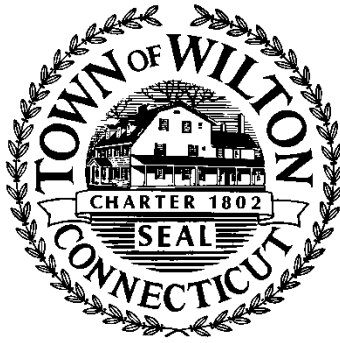


CONSERVATION COMMISSION

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TOWN HALL

238 Danbury Road

Wilton, Connecticut 06897

**WILTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MINUTES**

April 6, 2011 – 7:30 P.M.

TOWN HALL ANNEX - MEETING ROOM "A"

Present: Kristen Begor, chairman, Dave Hapke, Patrice Gillespie, Nick Lee

Absent: Chris Coyle, Jeff Coppelman, Kim Young

Also Present: Patricia Sesto, Director Environmental Affairs, Recording Secretary Liz Larkin

I. CALL TO ORDER – Ms. Begor called the meeting to order at 7:31 p.m.

II. INLAND WETLAND REFERRALS – None

It was noted that Ms. Begor will complete Mr. Hapke's liaison duties for Inland Wetlands Commission for the month of April

III. PLANNING and ZONING REFFERALS - None

IV. ONGOING BUSINESS

- A. Newsletter** – The newsletter articles are due on Monday, April 11, 2011 as the mailing will take place the last week in April. Mr. Hapke is writing about Clean Up Day, Ms. Begor is writing about Go Green and e-waste, Ms. Gillespie and Mr. Coppelman will write about the energy audit and there will be some advertisements for upcoming events and festivals.

The commission discussed the success of the Town Clean-Up Day due to Mike Conklin's diligence in contacting individual town groups and agencies prior to the event. It was said that this was "the best day ever" and all pizza coupons are still redeemable until May 1st which is the Go Green Festival. Ms. Gillespie was thanked for obtaining the free movie tickets for the poster contest winners, as well as the free pizza coupons at Pinocchio's.

- B. Parks** – Ms. Sesto noted that Dave Francefort is doing a great job cleaning up trails and that he is an asset to our parks as a volunteer. There was a recent report of

poorly cut saplings that left behind spikes on the bike trail, which Dave immediately removed for safety reasons.

Mr. Lee noted that Quarry Head is getting some work done. Ms. Sesto suggested that Jim Sweet and Terry Goodwin are contacted as they are stewards of this area and should be kept up to date on activity. It was noted that Halfdan Prahll is doing some work at the Land Trust near Keeler's Ridge.

Ms. Sesto stated that Schencks Island will not be mowed this spring as Theresa Mucci advised that if they disturb the soil at this time, it can invite invasives. Ms. Begor asked if Theresa has any before and after pictures of this situation for educational purposes. Ms. Sesto will follow up.

Ms. Begor reported that Wilton citizens are interested in a community garden at Sackett Preserve. Ms. Sesto confirmed that when the town bought the property, it was the town's option to construct a ball field and garden, neither of which ever took place. There is a waiting list at the Allen's Meadows, the only current community garden in town so another location would be ideal. Sackett has water. When the well chambers were filled last year the contractor added piping and risers to maintain the water source.

- C. **Recycling** - Ms. Begor reported that the website is still not updated with the new electronics recycling policy. A discussion ensued on how to get this accomplished with the Town's Information Systems Director as well as the First Selectman.

C. **Work with other Commissions/Committees**

1. **Tree/Bench Committee** – Mr. Lee noted that he has two more donated trees to plant in the center. There is also one bench that is ready to be installed.

The Tree Festival invitations were received by the commissioners. The Festival is being held on May 21st in Cranbury Park from 11am – 3pm.

Mr. Lee reported on a meeting he attended with the Tree Warden, Paul Young. There was a representative from the DEP present who explained the new law regarding the banning of pesticide applications near primary schools. A discussion ensued about a lobby group that was originally opposed to the new law but changed their mind when they did more research as organic products are not necessarily better for the environment.

2. **Energy Committee** – Ms. Gillespie asked why there are large lights on the pond at Merwin Meadows at night. Ms. Sesto suggested that she contact Parks and Recreation and thought that it might be for safety reasons.

Ms. Gillespie extended an invitation to a Neighbor to Neighbor Energy Challenge Meeting for those who have not had an audit, at the Wilton Library on April 7th at 7:00pm for information about the program. There is a second meeting on April 14th at 7:00pm for those who have had the energy audit. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss financing options and any retro-fits that are being used.

