

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

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TOWN HALL

238 Danbury Road

Wilton, Connecticut 06897

WILTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION

WEDNESDAY November 1, 2017 – 7:30 P.M.

TOWN HALL ANNEX - MEETING ROOM "A"

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MINUTES

- I. PRESENT: Susan DiLoreto (Chair), Frank Simone, Jackie Algon, Jade Hobson, Colleen O'Brien
- II. ALSO PRESENT: Mike Conklin, Director of Environmental Affairs; Liz Larkin, Recording Secretary; Amanda Lord, Weir Farm; Patricia Sesto, Norwalk River Valley Trail
- III. ABSENT: Jeff Lapnow, Brice Chaney (not notified of intended absences)
- IV. CALL TO ORDER – Ms. DiLoreto called the meeting to order at 7:35 pm.
- V. WEIR FARM – Amanda Lord, a National Park Ranger and Wilton resident, approached the commission and asked that we foster a partnership as we share the same goal to protect our natural resources. She noted Weir Farm was designated as a National Park in 1990 and has been open and operational for visitors since 2014. She invited Commissioners to enjoy a one-hour walk in the Park on November 4th from 2 – 3 pm. There is no fee or sign up requirement for this event. Ms. Algon stated she would work with Ms. Lord to schedule a walk within the Commissions Walks and Talks Program in the spring of 2018.
- VI. FRIENDS OF THE NORWALK RIVER VALLEY TRAIL – Ms. Sesto presented a plan to add a leg to the NRVt at Horseshoe Park at the intersection of Wolfpit and Horseshoe Road. She confirmed this plan was presented in the past and there were some concerns by the former Director of Public Works and First Selectman. She confirmed both entities have now approved the proposal and added that the funding was donated some time ago. There may be one tree removed and she confirmed the First Selectman requested a slightly smaller entrance than the plan indicates with bollards added. Ms. DiLoreto stated she was concerned about the Rotary Adopt-A-Spot as she remembers Richard Kent was also concerned about the location at the last meeting. Ms. Sesto confirmed the Rotary Club is ok with the proposal. Mr. Conklin expressed concern that in previous meetings he attended regarding this proposal the First Selectman, Director of Public Works and the Police Department were not in favor of this proposal. Mr. Conklin recommended the commission meet with those involved in the previous discussions as well as the Rotary Club before deciding on the proposal.

Mr. Simone MOVED to APPROVE this proposed leg of the NRVt, with the conditions that the First Selectman, Department of Public Works, Wilton Police and Richard Kent of the Rotary Club all approve the plans, SECONDED by Ms. Algon and CARRIED 5-0-0.

VII. INLAND WETLAND REFERRALS - None

VIII. PLANNING AND ZONING REFERRALS

A. SP#436, iPark Norwalk, 1 Cannondale Way, to allow the construction of a parking garage

Mr. Conklin noted that the original application contained an error in that it referenced an expansion to an existing parking garage. Gregory & Adams has submitted a revised Application noting it is a proposal for a new parking garage. Mr. Conklin confirmed the garage is being constructed over an asphalt parking lot. Ms. DiLoreto stated there will be small trees from the parking lot islands which should be replanted or replaced on site. The commission agreed that any affected trees should be preserved or replaced elsewhere on the site.

B. Mr. Conklin advised that there were other referrals from Planning & Zoning that he felt would not be Conservation related but he wanted to confirm that with the commission:

1. Gleason & Associates - 9 Hollyhock – Mr. Conklin advised this was a second story addition and changing the parking configuration that went through Wetlands. He stated the proposal was an improvement to the area and the adjacent brook.
2. H.A.R.T.S. – 196 Danbury Road – to establish a package store
3. CT Poke – 14 Danbury Road – to establish a food service establishment

The commissioners agreed they would have no comments for the above Planning & Zoning referrals.

Mr. Conklin stated he just received a referral that afternoon from Planning & Zoning for a moratorium on the AROD and stated if the commission would like to review, there will need to be a motion to add this to the agenda.

Ms. DiLoreto MOVED to ADD the Frisch Regulation Change to the Agenda, SECONDED by Mr. Simone and CARRIED 5-0-0.

C. REG#17366, Patricia Frisch, amendments for Zoning Regulations for a moratorium on Age Restricted Overlay District

Mr. Simone noted the moratorium is not site-specific and he questioned taking this up from a conservation perspective. Ms. DiLoreto stated the proposed moratorium is to allow for the Plan of Conservation & Development (POCD) to be redone prior to making any regulation changes. She confirmed the letter that was submitted for the 183 Ridgefield Road Application from the commission would still be applicable. Mr. Simone argued that the moratorium does not affect this commission. Ms. Algon stated she supports waiting to confirm what the new POCD would state about high-density housing. Mr. Simone stated it should be between the town and Planning and Zoning to decide.

Ms. DiLoreto stated she would write a response to Planning & Zoning for this approval and the commissioners discussed what should be stated. The commissioners agreed the letter should state that the commission is restating and affirming the position taken in the earlier memo as it is relevant to this referral.

Ms. O'Brien MOVED to ACCEPT this language for Ms. DiLoreto's response letter, SECONDED by Ms. Hobson and CARRIED 5-0-0.

IX. ONGOING BUSINESS

A. HazWaste Collection Follow-Up – Mr. Conklin indicated the day was a success but noted the lines were long. He stated the collection was from 9am to 3pm in the past and there was low turn-out later in the day which prompted the 1pm end time for the last two years. He confirmed more labor is needed from the vendor and signage needs to stand out more.

