

MINUTES
Wilton Parks & Recreation Commission
September 8, 2021 / 7:30 PM
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Attendees:

- a) Commissioners: Bilella, Guglielmo, Ring, Kendra, Macken
- b) Director of P&R: Pierce
- c) Ex Officio: None
- d) Public: J.D. Freda, Ashley Kineon, and Joe Bear (Pollinator Pathway Project guest)

I. Call to Order - Bilella called the meeting to order at 7:32 PM.

II. Approval of Minutes for June 9, 2021 and July 14, 2021 – Ring made a motion to approve June 9, 2021 minutes, Kendra seconded. **Approved 3-0-2** (Macken and Guglielmo abstained/absent from June meeting.) Kendra made a motion to approve July 14, 2021 minutes, seconded by Bilella. **Approved 3-0-2** (Ring and Guglielmo abstained/absent from July meeting.)

III. Correspondence – discussion and/or action

- None

IV. Pollinator Pathway Project Update – discussion and/or action

- Motion made by Bilella and seconded by Guglielmo to move agenda item to end of meeting agenda (before adjournment) to give time for the guest (Joe Bear) to join the meeting. **Approved 5-0-0.**

V. Lightening Detection System Update – discussion and/or action

- Pierce provided an update on the system, contract review and additional paperwork to be submitted to Town's attorney this week. Expectation is that it will be finalized the end of this month.

VI. Town's Tennis Courts Information Gathering - discussion and/or action

- Pierce advised that an online survey will be launched from Town's system soon. Additionally, polling of users at the WHS tennis courts by P&R started this week.

VII. Wilton Track – discussion and/or action

- Track Replacement Efforts - Final Update - Pierce provided a final update. Track replacement project is complete and final payments being made. The project came in under budget. Pierce again acknowledged and thanked Back the Track for their donation to support the replacement of the track.

VIII. Storm Ida Impact on Fields and Facilities - discussion and/or action

- Pierce gave an update on the impact of Storm Ida on P&R facilities and provided highlights on damage. Merwin Meadows and surrounding trails badly flooded. Lyons field flooded, including a downed tree. North Field flooded. Stadium track and turf severely flooded and in need of repair and cleaning, including drains. Lilly Field flooded. Today, all fields are open except the Stadium track and turf. Both, Stadium turf and Lilly Field had their infill impacted, which is being address by experts. Shaw (turf installer & specialist) advised Pierce

that Lilly Field is safe to use, and Stadium turf is being tested and evaluated this week. A meeting was held with Stantec (design and drainage experts), Shaw (turf expert), and Cape and Island (track expert) today with Town representatives to develop a plan to clear, repair (as needed) and clean the turf, track and all drains. Once testing and reviews of the turf field are complete, infill can be replaced, which has already been secured with the Town's vendor. A timeline will be defined and communicated once testing and reviews are completed. Future mitigation plan being created by Stantec.

IX. Indoor Field House Project Concept Exploration Update - discussion and/or action

- Pierce shared that Stantec is starting samplings of the area on September 16. End of October is the current target for feasibility study results.

X. Ambler Farm Parking for Sports Fields - discussion and/or action

- Pierce advised that temporary fencing was recently installed along the stone wall, which provides an additional 20 parking spaces for the Fall sports season.

XI. Youth Sports Associations Meeting - discussion and/or action

- Update forthcoming: the recent storm diverted Pierce and team's attention. Pierce will be setting up a meeting with all Youth Sports Association leads to discuss field usage, sharing of fields between sports, and working together to enhance the experience.

XII. Staff Reports – discussion and/or action

Pierce reported:

- Parks & Grounds Report
 - P&R repaired certain trails impacted by Storm Ida and taking care of all grounds post storm.
 - Mowing continues.
 - Fall sports started and P&R supporting.
- Recreation Report
 - Assisted Hideaway Circus at Comstock – was a great success, all performances sold out. Estimated 500-600 people per show. Circus organizer advised Pierce that Wilton was the largest attendance they have had in all their various towns' performances. Circus will donate some funds to the Town (amount TBD.)
 - Labor Day Weekend Celebration with fireworks and DJ was very successful. Strong attendance. All prepaid parking passes were sold out, and first responders were offered free parking. Pierce thanked Wilton's Fire Dept, EMT, Police and all Town staff for their support with the event. Unfortunately, the P&R scheduled road race had to be cancelled due to the track being closed from Storm Ida.
 - Summer camp wrapped up in August and was successful with great attendance every week.

XIII. Member Comment - None

XIV. Public Comment - None

IV. Pollinator Pathway Project Update - discussion and/or action.

- Approved to move from earlier in the agenda (see above.)
- Joe Bear provided an update on the Pollinator Pathway Project at Allen's Meadows – four months of effort thus far. Site has been completely leveled and cleared. Brush & debris pile

has been chipped/addressed and all nonorganic materials were carted to the transfer station. Issue in removing mugwort, and the use of black tarps and constant mowing are in progress. It could take approximately one year to 18 months to remove this invasive species. Project is expected to continue through 2024 and possibly 2025.

