

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

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TOWN HALL

238 Danbury Road

Wilton, Connecticut 06897

WILTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION

WEDNESDAY December 5, 2018 – 7:00 P.M.

TOWN HALL ANNEX ROOM A

MEETING MINUTES

PRESENT: Susan DiLoreto (Chair), Jackie Algon, Jade Hobson, Colleen O'Brien, Frank Simone

ALSO PRESENT: Mike Conklin, Director Environmental Affairs; Liz Larkin, Recording Secretary

ABSENT: Jeff Lapnow, Brice Chaney (notified of intended absences)

I. CALL TO ORDER: Ms. DiLoreto called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm.

Mr. Conklin welcomed two Scouts in the audience from Troop 20 working on a merit badge.

II. PLANNING AND ZONING REFERRALS

A. **REG#18373, Millstone Property Holdings, LLC**, to amend the Zoning Regulations to allow "agritourism" (educational, recreational and entertainment activities conducted in conjunction with a working farm or agricultural operation) in single-family residential districts as a special permit use, and to allow offices accessory to a farm or riding stable as permitted accessory use within such districts

Mr. Conklin described the requested regulation amendment and noted that this would not be limited to the Millstone Farm Property as regulation changes are not site specific. Ms. DiLoreto stated there are different forms of agritourism and asked that Planning and Zoning define the word "agritourism". Ms. Algon stated Millstone is selling poultry which is contrary to their current agreements with the town.

Ms. Algon suggested keeping the comments in line with ensuring water, soil and all woody and herbaceous plants, as well as noise and light pollution and vehicular traffic are considered. Mr. Conklin added that parking cars on the sites should also be considered as a conservation matter due to compaction of the soil. The Commission discussed the possibility of these farms holding large entertaining events such as wedding which could bring many cars, noise and lights into the nighttime hours which is not desired in a residential setting. The Commission emphasized that 'agritourism' should be defined by P&Z to reflect the activities that could be allowed by special permit on all farm properties in residential neighborhoods. Ms. DiLoreto confirmed the neighbors of Ambler Farm were adamant that weddings could not be held at that farm.

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Mr. Simone stated Millstone Farm should be required to cure the violations that exist on the site. Mr. Conklin reminded him that this referral is for a regulation change which would encompass the four existing farms in town and any potential new farm that is created. He also noted that Millstone has eight acres of land that they can potentially use for activities and additional structures. Mr. Conklin confirmed he visited the Millstone Farm the day prior and there were items not completed at this time that were required. He provided examples such as the footbridge and unsustainable grades. Mr. Simone stated he wants Planning & Zoning to be aware of the easement agreement discrepancies and the non-conformance.

Mr. Conklin suggested the comments include protecting and preserving the natural resources on the site including but not limited to soil, water, air, and existing vegetation. Mr. Simone asked that Planning & Zoning examine the current conditions on the Millstone Farm property and how this will be affected by the proposed regulation. The Commission agreed they would like to receive communication from Planning & Zoning on the final outcome.

- B. REG#18374, CH 241 Danbury Road Associates, LLC, to amend the Zoning Regulations to remove certain regulatory provisions pertaining to public and semi-public uses when such use is located on commercially-zoned property**

Mr. Conklin advised the Commission that this regulation change is based on area and bulk requirements. The Commission agreed there would be no comment for this referral.

### **III. INLAND WETLAND REFERRALS - None**

### **IV. ONGOING BUSINESS**

- A. Parks Reports –** Mr. Conklin advised that the town's new Environmental Analyst, Zen Herter drafted a Staff Report which was emailed to the members. His Staff Report included his observations of parks that require site work.

**B. Conservation Activity Log Updates**

Horseshoe Pond Long-Term Management Plan – Nothing new to report.

Park Walks & Talks – Ms. Algon confirmed there is a walk at Cherry Lane Park this Sunday at 1pm with Colleen O'Brien leading. Mr. Conklin asked Ms. Algon to send staff the information so it can be posted on the Facebook page.

Kent Pond Management – Nothing new to report.

Schenck's Island Plan – Mr. Conklin advised that the Committee has chosen Milone & MacBroom to complete the concept plan as the original chosen firm was not able to meet the contract terms of the town.

Stewardship Plan for Easements – Nothing new to report.

**C. Work with other Commissions/Committees**

- A. **Tree Committee** – Mr. Conklin clarified the membership for the Tree Committee is not contingent on the Conservation Commission as was the notion at the last meeting. It is made up from the Board of Selectmen so that a member is present from P&Z, Garden Club, Conservation, Board of Selectmen, and a landscape professional. Ms. Hobson stated she felt uncomfortable at the last meeting where the existing members were voting on the nominated members as they were present in the audience. Mr. Conklin suggested potential future members submit letters of interest and the commissioners can interview people if necessary.
- B. **Deer Committee** – Mr. Conklin advised that the DEEP is not updating the harvest numbers as frequently as in years past. He believes the harvest is consistent with past years.
- C. **Planning & Zoning Liaison** – Ms. DiLoreto and Mr. Simone had nothing to report.

## V. NEW BUSINESS

- a. **Winter Newsletter** – Mr. Conklin stated he has not been able to work on this newsletter but it would be great to have the issue released at the end of January or beginning of February so that we can start to publish the need for volunteers for the Townwide Clean Up Day Event.

Ms. DiLoreto suggested having an article about boxwood blight as this is currently a hot topic that many residents may not be aware of at this time.

- b. **POCD Discussion** – Ms. Algon confirmed Milone & MacBroom were apologetic about placing the conservation items at the end of the publication and will move the information closer to the front.
- c. **2019 Elections** – Mr. Simone MOVED to NOMINATE Ms. DiLoreto as the Chairperson, SECONDED by Ms. Algon and CARRIED 5-0-0. Ms. DiLoreto MOVED to NOMINATE Mr. Chaney as the Vice Chairperson, SECONDED by Ms. O'Brien and CARRIED 5-0-0.
- d. **2019 Meeting Schedule** – Mr. Simone MOVED to APPROVE the 2019 Meeting Schedule as amended, SECONDED by Ms. Hobson and CARRIED 5-0-0.

## VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. Meeting Minutes 11/7/18

Ms. Algon asked for the following revisions:

II. line 2: kids' (add apostrophe after kids)

VI.B. Park Walks & Talks - change Star Gazing to Skywatching. Third sentence: delete the word 'card' - ...she would send a thank you to the ....

VI.C. B. Deer Committee - third sentence: delete the word 'the': This is in-line with previous years....

VII.D. Edit as follows: Ms. Algon advised there is a new term called "Green Lines" which represents open space [omit trails] that connect with private residence(s). "Greenways" refer to open spaces that connect with other open spaces.

In that section the last sentence about China should be removed and placed under the Haz Waste section.

Ms. Algon MOVED to APPROVE the Meeting Minutes as amended, SECONDED by Ms. Hobson and CARRIED 4-0-1 with Ms. DiLoreto abstaining as she was not present.

**XI. ADJOURN** – Ms. O'Brien MOVED to ADJOURN at 8:27 p.m., SECONDED by Ms. Hobson and CARRIED 5-0-0.

Next meeting will be January 8, 2019.

Respectfully submitted,  
Liz Larkin, Secretary, Environmental Affairs