

**Final / Approved**

**WALLINGFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

**SPECIAL MEETING**

**Thursday, December 10, 2020, 6:00 p.m.**

**Room #7, Parks & Recreation Department  
6 Fairfield Boulevard, Wallingford, CT**

Note: The December 10, 2020, Regular Meeting in Town Hall for 7:00 p.m. was cancelled and a Special Meeting was set and held at Room #7, Parks & Recreation Department, 6 Fairfield Boulevard, Wallingford, CT, at 6:00 p.m. due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Present:** Chair Mary Heffernon, Vice Chair John Lathrop, Commissioners Jared McQueen, Dianne Saunders, Brad Sammis and Environmental Planner Erin O’Hare. Commissioner Carl Arsenault arrived as noted.

**Absent:** Commissioners Mike Miller, Dianne Lendler and Jeffrey Borne

Chair Heffernon called this Special Meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

Ms. Adelheid Koepfer presented a letter to Chair Heffernon about Sustainable CT. Chair Heffernon spoke briefly about the organization later on.

**1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**A. Special Meeting, Nov. 12, 2020**

**Motion by Vice Chair Lathrop to accept the November 12, 2020 Minutes as presented; seconded by Commissioner McQueen, and approved unanimously.**

**2. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT**

**A. Tyler Mill Preserve**

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

Commissioner Saunders said the Preserve is in pretty good condition since the last storm. Now the Purple Trail and Red Trail need cleanup as well as the Blue Trail. Tasks would be to trim back to widen trails. *Chair Heffernon offered to help on this.*

Commissioner Saunders said individuals have gone out to Tyler Mill Preserve and felled trees and built footbridges which had to be taken out. It could be bikers or not. People still bike off-trail, and Commissioner Saunders has told them that certain areas are not trails. Where they go, invasive plants may take root. Stewards fill the areas back in, but the off-trail bikers have pulled fill out. They have gone on private property, etc. The object is to preserve sensitive habitat. Vice Chair Lathrop suggested posting a sign with “This is not a trail.” Commissioner Arsenault arrived about 6:14 p.m.

Commissioner Arsenault noted he had blocked three trails before on State land for his job, and people stopped using them. *Commissioner Arsenault agreed to see the areas with Commissioner Saunders.* Commissioner Saunders asked for a Town sign saying, “Not an Official Trail – Stay Off.” Other suggestions were: “Sensitive Bird Habitat – Stay Off”, “Endangered Species in This Area” and “Major Diversity Habitat”.

2. Other reports – Commissioner Saunders said the CT Botanical Society’s virtual meeting is this Saturday.

**B. Fresh Meadows**

1. Tessa’s Trail

Commissioners Lathrop, Arsenault and Chair Heffernon cleaned Tessa’s Trail recently.

2. Trees by glacial erratic

Commissioners Lathrop, Arsenault and Chair Heffernon cut saplings and lower branches off trees here. Public Works picked up the brush. They said the family’s memorial bench with a plaque has been installed there.

3. Addition of name on Town Open Space property signage

Ms. O’Hare reported that she has requisitioned three new “Fresh Meadows” signs to be attached to three existing “Town Open Space Property” signs and one replacement sign. Mayor Dickinson approved this larger cost from the Open Space Resources Management account instead.

**C. Ferguson Woods – storm damage**

Vice Chair Lathrop, Commissioner Arsenault and Chair Heffernon cleared fallen trees from the trail. They noted that someone has been cutting trees and fixing reflective markings to trees.

**D. 205 Main Street Open Space property**

1. Encroachment – Ms. O’Hare said nothing has happened yet.

2. Repair of Town open space property signage

Ms. O’Hare is waiting for the new sign that was ordered in November.

Ms. Koepfer left the meeting about this time.

**E. Beseck Meadows**

1. Encroachment – No report.

2. Bamboo – encroachment & management

Chair Heffernon said David Roche from All Habitat Services recommended cutting the bamboo at ground level and then cutting it into smaller pieces. Mr. Roche recommended, when the new sprouts come up, they should be sprayed with Imazapyr. Commissioner Saunders vouched for that because it is safer than glyphosate—but the person who applies needs to be licensed by DEEP for spraying. Because the bamboo is lightweight, Commissioner Arsenault recommended that the truckloads would have to be covered for removal from the site.

