

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

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TOWN HALL

238 Danbury Road

Wilton, Connecticut 06897

**WILTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MINUTES**

WEDNESDAY October 6, 2010 – 7:30 P.M.

TOWN HALL ANNEX - MEETING ROOM "A"

Present: Kristen Begor, chairman, Patrice Gillespie, Dave Hapke, Jeff Coppelman, Kim Young, and Nick Lee.

Also Present: Patricia Sesto and Recording Secretary Liz Larkin

- I. CALL TO ORDER – Ms. Begor called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.
- II. INLAND WETLAND REFERRALS –

A. WET#1995(S) – MATTHEWS– 560 Belden Hill Road – dredge pond.

Mr. Lee recused himself from this application.

Ms. Sesto described the project, noting the applicant would like to dredge a portion of the pond and use the spoils to fill in another part. A streambed would be reestablished. She expressed that the smaller pond would be okay from an environmental perspective since ponds are a source of thermal pollution. Discussion ensued regarding the details of the plan.

The consensus of the commission was that the proposal to line the perimeter of the pond was not desirable and additional details regarding the proposed stream channel are needed.

- III. PLANNING and ZONING REFFERALS – None
- IV. ONGOING BUSINESS
 - A. Parks –**

Wild Duck - Mike Conklin's Staff Report noted that Wild Duck Preserve has debris and work that needs to be done. Ms. Begor suggested that we send letters to neighbors.

Ms. Sesto proposed a co-op to try and get the neighbors to participate and learn more about the area, boundaries, and impact of debris to the area. The Commission plans to schedule clean-up days in October and November with Mr. Conklin's assistance.

Horseshoe Pond – Ms. Sesto reports that she was at Horseshoe Pond earlier in the day and the bottom trail at the southern connection is grown in, and the west side of the pond has vines that are killing the trees. A discussion ensued regarding any assistance that could be gained from a local organization. It was suggested that Deloitte and Touche be contacted to see if they can help this year as they have done in the past at Schencks. The Rotary Club may also assist during their National Clean-Up Day.

Mr. Lavity and Ms. DeWare have kept history of the pond and are managing the lilies. A discussion ensued relating to New Canaan to see if we can tour what they did at their pond. Current thinking is it is not feasible to dredge the pond as it is 6 acres. A suggestion was made to dredge half and fill the other half with the spoils.

Charlie Robinson cuts the view from the bench and has done a great job, and Suzanne Knutson did a great job with the flowers this year in the turn-around.

B. Recycling – Begor/Hapke –

Ms. Begor had nothing to report as the First Selectman has been busy with other projects.

C. Work with other Commissions/Committees

1. **Tree Committee** – Ms. Sesto reported that the bench and tree dedications will be this month. Six benches have been sold and there will be 2-3 more spots available after the Veteran's Memorial is completed. There may be 2 on either side of the memorial depending on how it may look once completed, and another space in front of CVS that the Garden Club has released for a bench that was in disrepair.

Mr. Lee will be planting crabapple trees this weekend and next week. There are 2 trees for the front of the library, 2 trees in front of the daycare center on Hubbard Road, and 1 tree for the American Legion Building.

Ms. Sesto said she would “call before you dig” to confirm that there are no power lines.

2. **Energy Committee** – At a special September meeting, the Commissioners confirmed a new structure and process for the development of the Town's forthcoming energy action plan. Richard Creeth is reformatting the material in the draft plan, and the Commission will soon present the draft to the Board of Selectman for comment.

3. **Go Green Committee** – Ms. Gillespie reported that the WGG committee is taking the lead on a local event celebrating 350.org’s “Global Work Party” on October 10, 2010: 10/10/10. With enthusiastic collaboration from various local groups, the plans are moving forward quickly.

The day’s activities will include planting of 14 trees at Allen’s Meadows. The participants will take water from the pond in buckets and will tote to water the newly planted trees. The trees will define the parking area and will not disturb the birding area.

The day’s activities will also include a walk, led by Becky Bunnell, from Allen’s Meadows to the Library to show how to navigate the route via the new Rt. 7 sidewalks and show a carbon-free way to get from one location to another. Mr. Coppelman will be at the Library to represent the Conservation Commission.

Ms. Begor handed out a flyer for “Take a Walk in the Woods”. She reported that Becky Bunnell was going to coordinate 22 different walks but it was too much. They have narrowed it down to 12 beautiful parks. Ms. Sesto will add this initiative to the Fall 2010 Newsletter.

Ms. Begor reported that the Go Green 501(c)3 is taking off in good fashion. The second annual Wilton Go Green Festival is planned for 5/1/11, and will focus on sustainability and energy.

Ms. Gillespie reported that the WGG Committee’s lead person for the Neighbor to Neighbor Energy Challenge has taken a full-time job so his work is being shared for the time being.

Ms. Gillespie reported on the 50,000 broad-winged hawks that came through an area in New York State after recent storms.