XV. Adjourn - Bilella made a motion to adjourn, Kendra seconded. **Approved 5-0-0.** Meeting adjourned at 8:35 PM.

Rochester, Jacqueline

Subject: FW: DOCUMENT TO BE POSTED WITH P&R SEPT 8TH COMMISSION MINUTES -- Fw: Allen's Meadow Pollinator Pathway Project- Sept. 2021 P&R Meeting

From: Bilella, AnnaMarie

Sent: Thursday, September 9, 2021 1:15 PM

To: minutesandagendas <minutesandagendas@wiltonct.org>

Cc: Pierce, Steve <Steve.Pierce@WILTONCT.ORG>; Ring, Kevin <Kevin.Ring@WILTONCT.ORG>; Kendra, Jennifer <Jennifer.Kendra@WILTONCT.ORG>; Guglielmo, Joseph <Joseph.Guglielmo@WILTONCT.ORG>; Macken, John <john.macken@WILTONCT.ORG>

Subject: DOCUMENT TO BE POSTED WITH P&R SEPT 8TH COMMISSION MINUTES -- Fw: Allen's Meadow Pollinator Pathway Project- Sept. 2021 P&R Meeting

Hello.

Please post this documentation along with the Sept 8th P&R Commission's minutes.

Thank you.

Anna Marie

From: Pierce, Steve

Sent: Wednesday, September 8, 2021 8:21 PM

To: Bilella, AnnaMarie; Macken, John; Kendra, Jennifer; Guglielmo, Joseph; Kevin Ring

Subject: Fwd: Allen's Meadow Pollinator Pathway Project- Sept. 2021 P&R Meeting

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Joe Bear <joebear.gator@gmail.com>

Date: September 1, 2021 at 4:32:43 PM EDT

To: "Pierce, Steve" <Steve.Pierce@wiltonct.org>

Subject: Allen's Meadow Pollinator Pathway Project- Sept. 2021 P&R Meeting

CAUTION: This email came from outside the Town network. Is it authentic? Don't click until you are sure.

Hi Steve,

As discussed, here's a summary of the Allen's Meadow Pollinator Project's benefits, what has been accomplished to date, and what's next:

As a brief background, there's a c. 3/4 acre section of land just east of the Community Gardens that had previously (e.g. 15+ years ago) been used as a dumping site for the town's road sweepings; while that activity has since ceased, a thick stand of a very aggressive, non native, and invasive weed called *Artemisia vulgaris* (aka Mugwort) took hold. The goal of the project is to actively eradicate this Mugwort and replace it with a native pollinator meadow; the strategy for doing so employs a combination of frequent mowing, followed by an extended period of tarping, after which a native pollinator seed mix will be sowed. Creating a meadow is not an overnight endeavor in the best of sites, let alone one with an extremely challenging weed to get rid of first- this will take time and patience.

Benefits

- restores the area to its original native flora thus benefiting our local wildlife and demonstrating our environmental stewardship
- adds to the pollinator pathway footprint (originated here in Wilton in 2017)
- a model for Wilton residents who realize that the beauty of our native plants would enhance their own properties while providing critically needed sustenance and habitat for insects, birds, and other native wildlife.
- helps beautify a heavily used town park frequented by walkers, bikers, runners, gardeners, WHS Track and Field, The Greens residents, and dog walkers
- collaboration with Wilton High School Garden Club (via Science teacher Jim Hunter) to plant native plugs
- sponsored by the Norwalk River Watershed Association/Pollinator Pathway organization giving the project added credibility
- no cost to the town of Wilton as independent funding has been raised and matched by Sustainable CT

Since given official town approval by Lynne Vanderslice on 5/17/21, the following has been accomplished:

- the site has been leveled and graded using an excavator
- woody non-native and invasive shrubs/vines such as Multiflora Rose, Russian Olive, and Porcelain Berry have been removed
- the large brush/debris pile in the south corner, formed when the additional community garden plots were created 2-3 years ago, has been picked through and what could be chipped was; non organic material was carted to the transfer station
- a 70' x 40' section was tarped in the Spring using 6ml black plastic sheeting- the rest of the site is being mowed every 1-2 weeks

Looking Ahead, the plan is to:

- roll back a 20' x 40' section of the above mentioned tarp in late Oct and sow a native pollinator seed mix to be ready for germination come next Spring. This is somewhat

experimental in that it remains to be seen if having a tarp down for several months is long enough to kill the dense mat of Mugwort rhizomes that lurk beneath the surface of the soil. Most studies and discussions I've had suggest a much longer period is needed.

- * in early Spring 2022 a large-scale effort will be made to tarp as much of the site as possible- while mowing helps weaken the plant by limiting its surface area from which it is able to photosynthesize, tarping is the more effective measure as photosynthesis ceases with no light
- what is not tarped will be mowed throughout 2022
- depending on the results of the late Oct 2021 sow (e.g tarp down for only several months), we'll either repeat that process in late Oct 2022 (tarps will have been on for 7mos) or leave the tarps on until Fall 2023 (19mos)

*Request: the Spring 2022 tarping will require a lot of materials to anchor the tarps- I've been primarily using planks of wood, logs, and large rocks. It would be very helpful if, over the course of the next few months, you wouldn't mind asking any tree cutting/landscape companies you know of or work with (e.g Knapp?) if they'd be willing to drop off medium sized logs for me to use next Spring. I'd of course be there to help and coordinate where to unload them.

Thanks,

Joe Bear

joebear.gator@gmail.com

"When one tugs at a single thing in nature, he finds it attached to the rest of the world."

-John Muir