

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

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TOWN HALL

238 Danbury Road

Wilton, Connecticut 06897

**WILTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MINUTES**

WEDNESDAY November 3, 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.

Absent: Chris Coyle (noticed of intended absence)

Also Present: Patricia Sesto and Recording Secretary Liz Larkin

I. CALL TO ORDER – Ms. Begor called the meeting to order at 7:34 p.m.

II. INLAND WETLAND REFERRALS –

A. WET#1999(S) – ROLLING HILLS COUNTRY CLUB – 333 Hurlbutt Street – pond dredging and site improvements.

Several commissioners indicated they walked the site on Monday morning. The proposal is to dredge 4 ponds on the property. One pond is used for irrigation and there is no vegetation on the sides except lawn.

Pond dredging is very messy and the applicant would like minimal disturbance. They would prefer to complete the activity while the land is frozen. The material would be taken by trucks via the cart paths to another on-site location. The spoils will be mixed with compost and subsequently used to build new tees or modify the course.

Ms. Young raised concern about the animals that live in these ponds and it was confirmed that some individual may die but that it will not permanently threaten the populations; none of which are endangered.

Mr. Lee added that the Country Club recycles water on-site to conserve and he and Ms. Sesto agreed that this applicant is very conscientious regarding green initiatives.

Some suggestions that will be presented to the Inland Wetland Commission are: ground covers, machine access paths, encourage them not to have lawn right up to the water's

edge.

III. PLANNING and ZONING REFFERALS – None

IV. ONGOING BUSINESS

A. Parks –

Wild Duck – Mike Conklin and several of the commission members spent the day cleaning up this park. They removed trash but there are many empty beer cans that are currently covered by leaves. The commissioners re-blazed the blue, red and white trails but there is some chainsaw work to be done which may be completed by Parks & Recreation.

Ms. Sesto confirmed that the commission enjoyed working in a group environment as it is more fun than working alone. There were some great pictures that were taken and they may submit these to the newspaper.

Sackett Preserve – Mr. Coppelman reported that the bridge close to the front of the trail is completely out. There are pieces of the bridge that are missing and this is a safety issue. Ms. Sesto reported that there is a scout working out there. Ms. Begor suggested that we install yellow caution tape. Ms. Sesto will follow up with the scouts to see where they stand with this project.

B. Household Hazardous Waste Day – The day was a huge success. Mr. Hapke made certain that people came through quickly and did not have to wait in large lines. Mr. Lee filled his truck with items so citizens did not have to wait with minimal items.

Ms. Gillespie reported that many people still brought their latex paint. Ms. Sesto confirmed that it is not as easy for people to know what type of paint they have. The commission discussed how to educate the public about what to do with the different types of paint. Some waste haulers will not take latex paints, even though they're not hazardous. Ms. Sesto confirmed that any paint that can be washed with soap and water is not hazardous but if the instructions note to wash with spirits, it is hazardous.

A discussion ensued relating to battery recycling. If you have one or two batteries, it is best to throw them in the regular garbage. Stock-piling will define them as hazardous due to the volume.

Mr. Hapke reported that a Wilton environmental science teacher, Mr. Perry, gives kids 15 extra credit points for participating in this event. Three sections of 3 students attended.

C. Recycling – Begor/Hapke - Mr. Hapke reported that Public Works has been sidetracked with the Veteran's Memorial. There is a new scale on order so the ground work is ongoing. Mr. Hapke challenged the commission to think about the next big step for the recycling initiative.

D. Work with other Commissions/Committees

1. **Tree Committee** – Ms. Sesto reported that the bench and tree dedications took place in Wilton Center. Mr. Brennan asked that the commission find more places for benches in town. The commission agreed that Merwin Meadows is an obvious choice. Allen's Meadows and The Greens were discussed as well.

There are some trees in front of Village Market that are going to be removed and new trees will be planted in their place. Mr. Lee confirmed that there is still a good month before the ground will freeze so the work should be completed by then.

2. **Energy Committee** – Ms. Gillespie noted that an energy meeting is taking place in Ridgefield simultaneously with this commission's meeting. The Department of Energy is talking to the attendees about the Neighbor to Neighbor grant and what community groups work and why. Doubt was raised regarding the towns' ability to reach the participation goals established. Reference was made to Ridgefield's effort to sign up homes for green energy; so far only 600 homes are onboard after several years. Wilton only has half that at about 300 homes. The attendees of the meeting are asking for Dept. of Energy's assistance in accomplishing the initiative participation goals.
3. **Go Green Committee** – Ms. Gillespie reported there is a meeting next week. She reports that they have made great strides so far. They are more formalized and can now accept donations as a 501(c)3.

D. Regional Projects

1. **FFD Co. Municipal Deer Management Alliance** - Ms. Sesto reported that there was a public meeting in October with the deputy commissioner of DEP and wildlife biologist, Howard Kilpatrick. The purpose of the meeting was to ascertain what help the DEP can bring to the Alliance towns. Wilton's Deer Management Committee will ask DEP to help us and provide examples of what more we can do.