Mr. Lee reported that there were nesting cranes reported in the Adirondacks for the first time near Lake Champlain.

Ms. Begor reported that Larry Flynn spotted a red-headed woodpecker, a red shouldered hawk and a northern harrier at Woodcock recently. A discussion ensued about the strength of the woodpecker and Mr. Hapke reported that he measured debris from a woodpecker at 12 feet from the tree.

D. Regional Projects

1. **FFD Co. Municipal Deer Management Alliance** - Ms. Sesto reported that there is a meeting in Redding on October 20, 2010 with the Department of Environmental Protection and a division head. The purpose of this meeting is to put “heat” on the DEP

to get help. The recreational hunters will “skim the cream off the top” but this is not enough to drop the density numbers down to the desired levels of 10-20 deer/sq.mi..

Ms. Sesto reported that Brookfield officials are very interested in lowering their deer population and they are turning to sharp shooters. Brookfield’s actions and results will be watched and evaluated.

Ms. Sesto requested that concerned residents attend this meeting in Redding and ask the DEP to do more, including stating attainable goals. The baseline measurement is 10-20 deer per square mile and right now Wilton has 60-70 per square mile. This number is based on the goal to break the reproductive cycle of deer ticks and to do this, we need under 10 deer per square mile. The annual harvest for Wilton needs to be 300 deer, but realistically this would require sharp shooting.

Ms. Sesto also reported that there were some issues with the hunting in 2009 so the Deer Committee is changing the program this year. All hunters have background checks and will take a proficiency test with a 3-D deer and their own equipment to ensure a kill-shot.

Ms. Sesto will arrange to have a press release and Ms. Young will notify the Garden Club in an effort to reach more citizens.

Mr. Hapke proposed that we should submit pictures to the Wilton Magazine relating to the deer over-population and the vegetation issues they pose.

2. **Norwalk River Valley Trail** – Ms. Sesto reported about the press conference that took place in September. The committee is preparing a request for qualifications from which a short-list will be picked.

Ms. Gillespie suggested that the trail information be handed out at the Go Green event on 10/10/10.

Ms. Begor reported that the NRWA is close to printing a trail map that was made specifically for sale at REI. She spoke to David Park who has promised 150 copies for the REI opening Friday through Sunday of the Columbus Day Weekend.

V. NEW BUSINESS

- A. **Fall Newsletter** – The newsletter is being drafted for an October 21st mailing date.

Ms. Begor suggested that we include an article on the cost to insulate a home vs. the cost for a heating bill. There was a discussion regarding watt meters. When there is any light on an object, i.e. phone chargers, digital clocks, this is using energy. The watt meter will show how much energy is being wasted for these types of items.

Other articles will include bird migration and the dark sky initiative, Neighbor to Neighbor, Take a Walk in the Woods, and a reminder to burn firewood where you buy it to prevent the spread of the Asian Long-Horned Beetle.

- B. Household Hazardous Waste Collection** – Ms. Begor confirmed that Mike Conklin sent out a request for volunteers for the event on October 30, 2010. Mr. Hapke has agreed to be one of the leads. There is a new vendor this year.

A discussion about volunteers ensued and CERT was dismissed as a source of volunteers since they are reserved for more significant and specific occasions.

- VI. **Liaison Report** – IWC - Ms. Young reported that Wilton Commons has down-sized to 60-65 units. Teachers Insurance Association for 10 Westport Road has not made a good case for the need for more parking spaces. They are not open to stacked parking. The applicant cited that they were going to extinguish an easement that provided parking at 20 Westport Road. The easement should not be released in this case as it creates a hardship.

Ms. Young also reported on Splash adding 2 oil changing bays. Ms. Begor confirmed that this is not within the flood plain. Mr. Hapke inquired about other double-walled tanks and asked if this has been tested. Ms. Sesto confirmed that The Greens has successfully used this system with no issue.

VII. **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Ms. Sesto reported on her recent coyote seminar. The local coyotes are mixed with wolf and a domestic dog. They are coming down from Canada and the Great Lakes. Long Island does not have any coyotes although they are expanding their range and becoming less fearful of humans. It is requested that people are more assertive and scare them away. There was one report of an issue on Ridgefield open space abutting the Weir Farm's main property. The coyote followed walkers with dogs. This will be the likely scenario for people being hurt by coyotes. The coyote will attack a dog and the dog-owner will step in the middle. The density is 1 coyote per 5-25 square miles so they do travel very far.

- VIII. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES** – 09/01/10 – Mr. Lee moved to approve the minutes and Mr. Hapke seconded the motion. The Minutes were approved 6-0-0.
- IX. **ADJOURN** – Ms. Begor moved to adjourn the meeting and Mr. Hapke seconded the motion. The motion passed 6-0-0. The meeting was adjourned at 8:47 p.m.

Next meeting will be November 3, 2010.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Larkin
Recording Secretary