Motion by Commissioner Borne to approve the Minutes of October 10, 2019, as corrected; seconded by Commissioner Miller, and approved unanimously.

2. Property Management

A. Tyler Mill Preserve

1. Stewards of Tyler Mill – report, D. Saunders & D. Lendler

Commissioner Saunders said the step footbridge was moved by the recent storm, and the Stewards relocated it by the smaller tributary instead. She noted 16 problems from visitors. Police were notified about two problems, and it has been quiet since. Unleashed dogs remain a problem.

2. Signage: street sign, unleashed dogs, no motorized vehicles, hunting notice & trail head signage

The hunting notice is now installed on a pole. Ms. O'Hare has some signs in her office. Commissioner Miller reported he installed the "No Unleashed Dogs" signs. One of the two "No Motorized Vehicles" signs is up. Commissioner Saunders said the trail head sign was broken at the middle, and she is working on it. The Green Trail sign will be done soon. For these, the lettering has to be routed out, and then the signs have to be painted. *Vice-Chair Lathrop said he will rout lettering for the two Pink Trail signs. Commissioner Saunders bought the paint—to be reimbursed later.* The Pink Trail sign was stolen.

3. Lilac Trail – post installations
Commissioner Arsenault will install these.

4. Guided Geology & Botany Walk, Oct. 12 – report
Commissioner Miller said about 30 persons came out to walk and hear the two speakers. It took about three hours.

5. Road erosion areas (2)

Ms. O'Hare reported that the one area near the closed bridge has been done by Public Works Department. Commissioner Saunders said the workers did not install a level spreader. She had given them a map, a diagram and a note. Before the houses were built by Maltby Lane, there was a marsh going through the woods, across Maltby, through the field and to the Pink Trail. The watercourse has flooding problems. Public Works Department installed large-stone riprap, which is dangerous for someone to walk on, she said.

6. Other reports – None.

B. Bertini Park – storm damage, Trails Committee

Acting Chair Lathrop said the Park is fairly clear at the top. The Blue Trail at the top of Woodhouse Avenue has a go-round that needs to be reblazed instead of going through the trees. *Commissioner Saunders will draft this route.*

C. Fresh Meadows

1. Dead tree

Commissioner Saunders said Public Works removed the dead tree by the glacial erratic.

2. Trail bed weeds

A number of Lyman Hall High School Agricultural Science students went out there and pulled weeds from the trailbeds for the Commission.

3. Proposed memorial donation

Ms. O'Hare had drafted an agenda for a Mayoral meeting on this topic, but it needed to be rescheduled. There are more issues than previously. The family wants to plant a tree before Thanksgiving. Public Works may possibly dig a hole for the tree, but the question is where to plant it. Ms. O'Hare does not want it to grow to obscure the boulder. Commissioner Arsenault asked if the tree could be planted across the street, where it could be seen from the boulder. *Discussion was inconclusive.*

4. Mowing

Ms. O'Hare had asked Steve Palermo, Superintendent, Public Works Department, to mow at Fresh Meadows, and she sent him a map with instructions for staggered mowing. Commissioner Saunders said the whole edge is done to 20 feet in, plus some big sections. Commissioner Arsenault said the idea is to do a portion this year and another portion next year, so some area(s) winter over. *Ms. O'Hare will call Mr. Palermo and ask him to stop mowing for now.* Commissioner Saunders reported that people came in and dug new plants out. Commissioner Borne saw on October 12th that trail portions looked great but edges were not done. *Commissioner Arsenault will look at it and advise Ms. O'Hare.*

D. Marcus Cooke – trail maintenance

Acting Chair Lathrop and others took down and cleared up quite a few trees on Veterans Day, so

Marcus Cooke is done.

E. Beseck Meadow – bluebird box installation, M. Miller

Commissioner Miller will put the two bluebird boxes on posts and install them in the spring..

F. 1242 Whirlwind Hill Rd. – mowing report, C. Arsenault & D. Lendler

There was no report.

G. Property Reports – D. Lendler, D. Saunders, J. McQueen

Marcus Cooke Park: Commissioner McQueen said his map and the bulletin board picture out there differ. He marked the Trails on his map: Yellow, Orange, Red. The Yellow Trail goes down the steep slope and by Southwind Apartments. The Purple Trail is almost all off the map. So are we going onto someone else's property, not the Town's? Acting Chair Lathrop thought Town property markers were in the middle of the property. Commissioner Arsenault said the surveyors marked some, and there is still more trail. Commissioner Miller thought portions could be historically known but not marked. Commissioner McQueen said activity when I-91 was built might have affected the trails.

Ms. O'Hare asked, Who made the original trails? Who put them on the map? Who blazed them? *Ms. O'Hare will have Engineering look into it.*

Acting Chair Lathrop said when we walked it as a Trail Committee five years ago, we decided to have the Engineering Department look at it to verify it. Nothing was done then. Commissioner McQueen said this probably would be of interest to the Risk Manager. Ms. O'Hare asked if the Commission wants a sign there saying "You are now leaving Town Property"? Commissioner McQueen said there is a sign at Southwind. *Commissioner Borne asked Ms. O'Hare to look at the Town maps.*

Commissioner Arsenault said trails go right up to the Southwind parking lot. Commissioner McQueen said that Southwind may not know about the trail because there are at least 150 to 200 feet of brambles and buffer to the southernmost point of the Yellow Trail. But perhaps Southwind had to do a big open space as part of their plan? Ms. O'Hare suggested that a sign could say "You are now entering Southwind Open Space Property", if that is the case. There was much discussion about abutting land.