3. **Go Green Committee** – Ms. Sesto confirmed that the Conservation Commission has reserved a table for the event. A discussion ensued relating to a “message” for the table. The commission agreed that it would be important to provide quantifiable numbers of what has been accomplished. Mr. Hapke added that part of the commission’s mission is to educate the public about sound conservation.

Ms. Gillespie provided information on the upcoming Go Green Festival which is taking place on May 1, 2011 at the Town Green. The due date for exhibitor paperwork is April 10th. A discussion ensued about available tents for the event as they are not being provided.

E. Regional Projects

1. **FFD Co. Deer Management Alliance** - Ms. Sesto stated that nothing is new with the Alliance
2. **Norwalk River Valley Trail** – Ms. Sesto reported that they have been conducting interviews this week for the Routing Study and they are minutes away from selecting a finalist.

Ms. Sesto invited all commissioners to Public Workshops that are being held to introduce the project and get feedback from citizens. The Wilton Workshop is being held on May 10th at the High School at 7pm. Ms. Sesto suggested that people go to other town workshops for a fresh perspective. She added that Danbury is challenging as we are not familiar with any of the contacts that would be representatives for that area.

Ms. Sesto announced that the paperwork has been filed for “Friends of Norwalk River, Inc.” They are waiting for the 501(c)3 status, but can now accept donations.

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. Lyme and Other Tick-borne Diseases Prevention Study – Bifenthrin Concerns –

Ms. Begor reported that she was recently at a meeting where residents are concerned about the new study that is taking place by CT DPH and CDC. Ms.

Sesto described that most tick control protocols call for pesticides applications 2 – 4 times during a normal season. This study only includes one application at the perimeter of the property which is where they think the ticks are coming onto properties from the wooded areas. The state is hoping to prove that one application, around a perimeter, applied at the right stage of the tick life cycle, should be sufficient to reduce the deer tick population and save the environment by avoiding the additional 1 – 3 applications. Ms. Sesto noted that the point of the study is to show that less is good enough to protect their family from Lyme.

Ms. Sesto will write an article for the paper explaining the study and the possible issues so that residents gain a level of comfort. It was noted that Bifenthrin is toxic to honey bees and the town has many beekeepers that should be aware of the spraying to protect their hives.

There are 32 homes in Wilton that will get the actual application and another 32 homes that will get a placebo. Not every property is ideal for the study so there is an interview to determine the appropriateness of the location and surrounding property. Mr. Lee added that a recent study noted 52% of homes in Wilton have been affected by Lyme disease.

Ms. Sesto spoke to Deborah Burnaman and Eileen Rice with “Time for Lyme” to get them involved. They have opted out as they feel people would not want less applications, and residents are concerned they would risk being the placebo case.

B. DEA’s Drug Take Back Day – Ms. Begor reported on a meeting she and Ms. Young attended in New Canaan. New Canaan has a program that Wilton will adopt where a DEA agent takes unwanted medications into custody and sends them to an incinerator. This one-day program will take place on April 30th from 10:00am to 2:00pm in the Police Station parking lot. The publicity is free from the State DEA so this is a much simpler program that what was done in 2010.

C. DEA’s Drug Take Back Program – Ms. Begor reported that she and Ms. Young met with the Wilton Police Chief Lombardo regarding a permanent locked drop-box in the police station’s foyer for unwanted medications and drugs. There were some concerns about the possible ramifications if someone were pulled over or getting in an accident with these prescriptions medications in the car. It is illegal

to possess medications prescribed to another person. This concern will be handled on an individual basis. It was reported that 45 states already have this program in place.

D. Rain Garden in Downtown Wilton – Ms. Begor noted that she was recently at a meeting where residents were asking why there are not rain gardens in the center as a means of mitigation for parking lot runoff and pollution. Ms. Sesto stated that this would need to be a volunteer effort. She added that this area is over an aquifer which should be considered in the planning. Mr. Hapke suggested a Rain Garden Committee.

VI. LIAISON REPORT

Ms. Begor will ask Ms. Young to send a message to the commission with details on what she learned at the Inland Wetland Commission Meetings in the month of March.

VII. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ms. Sesto stated that the town has hired VHB as the outside consultant for the Teacher's and Cannondale applications.

VIII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – 3/2/11 – Mr. Hapke MOVED to approve the minutes and Mr. Lee SECONDED the motion. The Minutes were APPROVED 4-0-0.

IX. ADJOURN – Ms. Begor MOVED to adjourn the meeting and Mr. Hapke SECONDED the motion. The motion CARRIED 4-0-0. The meeting was adjourned at 8:57 p.m.

Next meeting will be May 4, 2011.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Larkin
Recording Secretary