

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

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TOWN HALL

238 Danbury Road

Wilton, Connecticut 06897

WILTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION

WEDNESDAY June 7, 2017 – 7:30 P.M.

TOWN HALL ANNEX - MEETING ROOM "A"

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MINUTES

- I. PRESENT: Susan DiLoreto (Chair), Frank Simone, Jeff Lapnow, Jade Hobson, Jackie Algon, Brice Chaney
- II. ALSO PRESENT: Mike Conklin, Director of Environmental Affairs; Jennifer Fanzutti, Environmental Analyst; Liz Larkin, Recording Secretary
- III. ABSENT: Colleen O'Brien (notified of intended absence)
- IV. CALL TO ORDER – Ms. DiLoreto called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm
- V. INLAND WETLAND REFERRALS - None
- VI. PLANNING AND ZONING REFERRALS - None
- VII. ONGOING BUSINESS
 - A. **Parks Reports** – Mr. Conklin advised that Ms. Fanzutti has been out to all of the parks to weedwack and mark downed trees for removal. An arborist will be hired to remove the trees that cannot be done by staff and volunteers. This work will be completed starting in July.

Mr. Conklin confirmed he has chosen Timber & Stone to complete the Bradley Park boardwalk. He explained that Timber & Stone is the most qualified and has the equipment to remove the existing wood without removing any trees for access. He noted that the boardwalk will be made with rough-cut milled locust so it is not slippery when wet. This work will be completed by the end of June.

Mr. Conklin stated he and Ms. Fanzutti recently inspected the plantings at Horseshoe Pond. Ms. DiLoreto suggested that more plantings are placed to the left of the area that was planted last year. Mr. Lapnow offered his assistance to Ms. DiLoreto for this project.

Mr. Conklin noted the south side of Horseshoe Pond, where the NRVt was recently built does not look very inviting as there are invasives. He suggested targeting this area for a

clean up as many people walk through this area. Ms. DiLoreto suggested adding ferns between the trail and the pond. Ms. Algon suggested pollinator plants.

B. Conservation Activity Log Updates

Quarry Head Trail Consolidation – Ms. Algon stated the project is on hold until Dave Francefort is available but noted most of the work to be done is on the Land Trust property known as Harrison Smith Preserve.

Mr. Conklin stated he and Ms. Fanzutti walked the Quarry Head trails and there is some mowing that needs to take place. He explained that Jim Sweet has taken care of the property for Terri Goodwin for many years but a new landscaper may be hired due to Mr. Sweet's failing health. Ms. Algon stated the commission should hold the annual Terri Goodwin lunch at Quarry Head this summer. Mr. Conklin stated Donna Merrill typically arranges this luncheon. Ms. Algon stated she thinks the Commission should take this over from Donna as she is no longer a member.

Horseshoe Pond Long-Term Management Plan – Ms. DiLoreto and Mr. Lapnow will set up a meeting with Mr. Conklin to review work to be done in the summer.

Park Walks & Talks – Ms. Algon noted only two people attended the meditation walk at Cherry Lane Park. She indicated no walks are planned for June. The Commission agreed that showcasing some of the historic stone walls would be an interesting walk. It was also suggested that Bob Russell lead this walk.

Ms. Algon stated she recently discovered the Telva Road Open Space along the Silvermine River. She walked the property with Tom Case, a neighbor that suggested this area be maintained as a meadow. Mr. Conklin stated this is an open space set-aside, not a town-owned park, so the neighbors can work together on a plan if they desire. Any plan would need to be approved by his department and the commission.

Kent Pond Management – Mr. Conklin stated he and Ms. Fanzutti are drafting the plan for Kent Pond. This includes applying for the grass carp permit through DEEP. CT DEEP is requiring a special fence be installed so that carp cannot escape so this was added and then the CT Dam contact called and said the fence will need to be removed. He indicated there is a new special fence that will be installed for this purpose.

Ms. Algon stated she was hoping to get back to the neighbors with an update as the project has lost momentum and needs to be started again. Mr. Conklin advised that when working with the state, things like this take time. He agreed to write a summary that Ms. Algon could submit to the neighbors.

C. Work with other Commissions/Committees

- i. **Tree Committee** – Ms. Algon confirmed a tree was planted on Arbor Day for the Annual Tree Steward Award for Barbara Quincy. She reported 30 – 40 people

attended the ceremony. Mr. Conklin stated the tree is a large October Glory Red Maple planted in front of Gregory & Adams on Old Ridgefield Road.