Bamboo Treatment followup: After cutting, in spring of the first year, every two weeks any sprouts would need to be sprayed with a mixture of Imazapyr, canola oil and water. The second year, the same treatment should be continued. In the third year, the land would have to be watched for any regrowth and possibly treated again. Commissioner Saunders thought the bamboo might migrate to the neighbor’s property and regrow. It is difficult to eradicate and is drawn to grow near septic systems. Likely, it would cost \$1,500 to treat the bamboo each year. *Chair Heffernon and Commissioner Arsenault will review these methods and report on estimated costs.*

**F. Other properties**

1. Other – None.

**3. FARMLAND LEASE PROPERTIES PROGRAM**

**A. Farmland Lease Committee**

Ms. O’Hare said that Public Works Superintendent Steve Palermo is willing to cut Fields 7A and 7E, as she requested.

**B. Bid proposals: Fields 5A, 7A, & 8B**

No report. Separately, Commissioner Saunders said that someone has voluntarily mowed the corner by the stone wall and 12 to 15 feet in at Northford Road and Cooke Road, which has improved visibility for drivers.

**C. Field 7A, Northford Rd. – hunter parking proposal – No report.**

**D. Several fields – compliance with lease terms**

Commissioner Saunders reported that at the other fields off Anderson Road someone is driving through those fields regularly. It could be a hunter or someone harvesting a crop. *Ms. O’Hare will check with the lessee about the lease requirement to keep the gate up to prevent such trespass.*

**4. PUBLIC EVENTS – History Hike in Tyler Mill Preserve – June 2021**

Chair Heffernon said the History Hike will be June 12 with a rain date of June 13, 2021. *Commissioner Saunders is planning out the walk stations.*

**5. REPORTS / CORRESPONDENCE**

**A. CLCC – membership dues**

The Commission voted unanimously to pay these dues.

**B. Northford Road Bridge reconstruction**

Ms. O’Hare said a public information meeting was held December 7. The work is scheduled to begin in the spring of 2022. The Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission will hear about the plans at its meeting on January 6. Commissioner Saunders was concerned that the Natural Diversity Database Map be checked. *The Commissioners asked Ms. O’Hare and Commissioner Saunders to compile a letter on behalf of the Commission.*

Separately, Ms. O’Hare noted that the December 5<sup>th</sup> rainstorm brought to Town 2.2 inches of rain in 14 hours, which is becoming more typical and development practices should reflect new storm patterns. Commissioner Saunders said many times the Red Trail is completely under water from storms. Vice Chair Lathrop stated that in the last five years 100-year storms have occurred twice.

**C. Watershed Protection District zoning amendments**

Ms. O’Hare reported that she will be writing a letter on behalf of the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission to the Planning and Zoning Commission for the December 14th meeting regarding proposed amendments. The Watershed Protection District overlays part of the IX and the I-5 zones. If passed, the amendments would tighten rules pertaining to development allowed in the District, which protects all public drinking water supply areas.

**6. NEXT MEETING – January 14, 2021, at the Parks & Recreation Department.**

## **7. OTHER TOPICS**

**Motion was made by Vice Chair Lathrop to waive Rule 5 in order to discuss topics that are not on the agenda; seconded by Commissioner McQueen, and approved unanimously.**

Two topics were brought up:

### **1. Letter received from Ms. Adelheid Koepfer**

Chair Heffernon read from the letter received tonight from Ms. Koepfer. She wrote that the Commission should look into the “Sustainable CT” program. Ms. O’Hare noted that formal participation in this organization can help towns qualify for certain grants. *Chair Heffernon will invite Ms. Koepfer to the January meeting.*

### **2. Executive Session**

**Motion was made by Commissioner McQueen to go into Executive Session; seconded by Commissioner Sammis, and approved unanimously.**

The Recording Secretary left the room at 7:13 p.m.

**Motion was made by Commissioner Lathrop to come out of Executive Session; seconded by Vice Chair Lathrop, and approved unanimously.**

At 7:24 p.m. the Recording Secretary was called back into the room.

As a result of Executive Session, Chair Heffernon was directed to write a letter to Mayor Dickinson.

## **8. ADJOURNMENT**

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

The meeting was adjourned at 7:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen L. Burns  
Recording Secretary