

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

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TOWN HALL

238 Danbury Road

Wilton, Connecticut 06897

WILTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION

WEDNESDAY May 6, 2015 – 7:30 P.M.

TOWN HALL ANNEX - MEETING ROOM "A"

MINUTES

- I. PRESENT: Dan Berg (Chair), Donna Merrill, Jackie Algon, Susan DiLoreto, Frank Simone
- II. ALSO PRESENT: Mike Conklin, Environmental Analyst; Liz Larkin, Secretary, Environmental Affairs
- III. CALL TO ORDER – Chairman Berg called the meeting to order at 7:17pm.
- IV. INLAND WETLAND REFERRALS

A. WET#2310(S) DAHLEN – 136 Old Kings Highway – construct pool and level backyard

Mr. Conklin showed the area on the plan where the proposed dirt is being removed and a retaining wall is being built to level the backyard area. He confirmed the pool is outside of the 100 ft. regulated area but the new lawn and fill material will be encroaching into the wooded area of a previous mitigation planting area. Mr. Conklin confirmed the homeowner is proposing enhanced mitigation with natives which will improve the area from its current state. The commissioners agreed that the plan looks like an improvement and no comment is necessary.

B. WET#2314(S) BARBER – 23 Coley Road – remove existing dwelling and construct new 4-bedroom house with underground stormwater system

Mr. Conklin confirmed the new house is being proposed at a closer proximity to the wetlands than the existing home. He suggested pulling the new house closer to the road, in the same location as existing, in order to maintain a larger wetland buffer area. Mr. Conklin noted that the homeowner probably wanted a larger front yard but in his experience, a future homeowner may want a larger backyard eventually so moving it up may be a good idea for them in the long term. He also pointed out the permanent demarcation boulders that are typically requested by the Wetlands Commission. The commission discussed that the wetland is more of a drainage area and decided with the infiltrators, the only comment would be the shifting of the disturbance area closer to the road.

C. WET#2313(S) DOWNEND – 31 Old Danbury Road – construction of a 30-unit housing development

Mr. Conklin described the site as a scrub/shrub, lightly wooded area along Old

Danbury Road adjacent to Wilton Commons. He reminded the commissioners that this applicant originally proposed a 20-unit development in a residential zone at 44 Westport Road.

The only comment from the commission related to tree protection measures as there are some established trees present. The area also includes invasives that will be addressed with this project. Mr. Conklin confirmed the underground infiltrators have a 90% renovation rate with routine maintenance which is normal and customary.

V. PLANNING AND ZONING REFERRALS - None

VI. ONGOING BUSINESS

A. Parks Reports – Mr. Simone confirmed he walked his parks and sent an email report to staff.

Mr. Conklin stated that he met with Chip Away's owner, Joe Cass, and a Public Works employee at Horseshoe Pond to discuss removing hazardous and storm damaged trees around the lower end of the pond. The Department of Public Works will chip the larger trees and Conservation will pay the disposal fee of \$65 per ton which is a very good deal. Mr. Simone asked if the chips would be added to the pile by Allen's Meadows. Mr. Conklin stated that pile was illegally dumped there and someone was recently cited by the police for doing this dumping. Mr. Conklin confirmed the tree work will take place in the beginning of June. Ms. Merrill noted the Horseshoe Pond weekend is being planned for June 6 – 8 for a vine management work day. These events will need to be coordinated.

Mr. Conklin showed the new dog waste signs that were received and explained that he would install them at Schenck's Island as this seems to be the location that needs the most attention.

B. Conservation Activity Log Updates

Quarry Head – Mr. Conklin confirmed he spoke to Dave Francefort who will flag the trail that is being consolidated. Mr. Conklin will email Bruce Bebee to gain permission for Dave to flag on the land trust property.

Horseshoe Pond Long-Term Management Plan – Ms. Merrill confirmed there is a timeline for the committee's action plan. She stated that Anne Deware is meeting with a professional fundraiser. The committee is developing a planting plan and will be presenting it to the commission in the fall.

