

**Final / Approved**

**WALLINGFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

**REGULAR MEETING**

**Thursday, December 12, 2019, 7:00 p.m.**

**Conference Room, Town Hall**

**45 South Main Street, Wallingford, CT**

**MINUTES**

**Present:** Chair Mary Heffernon, Vice-Chair John Lathrop and Commissioners Dianne Saunders, Jared McQueen, Dianne Lendler, Brad Sammis, and Mike Miller.

**Not Present:** None.

Chair Mary Heffernon called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Commissioners Jeffrey Borne and Carl Arsenault arrived at 7:04 p.m.

**1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**, Regular Meeting, November 14, 2019

These corrections were made:

- p. 2 at 2.A.2., second sentence to delete “of these”, to read “Ms. O’Hare has some signs in her office.” And in the eighth sentence to add “for the two Pink Trail signs.” to say, “*Vice-Chair Lathrop said he will rout lettering for the two Pink Trail signs.*”
- p. 2 at 2.C.2, to restate the sentence as: “*A number of Lyman Hall High School Agricultural Science students went out there and pulled weeds from the trailbeds for the Commission.*”
- p. 3 at 2.E., to restate the sentence as: “*Commissioner Miller will put the two bluebird boxes on posts and install them in the spring.*”
- p. 3 at 2.G., Cooke Road, to delete the third sentence of “Ms. O’Hare said she sent the Lessee a memo in August.” In the fourth sentence to change “age” to “ago”. In the fifth sentence to change “*request that*” to “*send a letter to the*” and add “to” before “*post*”, to read “*Ms. O’Hare will check the maps and will send a letter to the Engineering Department to post it again with boundary markers.*”
- p. 4 at 3.A. in paragraph 1 to delete the sentence, “One field, #10A on Tamarac Swamp Road, was mowed too much.”
- p. 4 at 6. Reports/Correspondence, Ms. O’Hare asked to replace “near the” with “in” and to delete “/Guilford line.” This will read: “*Ms. O’Hare showed a magazine article on a leatherback turtle that was found dead in Westbrook.*”

**Motion by Commissioner Borne to approve the November 14, 2019, Minutes 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 reported that Lyman Hall High School students are propagating buttonbush, winterberry and a third wetland-tolerant plant.

- 2. Signage: street sign, no motorized vehicles & trail head signage

Ms. O'Hare said she has the "No motorized vehicles" signs. These should be posted at the Northford Road entrance once the street sign is replaced and at Vietnam Veterans Memorial Park. As to trail head signage, the Green Trail sign has to be repaired and put up, and the two Pink Trail signs are being made by Vice-Chair Lathrop.

3. Lilac Trail - post installations

*Commissioner Arsenault will install these posts.*

4. Maltby Lane erosion area

*Commissioner Saunders will send a brief memo to Public Works Superintendent Steve Palermo regarding the Pink Trail.* She would like to see the large tree pulled from the field and the runoff managed.

5. Other reports

Ms. O'Hare reported a small tree down across the White Trail about 300 feet in and along the river.

Commissioner Borne suggested that the new Wallingford Town Engineer could be invited to a Commission Meeting.

**B. Fresh Meadows**

1. Proposed memorial donation

Ms. O'Hare reported that the donation desired was an evergreen, but decision awaits a meeting with the Mayor. (See F.1. below).

2. Mowing

Ms. O'Hare had asked Public Works to conduct a staggered mowing at Fresh Meadows, which has been done. On December 1<sup>st</sup> she received a memo that Public Works finished their mowing by November 22<sup>nd</sup>. Commissioners discussed needs and agreed on future mowing plans for Fresh Meadows. *In the future, Ms. O'Hare will relay the Commission's timetable and plans to Superintendent of Public Works Steve Palermo and will include a map.* Commissioner Borne said he saw a camera affixed to a pipe in the southern field. Chair Heffernon asked him to take a photo of that for her. Commissioner Borne said at the outlet of the pond on the swamp side near the Cuneo house there is an amount of farm debris, barrels and slabs of concrete. Commissioner Arsenault thought the refuse likely predated the Town's ownership. Commissioner Borne suggested that the Commission should take a walk to see it. Ms. O'Hare said there is an area there that has Japanese knotweed.

**C. Marcus Cooke**

1. Trail maintenance – This was done and reported in the November 14 minutes.

2. Map discrepancies

Chair Heffernon said the trail discussed by Commissioner McQueen last month does not go to any other property. It can be seen online. The trails were a project by the Girl Scouts and trail maps are on the kiosk, but Chair Heffernon did not think the Engineering Department has the trails mapped. Commissioner Arsenault said the trail goes almost to Southwind Apartments property. Ms. O'Hare showed an aerial image of the wooded property at Marcus Cooke and at Southwind Apartments. Commissioner Borne suggested asking the Town Engineer to go out there and check the boundaries.