B. Parks Reports – Mr. Conklin introduced SeeClickFix to the commissioners and explained how it works from a resident's perspective.

C. Conservation Activity Log Updates

Horseshoe Pond Long-Term Management Plan – Ms. DiLoreto confirmed she would have a plan for discussion in January of 2018.

Park Walks & Talks – Ms. Algon stated that she has not been able to get confirmation from Mr. Lapnow on his willingness to lead the Quarry Head Walk on November 19th. The 12th was a backup date selected by Ms. O'Brien if Mr. Lapnow is unavailable.

Ms. Algon wanted to schedule a January walk but the commissioners asked to discuss this walk at the next meeting in December. She stated she would contact Bob Lambert for a night walk. Mr. Conklin suggested another bonfire at Schenck's Island.

Kent Pond Management – Ms. Algon reported that the grass carp are doing well. She noticed some swans on the lake and confirmed the neighbors are still working on the buffer. Ms. Algon noted she is holding a brunch for volunteers at her home in December for the Friends of Kent Pond.

D. Work with other Commissions/Committees

A. Tree Committee – Ms. DiLoreto stated the Chairperson, Ms. Throckmorton, is working on proper pruning practices to place on the website for residents.

B. Deer Committee – Nothing to report.

C. Planning & Zoning Liaison – Ms. DiLoreto reported that the Planning & Zoning Commission did not hear the Millstone Properties Application as it needed to get through wetlands approval first. Mr. Conklin stated the position of Town Counsel that the Wetlands Commission may act on the application with a special condition that approval is based on Board of Selectman review.

X. NEW BUSINESS

A. Discussion of Conservation Commission Roles & Responsibilities Part I – due to the late hour, this item was tabled.

XI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. 9/6/17 Meeting Minutes, 10/4/17 Site Walk Minutes and 10/4/17 Meeting Minutes

9/6/17 Meeting Minutes are amended as follows:

Page 3 Paragraph 5 - add the word "*hi*" to "density"

Page 3 Paragraph 5 - "Ms. DiLoreto countered that she wants to make the best long-term decisions for the town *and Westport Road already has cluster homes and commercial development*"

Page 3 Paragraph 6 - "Mr. Simone asked that the letter reiterate previous communications and specifically emphasize Ridgefield Road." (remove "*but include others*")

Page 5 Paragraph 1 - change the word driveway to *pathway*

Page 5 Paragraph 1 - "suggested spot spraying the meadow"

Page 5 Paragraph 2 - "Ms. DiLoreto stated the SIMM Committee *finalized the RFP for delivery to Lynne Vanderslice but was not sure if it had been forwarded for her review*"

Page 5 Paragraph 4 - change the word blurb to "*brief note*"

10/4/17 Meeting Minutes are amended as follows:

Page 2 Paragraph 3 - add last sentence, "*Plans of the barn, square footage and exact placement were not available with this submission.*"

Page 2 Paragraph 4 - "He confirmed the location of the septic area which will pick up the bathrooms for *riders/employees as well as showering of horses daily and waste from the horse stalls.*"

Page 2 Paragraph 5 - "it had gone to a town vote in 2001 for the 2 million dollar purchase *of the Conservation Restriction.*"

Page 3 Top Paragraph - "access the parking issues as *the barn/indoor riding rink occupied most of the area of the Reserved Residential Area.*"

Page 3 Paragraph 1 - "Mr. Simone reiterated that the town paid 2 million to protect this land *with a conservation restriction.*"

Page 3 Paragraph 2 - "Ms. DiLoreto responded there are many people involved with the keeping of horses such as trainers and riders *and horse maintenance people.*"

Page 3 Paragraph 2 - "Mr. Lapnow stated the idea of taking down trees for sight line purposes is not desirable *or compliant with the Conservation Restriction.*"

Page 3 Paragraph 3 - "Mr. Simone MOVED to OPPOSE Special Permit #434 as it is inconsistent with the conservation restriction *due to land disturbance outside of the Reserved Residential Area* and if amended the proposal would be inconsistent with the intent of the conservation restriction *which is a legal agreement that protects the land in perpetuity...*"

Page 3 Paragraph 5 - "Mr. Simone MOVED to RECOMMEND the proposed development on the 3-acre lot be consistent with the Conservation Restriction Document and preserve (s) the conservation..."

Page 4 Paragraph 2 - "Mr. Lapnow will work with Ms. DiLoreto to define the end of the planting area *and develop an overall plan on paper for the pond.*"

Page 4 Paragraph 2 - "She also noted there are some weedy trees that should be cut back so that there is a better buffer between the Norwalk River Valley Trail and the road. *Jeff Lapnow suggested it might be better to have a green buffer between the trail and the road and focus our efforts on the pond side of the trail.*"

Page 5 Paragraph 4 - "the approval of the September minutes was tabled until the next meeting."

Mr. Simone MOVED to APPROVE the 9/6/17 Meeting Minutes, SECONDED by Ms. O'Brien and CARRIED 5-0-0.

Mr. Simone MOVED to APPROVE the 10/4/17 Site Walk Minutes, SECONDED by Ms. Hobson and CARRIED 5-0-0.

Mr. Simone MOVED to APPROVE the 10/4/17 Meeting Minutes, SECONDED by Ms. Algon and CARRIED 5-0-0.

- XI. ADJOURN** – Ms. Hobson MOVED to ADJOURN at 10:02 pm, SECONDED by Ms. O’Brien and CARRIED 5-0-0.

Next meeting will be December 6, 2017.

Respectfully submitted,
Liz Larkin, Secretary, Environmental Affairs

