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TOWN HALL
238 Danbury Road
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WILTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION

WEDNESDAY APRIL 4, 2018 – 6:00 P.M.

TOWN HALL ANNEX - MEETING ROOM "A"

2018 APR -9 P 1: 51

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

- I. PRESENT: Susan DiLoreto (Chair), Frank Simone, Jade Hobson, Jackie Algon
- II. ALSO PRESENT: Mike Conklin, Director of Environmental Affairs
- III. CALL TO ORDER Ms. DiLoreto called the meeting to order at 6:08 pm.
- IV. Review Conservation Commission Plan of Conservation & Development (POCD)

 Questionnaire Answers for Milone & McBroom

Mr. Conklin advised that he would like to share insight about what has transpired over the last ten years since the last POCD was produced. He wanted to explain previous work Commission so the Commission can include it in the revised responses for Milone and McBroom. He reviewed protecting natural resources is the key goal for this Commission. Mr. Conklin questioned if banning fracking waste is something that should be included in this POCD discussion. Mr. Simone stated some surrounding towns are passing legislation as the State is slow in their implementation so he wants this to remain on the wish list.

The Commissioners referred to the 2010 POCD Implementation Table starting on page 118, and noted education of the public is a big piece of the Commission's charge. Mr. Conklin stated the Commission should continue to implement conservation related guidance within the town. Ms. Algon agreed to write up the revised answers discussed at this meeting as she did for the first version.

Mr. Conklin confirmed that the Town has been working with Trout Unlimited on several restoration projects. Ms. Algon stated she wanted to be clear on all the work being done for the Conservation Commission related POCD meeting being held on June 21st. Ms. DiLoreto said she thinks we are doing a good job with the town charter requirements.

Mr. Conklin stated the Norwalk River habitat restoration projects should be included as an accomplishment as we have worked with Trout Unlimited on several habitat restoration projects along the length of the River in Wilton. He also suggested adding Kent Pond as an accomplishment as we are removing the invasive aquatics. Ms. Hobson added that Merwin Meadows should be included with the Trout Unlimited restoration. Ms. DiLoreto stated general education should be added as an ongoing project with the Newsletter and Walks and Talks Program.

Mr. Conklin stated that the first item under the 2010 Natural Resources Table is

maintaining a professional staff so this goal has been accomplished. He noted the next item on the table encourages the properties along the Norwalk River to retrofit drainage using Low Impact Development principles, which we do through Site Plan reviews and encouraging on-site stormwater management practices including rain gardens. He also noted the town reduces the presence of medical waste in water resources which is done at the Police Department with their medical return program, implemented by the former director.

Mr. Conklin explained the town's relationship with Harbor Watch as the POCD states the Commission needs to monitor surface waters. The Town contracts with Harbor Watch to maintain accurate assessments of pollution risks and to determine if additional regulations are needed to reduce sources of pollution, and to measure progress. He added that this program is funded through the Environmental Affairs department. He stated one area that can be improved is the education of the public on Norwalk River's TDML nitrogen criteria to help individuals make informed decisions. The Nature Conservancy is working to improve that function on a statewide level.

Mr. Conklin stated there are regional efforts to implement the Norwalk River Action Plan such as the Norwalk River Watershed Initiative which is comprised of members of government agencies and CT DEEP. He reported that there are some staffing issues and not much has taken place recently.

Mr. Conklin stated he believes the section relating to Protection of Habitat is also successfully being accomplished with the pollinator pathway initiative currently underway. Ms. Algon suggested we partner with Ridgefield Conservation on the pollinator pathway. Ms. DiLoreto stated the board can enhance this further.

Mr. Conklin stated the town is managing nuisance species of flora and fauna. We find appropriate methods to manage invasive plant species and nuisance wildlife. We addled eggs to reduce the Goose population, and run the controlled deer hunt to manage the deer population as examples.

The Protecting Trees section of the 2010 POCD has been completed, most notably as a Tree City. The mechanisms to protect trees and recognizing the value of trees have been met and will continue. There is an inventory of the Wilton Center Trees that is ongoing.

Ms. Algon thinks we could be doing more to assist the Energy Commission and foster a relationship with them.

The next section, Open Space and Greenways was noted as ongoing with the creation of the Norwalk River Valley Trail. The Norwalk River Walk is also ongoing. Identifying other greenway opportunities have been discussed but not implemented. Ms. Algon noted that South of Kent Road, the WilWalk Section falls under the Route 7 Right of Way. Mr. Conklin noted the western loop of the NRVT is the "other greenway". Ms. Algon asked about the space under power lines. Mr. Conklin stated these areas are mostly easements, not utility company-owned land. He confirmed the water company would not likely sell any of their property. He also noted he has utilized GIS for years to determine other opportunities.

The topic of continuing efforts to acquire open space is ongoing. Mr. Conklin has been working with residents since the recent changes to the tax code and guided inquiries about divesting excess land to the Land Trust as the group that will hold the land. The commissioners agreed that the last paragraph on that page which relates to managing open space is being done. Mr. Conklin noted we are being pro-active about trees that are a danger at our parks. Mr. Conklin also mentioned the CT DEEP Natural Diversity

Database and how to use it.

Ms. Algon agreed to write up the new responses to the questionnaire and send it to Mr. Conklin for review and discussion at the next meeting.

XI. ADJOURN – Ms. Algon MOVED to ADJOURN the meeting at 7:04 pm, SECONDED by Ms. Hobson and CARRIED 4-0-0.

Respectfully submitted, Liz Larkin, Secretary, Environmental Affairs

		Zh.