Mr. Conklin asked if the commission would want to fix or replace the tree that was damaged by a car being pushed into the pond. The commissioners did not think this would be necessary.

Park Walks - Ms. Algon reported that the hike at Merwins Meadows went well. The next walk is scheduled for Bradley Park on May 17th. Ms. Algon is working with The Wilton Bulletin to publicize the event. There is a talk scheduled at the Library with Michael Dietz regarding low impact development on May 19th.

Ms. Algon noted that she is trying to reserve a fall talk with Mickey, of Pesticide Free New Canaan. She confirmed there is an upcoming presentation that she will attend to confirm if Mickey is a good speaker that may help Wilton.

The commissioners discussed the schedule of walks for the summer months. It was decided that June, July and August will not have walks as many people are away.

Mr. Conklin stated that he spoke to the photographer, Gretchen Yengst, about the type of photos we would like to obtain from the walks. He commented that she has a great vision of what would be the best types of photos for these events. She will visit the locations and take shots prior to an event. She does not believe in taking close up staged pictures of people.

Ms. Algon asked for recommendations for park walks in the fall. Ms. Merrill stated Sackett is interesting but very deer browsed. Mr. Conklin suggested Wild Duck and Vista Road but will look into the hunting schedule prior to making any plans.

Invasives Workshop – Ms. Algon noted this workshop was completed. Ms. Larkin will remove it from the list.

Carry In/Carry Out Initiative – Mr. Conklin confirmed he researched a typical sign and will get one placed at Schenck's Island. Ms. DiLoreto stated that she wants to build recognition and gain support throughout the town. She suggested speaking to coaches and coming up with a slogan to get the word out. Mr. Conklin stated that he can work with Parks & Recreation for the issues at the playing fields. Ms. Algon noted that it is good practice to start the program by targeting the education to the children of the town, much like was done when recycling started.

GIS Trail Maps for Walkers Guide – Mr. Conklin and Mr. Berg stated they are working towards testing for this project.

C. Work with other Commissions/Committees

- i. Tree Committee – Ms. DiLoreto confirmed many Go Green attendees stated they walk our parks. Ms. Merrill agreed that the festival was worth having a table, but better materials are needed. Ms. Algon stated that an umbrella or a tent is needed for these events as it was very hot and sunny. Mr. Berg confirmed he has a pop-up tent that can be used for this purpose.

Ms. DiLoreto confirmed the Arbor Day Celebration was a success. The committee selected Chris Lavin of MCL Ventures as this year's tree steward for the partnership and work he has done in the Center. She noted that the Tree Committee was disappointed that the Conservation Commission is not attending the Tree Festival.

- ii. Deer Committee – Ms. Merrill stated the Deer Committee is completing an analysis on the past year’s surveys to guide changes for this year. The state reported 153 deer harvested in Wilton during the 2014 season however, the committee counted 164. The annual target is 300 deer so Ms. Merrill confirmed they need to be more strategic.
- iii. Land Trust – Ms. Merrill stated there was nothing new to report.

D. Regional Projects

- i. Fairfield County Regional Conservation Partnership – Ms. Merrill stated that a particular initiative in mapping all of Fairfield County by a GIS expert is underway. She confirmed the group is producing marketing materials to explain what they do, and to gain interest. Ms. Merrill also noted that 13 meetings have been held for the Hudson to Housatonic project and individuals have been identified for land with natural resources including climate resistance and tributaries.

VII. NEW BUSINESS - None

VIII. LIAISON REPORT

Ms. DiLoreto confirmed there was nothing to report as there were no conservation-related items in the month of April. Ms. Merrill is the May liaison.

X. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – 4/1/15

Ms. Algon MOVED to APPROVE the meeting minutes as drafted, SECONDED by Ms. Merrill, and CARRIED 5-0-0.

XI. ADJOURN – Mr. Berg MOVED to adjourn at 8:45pm, SECONDED by Mr. Simone, and CARRIED 5-0-0.

Next meeting will be June 3, 2015.

Respectfully submitted, Liz Larkin, Secretary, Environmental Affairs