Ms. Algon confirmed the committee will tag trees again starting the following week. She noted that the Fairfield Tree Committee has a program where they will plant a shade tree in the right of way when a larger tree is removed for a \$150 fee. She stated this should be considered in Wilton.

Ms. DiLoreto stated she knows someone who would like to plant a tree at Horseshoe Pond for the loss of a loved one and she was not sure if there was a good place to plant it. Mr. Conklin confirmed a crabapple tree was destroyed in the Horseshoe driveway area that may be a good location.

- ii. Deer Committee – Mr. Conklin reported the Committee completed a successful hunt for the 2016 season. He presented the 2017 Controlled Hunt Plan and noted that the only major change for Town owned property is that Belknap will be hunted through January. Mr. Conklin advised that the total harvest was in line with previous years.

Mr. Conklin stated two hunters that participate in the program every year have had some major medical issues that were concerning for safety. He confirmed he spoke to Town Counsel and these hunters can participate with a doctor's note. Mr. Conklin then explained the vetting and proficiency test that is administered every year. He added that every hunter is required to hunt from a stand that is labeled and removed at the end of the season.

Ms. DiLoreto MOVED to APPROVE the 2017 Hunt Plan, SECONDED by Mr. Simone and CARRIED 5-0-1 with Ms. Hobson abstaining.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

- A. **AROD Discussion** – Ms. DiLoreto stated she did not understand how the zone change was completed without public notice, even after meeting with Mr. Nerney, the Town Planner. Mr. Conklin stated the town is looking for economic development and this age-restricted housing could fill a need of the town. Mr. Conklin explained that Planning and Zoning approved an overlay zone change. He did remind the Commission that they reviewed the property under a Planning & Zoning referral for a 4 lot subdivision and a free cut to create 5 lots in total. Mr. Conklin confirmed there are no wetlands within 100 ft. of any activity.

Mr. Conklin stated the developer applied through the Water Pollution Control Authority to extend the sewer which instigated concern from the residents. Ms. DiLoreto stated the sewer extension at this location is not included in the current Plan of Conservation and Development and there was notice in the paper, but no specific address was provided. Ms. Fanzutti handed out copies of the Town Code as it pertains to Conservation for everyone's reference. Mr. Conklin suggested that if anyone would like to attend the P&Z Meeting as residents, or Commissioners, they can do so. Ms. DiLoreto stated something is not right, the proposal goes against the POCD, and asked if the Commission can make the overlay go away. Ms. Algon responded that the POCD is a guiding document, not a mandate, and has huge public

input. Ms. Hobson stated this development should not be allowed on Ridgefield Road.

Ms. Algon MOVED for Ms. DiLoreto to PREPARE a letter to present to the Planning and Zoning Commission at their next meeting on Monday, June 12, 2017, SECONDED by Ms. Hobson and CARRIED 6-0-0.

Ms. Algon noted she is on the committee that is interviewing firms to complete the next POCD within the next two years. She stated a special committee may be formed by the vendor. Mr. Conklin confirmed that this Commission will have input. Ms. Algon noted she would like to be at the table. Mr. Conklin responded that this is decided by Bob Nerney, the Town Planner, and the Planning and Zoning Commission.

- B. Conservation Commissioner Roles & Responsibilities** – The Commissioners looked at the Town Code to confirm their roles and responsibilities. Ms. DiLoreto asked that the Commissioners think outside of the box and be more proactive.
- C. 2017 Park Assignments** – Ms. Larkin noted that there are two new commissioners so the Park Assignments should be redistributed. Mr. Chaney agreed to take Cherry Lane and Wild Duck and Mr. Lapnow agreed to take Sackett Preserve.
- D. Fall Newsletter** – Mr. Conklin asked Commissioners to start thinking of articles that can be included in the Fall Newsletter that needs to go out prior to Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day on October 28, 2017.
- E. Bear Education** – Mr. Conklin relayed a story from another town where a mother bear with two cubs scratched a dog walker and was later euthanized. He suggested the Commission come up with guidelines on interacting with bears as they are in our community.

XI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES –

a. 5/3/17 Meeting Minutes and 5/3/17 Site Walk Minutes –

Mr. Chaney MOVED to APPROVE the Minutes, SECONDED by Ms. Hobson and CARRIED 6-0-0.

XII. ADJOURN – Ms. Algon MOVED to adjourn at 9:46 pm, SECONDED by Ms. Hobson, and CARRIED 6-0-0.

Next meeting will be July 5, 2017.

Respectfully submitted,
Liz Larkin, Secretary, Environmental Affairs