

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

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TOWN HALL

238 Danbury Road

Wilton, Connecticut 06897

WILTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION

WEDNESDAY July 5, 2017 – 7:30 P.M.

TOWN HALL ANNEX - MEETING ROOM "A"

RECEIVED FOR RECORD
TOWN OF WILTON
2017 JUL - 7 P 1:13
BY: LK

MINUTES

- I. PRESENT: Susan DiLoreto (Chair), Frank Simone, Jeff Lapnow, Jade Hobson, Jackie Algon, Brice Chaney, Colleen O'Brien
- II. ALSO PRESENT: Mike Conklin, Director of Environmental Affairs; Jennifer Fanzutti, Environmental Analyst; Liz Larkin, Recording Secretary
- III. CALL TO ORDER – Ms. DiLoreto called the meeting to order at 7:36 pm
- XI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES –

The commissioners requested the following revisions to the minutes:

- a. Page 3 – First Paragraph – Last two sentences should read, "The Fairfield Tree Committeewhen a larger tree is removed for a \$150 fee *to the homeowner*. She *suggested* this program be considered in Wilton."
- b. Page 3 – 4th Paragraph – "theses" should read "*these*".
- c. Page 3 – Last Paragraph – Remove sentence "*Ms. DiLoreto stated something is not right, the proposal goes against the POCD, and asked if the commission can make the overlay go away*".

6/7/17 Meeting Minutes – Mr. Lapnow MOVED to APPROVE the Minutes with revisions, SECONDED by Mr. Simone and CARRIED 7-0-0.

IV. INLAND WETLAND REFERRAL

A. WET#2464(S) JENKINS – 58 Musket Ridge Road – lowering 3 areas of existing small stone dam by 6 – 12 inches and replanting wetland area

All commissioners indicated they visited the site. Mr. Conklin explained there was a previous permit granted to dredge a pond and the area has again filled with sediment. The homeowners would like to alter the dam by lowering it. He confirmed there are two streams that converge on the property and the area of the dam dries out in the summer months. The proposal includes pulling out the existing stones and dropping the water level by 6 – 12 inches and replanting the area.

Mr. Conklin pointed out the planting plan calls for 100 2-inch plugs which the commission

agreed seems small. Mr. Conklin confirmed doing this work is a good idea as this cool water stream can become a heat sink if not properly maintained.

Mr. Lapnow recused himself from this application as he may be hired to complete the work if approved.

Ms. DiLoreto asked if this dam is serving a purpose. Mr. Simone responded that it affects the flow of water. Ms. DiLoreto confirmed there is a natural flow that will go over the bridge in large events and noted the proposal is a small 25 ft. x 25 ft. area. She raised concern about the size and number of proposed plantings and the timing of the planting. Mr. Conklin confirmed all stream work would likely take place in August when it is driest.

The commission determined the comments should include one gallon size plants in lieu of 2" plugs, and twelve 3-4 ft. shrubs.

V. PLANNING AND ZONING REFERRALS

Mr. Lapnow was reseated.

- a. SP#426, 211 Danbury Road, LLC, 221 Danbury Road, to allow a 90-unit assisted living facility

Mr. Conklin advised that current site conditions from the historic Plant Nursery include a layer of asphalt about one foot down and then soil which has been subject to pesticides and debris. The proposal includes the re-crafting of the landscape. There is a proposed bio-retention system which assists with the current direct wetland impacts to the Norwalk River. Mr. Conklin confirmed no tree removal is required and they will eliminate the withdrawing line from the Norwalk River which was utilized to water the plants. Mr. Conklin noted that the neighbors have been involved in the planning process and the owners are adding a tree line barrier with the adjacent neighbor. The commission had no comment on the proposal.

Ms. DiLoreto MOVED to ADD AROD Discussion to the Agenda, SECONDED by Mr. Lapnow, and CARRIED 7-0-0.

- b. AROD Discussion

Mr. Conklin confirmed he met with the Town Planner, Bob Nerney, to discuss the current situation with AROD. As the public notice was not properly executed, the regulation will be void. It is expected the proposal will be rescinded at their next meeting on July 10, 2017. Mr. Simone asked if the commission can make comments without a regulation change in process. Mr. Conklin confirmed that they can make recommendations. Ms. DiLoreto stated she would submit a letter she had written prior to the last Planning and Zoning Hearing. Mr. Chaney recommended a pre-emptive point of view to not include specific roads. Mr. Simone added that this commission wants to have an active voice in how P&Z moves forward. Mr. Conklin and Ms. DiLoreto agreed to meet and fine tune the letter. Mr. Simone stated he trusts Mr. Conklin and his judgment and felt the commission does not need to see every referral that Mr. Conklin acts upon on behalf of the Commission. Ms. Algon stated she would like to see all referrals that are being requested of the department. Commissioners were invited to look at any plans they wish during normal business hours.

VI. BOARD OF SELECTMEN REFERRAL

- a. Weir Farm Scenic Road Alteration Request

Mr. Conklin explained there are two parking lots that are separated by trees which they would like to connect. Mr. Conklin confirmed they are also altering their entrance for safer access and that he reviewed the ordinance and stonewall guidelines to ensure all is approvable. The commission unanimously supports the proposal.