**D. Beseck Meadow - bluebird box installation, M. Miller**

*Commissioner Miller will do this in the spring.*

**E. 1242 Whirlwind Hill Rd. - mowing report, C. Arsenault & D. Lendler**

There was still no report.

## **F. Other properties**

### **1. Memorials on Town properties.**

Ms. O'Hare reported on the meeting that was held December 4th between Mayor William Dickinson, Mr. Kenny Michaels, Director, Parks and Recreation Department, Mr. Rob Baltramaitis, Director, Public Works Department, and herself to formulate a clear policy on the placement of memorials on Town property. Persons interested in a memorial are to make contact with Town staff and then forward a letter of their wishes, with the particulars of location, type, timing, etc. These are looked into by Town staff with input from Mayor's Office, Parks and Recreation, Public Works, and Environmental Planning Office. Only flush-mounted plaques installed to 18 inches below the ground will be allowed. Trees must be installed by certified professionals with the Environmental Planner present. The Town is not responsible for the future welfare of the tree (i.e., watering of the tree, damage, replacement if the tree dies) or the plaque if damaged or stolen. A letter is then sent to the person with the Town's conditions. The person forwards a letter agreeing with the conditions, and this letter then goes to the Town Council for approval of the donation. The donation must be approved by the Town Council before the actual installation occurs.

### **2. Other – No report.**

## **3. FARMLAND LEASE PROPERTIES PROGRAM**

### **A. Farmland Lease Committee - report**

Commissioner Saunders said the Committee did not meet in November.

### **B. Bid Proposal - Field 8B, Field 8B, Northford Rd.**

Commissioner Saunders said this bid proposal is not ready.

### **C. Bid renewal – Field 5A, Cooke Rd.**

Commissioner Saunders said that Ms. O'Hare's bid renewal draft was revised at the October 30<sup>th</sup> Committee meeting. Field 5A on Cooke Road should renew on December 31<sup>st</sup> and the Lessee is agreeable to the renewal. *Ms. O'Hare will see if this renewal has to go to the Town Council.*

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

Commissioner Saunders said this mowing by Public Works was done well, but the crew could not mow by the Autumn olive at the edge of Whirlwind Hill Road, Field 4C—it is too dense. Commissioner Arsenaault suggested to leave the cuttings at the hedgerow because the cuttings will rot in five years. Commissioner Lendler recommended a site visit. The Committee is trying to save the hedgerow. Public Works Superintendent Steve Palermo recommends getting a contractor to cut the Autumn olive because his machinery cannot handle it. *Chair Heffernon directed Ms. O'Hare to get contractor quotes for this work.*

## **4. PUBLIC EVENTS**

### **A. Spring Farm Day event**

*Commissioner Saunders will send the host farmer some proposed dates for a meeting.*

Commissioner Saunders and Chair Heffernon will meet with the farmer, and there will be a planning meeting. The public will be invited to see a local working farm. Chair Heffernon said this is part of the Commission's functions under the Implementation part of the Plan of Conservation and Development.

### **B. Grand Street Park**

This park is near the Ulbrich Boys & Girls Club. Chair Heffernon said she had met there with Superintendent of Recreation Michelle Bjorkman and Director Kenny Michaels from the Parks and Recre-

ation Department. Cory Folsom-O'Keefe of Audubon CT will help design the pollinator garden, and Chair Heffernon will ask the Boys & Girls Club members to help plant. Chair Heffernon said there is a possibility of doing a similar planting at West Side Field.

## **5. REPORTS/CORRESPONDENCE**

Chair Heffernon showed the Connecticut Forest & Parks Association magazine. Also, she described a newspaper article about a farmer whose fields are affected by climate change. Commissioner Lendler knew of a farm that lost 60 percent of the crop due to flooding. Farmers now have to rethink their planting cycles and use different, costlier methods to accommodate climate change factors.

Commissioner Saunders spoke about buttonbush, which is good for erosion control. She had found a photo of four pollinator species on the same buttonbush plant at the same time. She reported instances of coyotes invading farm fields and destroying the corn crop, which is new.

CACIWC Conference - Both Chair Heffernon and Ms. O'Hare attended on November 23rd. Ms. O'Hare reported on the Bear presentation, saying bears are becoming more numerous across the state, are here to stay, and we need to learn how to live compatibly with them.

## **6. NEXT MEETING – January 9, 2020**

## **7. ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion by Commissioner McQueen to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Vice-Chair Lathrop, and approved unanimously.**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen L. Burns  
Recording Secretary