Acting Chair Lathrop asked, if the trails do go off Town property and we can identify onto whose property they go, could we notify those persons? Commissioner Arsenault thought it was part of what the Girl Scouts did when they made the maps. Commissioner McQueen said the trails were acquired by set-asides in the 1960s. Ms. O'Hare asked if an owners association was involved? Commissioner McQueen remained concerned about the physical bottom of the Yellow Trail, which goes down and comes back up steeply. He asked to know who owns from the Turnpike from this line and all the way to Southwind. If we contend that this is part of Town property, then we have an issue. This map shows it as Town property. *Ms. O'Hare will ask with the Law Department if need be. Commissioner McQueen will submit what he has to Ms. O'Hare.*

Cooke Road: Commissioner Saunders said Cooke Road has the same issue. She cannot find the northern boundary, so she was not sure if she was on private or Town property. Ms. Saunders had walked it two weeks ago with the Farmland Lease Map and the Open Space Map, starting by the driveway, and the Open Space Map and the Farmland Lease Map don't jibe. *Ms. O'Hare will check the maps and will send a letter to the Engineering Department to post it again with boundary markers.*

H. Other Properties

1. Letter to Ordinance Committee members

Chair Heffernon had written to the Ordinance Committee members about advertising signs possibly being allowed on Town ball fields. Mr. Chris Shortell responded that this request is still being considered.

2. Memorials on Town properties – This was discussed under 2.C.3. above.

3. Farmland Lease Properties Program

A. Farmland Lease Committee – Meeting, Oct. 30, 3:00 p.m. – report. D. Saunders

Commissioner Saunders submitted the Committee's Meeting Minutes of October 30th and said the reports are finished. Not many problems—odd things, like crop damage from coyotes; also, the Town is not mowing edges, and people dump trash there. Commissioner Arsenault found horse nettles in other fields and in the middle of the Red Trail. It grew to full size in three weeks. He counted 30 Trees of Heaven on Field 9A and in the pasture by the ball field. Commissioner Saunders said, a few years back, a water pipe broke and the field flooded. Acting Chair Lathrop said the best time to get rid of Trees of Heaven is July to August. *Ms. O'Hare will put that on her calendar.*

Commissioner Saunders said members drafted a letter to renew the lease on Field 5A. Mowing should be November 1st to January 31st, so it is done before February. If the farmer is going to use herbicide, he will have to keep a watch on it.

Regarding Field 8B, Northford Road, the bid proposal is drafted.

Regarding Field 18A, 995C East Center Street, Ms. O'Hare will follow up with the Mayor at Commissioner Saunders' recommendation.

In other discussion, Ms. O'Hare suggested having a Special Meeting about the lease on Field 18A, 995 C East Center Street, which will expire soon, perhaps in January. No meeting date was set.

Commissioner Sammis said last summer he did the report on Field 14A on Main Street in Yalesville. *For the File, Commissioner Saunders will write monitoring reports for Field 4A at 1390 Whirlwind Hill Road and Field 19A on Scard Road.*

B. Bid Proposal – Field 8B, Northford Rd. – This bid proposal was covered already in 3.A. above.

C. Bid Renewal – Field 5A, Cooke Rd. – This bid renewal was covered in the Committee Minutes and noted at 3.A. above.

D. Mowing – Field 4C, Whirlwind Hill Rd./Scard Rd. & Field 8B, Northford Rd. – report

Commissioners agreed to having Field 4C mowed after the Town goes in and kills the Autumn olive hedgerow. Ms. O'Hare asked the Commission to approve mowing just Field 8B, Northford Rd. Steve Palermo at Public Works would do it. *This discussion was continued to the December meeting.*

4. 2020 Meeting Schedule – Meetings are on the second Thursday of each month. Acting Chair Lathrop called for a motion to approve the schedule as drafted.

Motion by Commissioner Miller to approve the 2020 Meeting Schedule; seconded by Commissioner Borne, and approved unanimously.

5. Public Events

A. Spring Farm Day event

Chair Heffernon and Commissioner Saunders are working on this, which will serve as part of the Commission's commitment under the Plan of Conservation and Development.

B. Grand Street Park

Acting Chair Lathrop said Chair Heffernon reported that several persons have agreed to plant a Pollinator Garden in the Park.

6. Reports/Correspondence

A. Commissioner Saunders circulated a notice for a January 9, 2020, all-day meeting on "Climate Change for Land Trusts", to be held in Hartford.

B. Ms. O'Hare showed a magazine article on a leatherback turtle that was found dead in Westbrook.

C. Ms. O'Hare reported Eversource has made application to the Siting Council for permission to take old

wooden towers down and to replace them with metal ones.

- D. Commissioner Saunders showed a small tamarac branch from the field, and she gave a sample to the CT Agricultural Experiment Station, which is hosting a Forest Ecology talk in early December.

7. Next Meeting – December 12, 2019

8. Adjournment

Motion by Commissioner McQueen to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Commissioner Sammis, and approved unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:49 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen L. Burns
Recording Secretary