

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

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TOWN HALL

238 Danbury Road

Wilton, Connecticut 06897

**WILTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 7, 2010 – 7:30 P.M.

TOWN HALL – MEETING ROOM "A"

PRESENT: Kristen Begor; Kim Young; Dave Hapke; Jeff Coppelman; Christopher Coyle; Patrice Gillespie; Nicholas Lee;

ALSO PRESENT: Patricia Sesto, Director of Environmental Affairs; Allison McConnell, Acting Administrative Secretary; Krista Willett, Faesy-Smith Architects; Tom Smith, Faesy-Smith Architects; Bruce Beebe, resident

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Begor called the meeting to order at 7:34 p.m.

II. BOARD OF SELECTMEN REFERRALS

**A. 320 & 322 Nod Hill Road**

Commissioner Nick Lee is recused from this matter.

Pat Sesto gave some background of the proposed work at the property, described the site conditions and the nature of the scenic road status.

Krista Willett and Tom Smith of Faesy-Smith Architects presented a summary of the project and described the alterations they propose to make to the stonewall on the property border. They explained that they wish to move the curb cut and to rebuild the wall some six feet further back from the road, both to improve the sight lines for that driveway entrance.

Commissioner Hapke expressed his concern about future changes to the wall; once the wall is moved off the property line the town no longer has a say in its character. He would like for the town to continue to have partial ownership of the wall, to have a say in its appearance and composition.

There was some discussion of whether creating a conservation easement as a possible solution. Ms. Sesto explained that a conservation easement should include prohibitions on fences and lighting associated with the wall.

Bruce Beebe of 350 Nod Hill Road, commented on the history and controversy of the wall in the neighborhood, describing that it is not historical and generally agreed to be unattractive. He also described the difficult sight lines in that area.

The Commission discussed their recommendation to the Board of Selectmen, and continued to discuss the possible solution of a conservation easement.

Ms. Sesto explained that the Town would be a steward of the easement, but would have no obligation to maintain the wall.

There was consensus that moving the wall was justifiable and that a conservation easement would be the best solution to ensure the town retains a say in the management of the wall.

### III. INLAND WETLAND REFERRALS

#### **A. 35 Chessor Lane**

Kristen Begor, David Hapke, and Jeff Coppelman visited the site.

Ms. Sesto summarized the site conditions and the proposed work. The proposal would result in a net loss of maintained lawn and net gain of wetland buffer coverage on the rear grade. Ms. Sesto explained that the Inland Wetlands Commission looks at the question of whether the proposal would have a negative impact on the wetland before any consideration of mitigation is made. Their obligation is to first avoid impacts.

There was discussion of constructing the pool and terrace in an alternate location, but such an alternate would not be adjacent to the wetland buffer and would not include the proposed buffer improvements. Further, the alternate location would have the same interaction with the wetland as the preferred location. Ms. Sesto explained that the IWC looks to alternatives as a means to reduce impacts. If the proposal has no impact on the wetland, even if it is in the buffer, the IWC can't look to the alternative simply because it's an alternative.

Commissioners offered no objections or suggestions regarding the proposed plan.

### IV. PLANNING AND ZONING REFERRALS

None.

### V. ONGOING BUSINESS

#### 1. Parks - All

Chairman Begor has visited Horseshoe Park; she noted that some invasive plants are present, and vine maintenance will be needed in the coming season.

Commissioner Young spoke about the Wilton Riding Club and the neighboring Black family property. The Riding Club and the Blacks are discussing a riding trail around the reservoir. It was noted that land owned by SNEW is not open to the public.

Commissioner Hapke described the work of Dave Francefort and Dave Cody at Bradley Park.

Chairman Begor recommended that the Commission look into honoring Mr. Francefort as a conservation volunteer of the year, perhaps to coincide with National Trails Day on June 5, 2010.

Commissioner Lee described improvements at Quarry Head, and praised the cedar bench built and installed by Rick Parisot and honoring Larry Goodwin. Commissioner Lee also noted that an engineer should be consulted on needed repairs for the dam.

## 2. Open Space Preservation – Sesto

Ms. Sesto stated that there is nothing to report at this time.

## 3. Recycling – Begor, Hapke

Chairman Begor explained that she and Commissioner Hapke are working with Jennifer Fascitelli of the Department of Public Works on 20 minute presentation for the Go Green Festival. They will emphasize “closing the loop” on the waste cycle.

Commissioner Hapke noted that updated statistics show that trash has been reduced by 18% since the expanded recycling program started; and recycling has increased 4%.

## 4. Work with Other Commissions/ Committees

### a. Tree Committee

Ms. Sesto reported that this year’s Norwalk Wilton Tree Festival will have more vendors, and they will emphasize the availability of licensed arborists for consultation. The Commission will have a booth and will provide tree-related handouts and the guide to the Town Preserves.

The Tree Committee is working on new maps for the Tree Donation program, and will be creating identification placards to be placed near the donated trees during the Go Green Festival.

Ms. Sesto also noted that the Town will have an official Tree City USA designation ceremony to open the Go Green Festival.

She also reported that Halfdan Prahls has been awarded the Town’s Tree Steward Award for 2010.

Volunteers from the Commissioners were sought to staff the booth at the Tree Festival.

b. Deer Committee

Ms. Sesto noted that she will have the annual report for the Commission's consideration at the May meeting.

c. Energy Committee

Commissioner Gillespie noted that Karen Burke is the newest member of the Committee, representing the Board of Education. She discussed the greenhouse gas inventory that will be presented by the Ridgefield Action Committee for the Environment. She noted that the Committee's ICLEI membership has expired, and they are discussing the availability of funds for renewal.

d. Go Green Festival

Previously reported in other discussions.

5. Regional projects

a. Fairfield Co. Municipal Deer Management Alliance - Sesto

Ms. Sesto reported that David Streit of Redding is the new chair.

b. Norwalk River Valley Trail – Coyle, Sesto

Commissioner Coyle reported that they are seeking official Greenway designation, and are awaiting a grant.

There was discussion of funding and other donations from REI on the Norwalk section, and possibly from the Outdoor Sports Center in Wilton.

6. Pharmaceuticals Collection – Sesto

Ms. Sesto reported the flyers and posters that were created, and are being distributed for the event. Connecticut Coffee Company will be donating breakfast to the volunteers. Silver Hill Hospital has donated the printing costs.

7. Newsletter

Ms. Sesto noted that the goal is to have the newsletter sent out by mid-April.

8. Other Business

None

## VI. NEW BUSINESS

### 1. Town Clean-Up

Commissioners Coppelman and Hapke have spoken with Mike Conklin, who is organizing a number of scouting groups as volunteers, and coordinating the logistics. The Commission's role will be to hand out gloves and bags to volunteers.

### 2. Natural Resource Inventory - Gillespie

Commissioner Gillespie will have more to report in May.

## VII. LIAISON REPORT

Commissioner Young reported that the only matter of note from the Inland Wetlands Commission meeting was the Nod Hill property previously discussed this evening as a referral.

## VIII. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Nothing additional to report.

## IX. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – February 3, 2010

Commissioner Hapke MOTIONED to accept the minutes without revisions; Commissioner Lee SECONDED, PASSED 7-0-0, Ms. Gillespie abstaining.

## X. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Begor adjourned the meeting at 8:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Allison McConnell  
Acting Recording Secretary