Ms. Sesto noted that recreational hunters only take us so far due to their mind-set. Residents collectively spend millions of dollars a year to respond to deer overabundance. Brookfield's Board of Selectmen is likely going to take more assertive actions to reduce deer numbers as a result of an economic impact study commissioned by the Alliance. Sharp-shooting will likely be the answer.

Ms. Young noted that White Buffalo is a group that teaches hunters how to sharp-shoot. They are considered the best in the business but can be expensive. Ms. Sesto noted again that the hunter personalities may not be motivated to harvest enough to get our

deer population down to 10 deer per square mile. Ms. Young added that the hunters may not want to harvest many deer so they have deer for the next hunting season. It was suggested that Howard Kilpatrick be invited to speak at The Garden Club to expand awareness.

2. **Norwalk River Valley Trail** – Ms. Sesto reported that the request for qualifications is ready to go out. This is to find a consultant to craft the routing study. The NRVT were awarded technical assistance by the National Park Service. John Monroe is person assigned to the NRVT and is known for his great enthusiasm in engaging the public. His services will alleviate this requirement of the routing study consultants so those grant dollars will go further.

V. NEW BUSINESS

- A. **FY12 Budget** – Ms. Sesto reports that there was a town hall budget meeting this week. Five-year projections for capital improvements are to be included. Consequently, Ms. Sesto asked for any projects or capital improvements that we may consider adding by the end of November when her report is due.

A discussion ensued on the need to clean up Horseshoe Pond and recent interest by a resident Anne DeWare to work on the project. There are substantial hurdles with fixing the pond. She and Ms. DeWare visited a site in New Canaan yesterday, where there is a similar pond, to see what they are doing. The cost of this dredging could be upwards of \$1,000,000. Given the town's economic picture, a substantial portion of this money would have to be privately raised and Ms. DeWare's may be willing to take this on. Mr. Lee countered that it may be better to request assistance for Kent Pond as it would benefit more people. It was the consensus of the commission not to submit work on Horseshoe Pond as a capital improvement project at this time. It would likely be better received once public support has been tangibly established by others.

Ms. Gillespie brought up the bio-blitz that is taking place in Ridgefield. Ms. Sesto added that there was a fundraiser last year to pay for this study. Her personal thinking questions the value of the study. Ms. Begor suggested that it was to identify endangered species and this was not Ms. Sesto's understanding given the methodology associated with where assessments are made.

Mr. Lee suggested that we consider budgeting for invasive removal for knotweed on Route 7 and other hot spots. Ms. Sesto noted that we would need to define the project and propose an estimate. Some of these charges could fall under the Dept. of Public Works if it is town property. If the cost was absorbed by Conservation, this would come out of the

“Ground and Maintenance” account. Mr. Lee suggested that we increase this budget, especially as we are speaking about a 5-year plan. The Commission would like to partner with the Dept. of Public Works to ensure appropriate action is taken. This approach should be discussed with Paul Young, the Tree Warden, which Mr. Lee said he would do.

- B. 2011 Liaison Schedule** – The commission agreed to discuss this in more detail at the meeting in December. The commissioners were asked to think about how the floating liaison schedule worked. It was assumed that if there was a reason the liaison could not make a meeting that they would let someone know for other arrangements to be made. It was decided that this was tough on the floaters because they would not know if they should remain available. Ms Sesto confirmed that the next Inland Wetland Meeting should be lighter so it is okay if the liaison cannot make it.

- VI. Liaison Report** – Ms. Sesto reports that Vollmer is coming up for the Planning and Zoning Commission. The liaison should be prepared to speak up if the commission is not giving due attention to this commission concerns. She added that lots 2 and 3 are oversized and the pond is an asset which will be privately held. The two wetlands in the front are not in great condition and the back two lots are 100 ft. from the wetlands. The November liaison should go to the next meeting to reiterate the issues and questions that will be included in the Memorandum Ms. Sesto will write. There was also a reminder for the liaison to keep information in the folder outside the meeting room.

Ms. Begor reported on the Planning & Zoning Meetings she attended on October 12th and October 25th. There were 3 different projects she shared with the Commission:

- a. Metro PCS is looking for a special permit for 2 flagpole towers. This application was continued
- b. Pollito at 490 Danbury Road has requested multiple apartments and offices under an adaptive use, which was also continued.
- c. Teachers Insurance and Annuity Association of S.W. CT where there are two parking phases to approve. This application was continued as P&Z needs to get approval from Inland Wetlands first.

VII. DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Ms. Sesto had nothing to add.

- VIII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – 10/06/10** – Mr. Hapke MOVED to approve the minutes and Mr.

Lee SECONDED the motion. The Minutes were APPROVED 6-o-o.

IX. ADJOURN – Ms. Begor MOVED to adjourn the meeting and Mr. Lee seconded the motion. The motion passed 6-o-o. The meeting was adjourned at 9:02 p.m.

Next meeting will be December 1, 2010.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Larkin
Recording Secretary