VII. ONGOING BUSINESS

- A. Parks Reports** – Mr. Chaney reported on a recent visit at Wild Duck. He stated there were some minor issues and the white trail is impassible so he recommends removing or redoing this trail.

Mr. Conklin confirmed the Boardwalk at Bradley Park was installed. Ms. DiLoreto stated she is getting great feedback on the work that was completed. Mr. Conklin advised that the builder relocated the trail to higher ground and used rough cut locust to avoid slips. He added that this contractor was the only one who was not removing any trees, and that they used tarps to remove the old creosote laden wood. Mr. Conklin stated Ms. Fanzutti is meeting with an arborist to start tree work in some of our parks.

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 recommended this item be removed from the Activity Log.

Horseshoe Pond Long-Term Management Plan – Mr. Lapnow asked Mr. Conklin if we have made arrangements for power to water the new plantings. Ms. DiLoreto questioned the need to water the plants as it has been so wet recently. Mr. Lapnow stated he could water if needed. Ms. DiLoreto wants to hold a meeting at the pond to get an idea of what is happening and what needs to be done this summer. The commission agreed to hold a meeting on July 11, 2017 at 5pm at Horseshoe Pond.

Park Walks & Talks – Ms. Algon stated there was no walk in June. She suggested a walk at Bradley in July with the boardwalk builder leading. Mr. Conklin advised that the builder lives in Vermont and would not be available. Ms. O'Brien stated she would lead the walk which was scheduled for July 30th at 1pm.

Ms. Algon confirmed there is a walk scheduled for August 12th at the Keeler's Ridge Land Trust Property. This will be a butterfly walk with Victor DeMasi which will end with an open house with refreshments at the newly renovated Fire House #2 just north of the property.

It was discussed that a stone wall walk would be an interesting topic and Vista Road would be a good property for this purpose. The best time for this would be in the fall when the walls are more visible. Mr. Chaney suggested a stream walk in Cannondale. Mr. Conklin advised against this area as it is not Town-owned land.

A discussion ensued relating to conflicts of interest when commissioners also work with other environmental groups that may provide an opinion on an application. Mr. Conklin advised there will be a mandatory meeting of the land-use boards with the town attorney to ensure compliance in the Fall of 2017.

Ms. Algon asked if the commission can add the Pocket Park at Schenck's Island on the work log. Mr. Conklin suggested working through some old projects prior to starting new ones.

Kent Pond Management – Mr. Conklin stated a letter was drafted for the neighbors that each commissioner received in their packets.

C. Work with other Commissions/Committees

i. Tree Committee – Nothing to report.

ii. Deer Committee – Nothing to report.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

A. POCD Discussion – Mr. Conklin confirmed he spoke to Mr. Nerney regarding the process for the new Plan of Conservation & Development. He confirmed the Planning & Zoning Commission is solely responsible for the oversight of the document. They have chosen Milone and MacBroom to complete the POCD on behalf of the town, although there is no written agreement as of yet. The timeframe for the POCD is about 18 months in duration and public meetings will be held for input. Mr. Conklin advised that there is no seat for a Conservation Commissioner at the table but there will be a special meeting to include the commission's input.

Ms. DiLoreto suggested writing an article about POCD in the Fall Newsletter. Mr. Conklin stated it would fine as long as the article is providing background and not specific POCD items. Mr. Conklin suggested having a liaison assigned to attend the POCD Meetings and report back to the commission. The commission will make this decision once the schedule has been set.

B. Pollinator Pathways Update – Ms. Algon suggested the interns are hired to work at the chess park to remove invasives and replant native pollinators. Mr. Conklin confirmed these activities have been permitted by the Inland Wetlands Commission. Mr. Conklin stated all planting done on town owned land, including pollinator installations, must come through his office for approval with a site plan and management details. Ms. Algon stated the Norwalk River Watershed Association (NRWA) received a grant for the pollinator pathway initiative.

C. Fall Newsletter – Education of Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) – Ms. DiLoreto confirmed the Tree Committee is submitting an article to the Wilton Bulletin shortly relating to the EAB in Wilton. She noted there is a moratorium on moving wood throughout the state to avoid further spreading. The commission discussed ways to eradicate the EAB including removal at the larval stage. Mr. Conklin stated he went to a forestry conference and the recommendation was to cut the ash trees down and replant other tree species in their place. Ms. DiLoreto confirmed she will submit the Tree Committee Letter for the Fall Newsletter. Ms. Algon stated Dr. Claire Rutledge of the CT Agricultural Station will be presenting on this topic at the Brubeck Room of the

Wilton Library on September 19, 2017.

D. SIMM Meeting Update – This item was tabled due to the late hour.

E. Discussion of Conservation Commission Roles & Responsibilities Part 1 – This item was tabled due to the late hour.

XII. ADJOURN – Mr. Lapnow MOVED to adjourn at 9:55 pm, SECONDED by Mr. Chaney, and CARRIED 7-0-0.

Next meeting will be September 6, 2017.

Respectfully submitted,
Liz Larkin, Secretary, Environmental Affairs

