

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

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TOWN HALL

238 Danbury Road

Wilton, Connecticut 06897

**WILTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MINUTES**

November 2, 2011 – 7:30 P.M.

TOWN HALL ANNEX - MEETING ROOM "A"

Present: Kristen Begor, Chair, Kim Young, Dave Hapke, Patrice Gillespie, Nick Lee

Absent: Jeff Coppelman (notified of intended absence)

Also Present: Patricia Sesto, Dir. Environmental Affairs, Christina Duncan, Middlebrook Farm Road

I. CALL TO ORDER – Ms. Begor called the meeting to order at 7:41 p.m. and welcomed prospective member, Christina Duncan.

II. INLAND WETLAND REFERRALS

A. WET#2066(S) – GUERON – 24-30 Cannon Road – construction of 22 new residential units and other site improvements within a regulated area at Cannondale Village

Patricia Sesto briefly described the resubmitted application, noting there was not a notable deviation from the last application. Commissioners requested Ms. Sesto review the comments previously conveyed by this commission and resubmit and updated version.

Patrice Gillespie asked about the extent of impervious coverage and requested staff to provide that figure to her and the commission.

With the last submission a failing septic system was documented. Staff was asked to follow up on the standing of this failure.

III. PLANNING and ZONING REFFERALS - None

IV. ONGOING BUSINESS

A. Newsletter –

The fall newsletter went out on time and positive feedback was received by several commissioners.

It was suggested that the spring newsletter include an article promoting park stewardship by neighborhood groups or individuals.

B. Parks –Storm Damage Report

Chairman Begor noted the wide-scale storm damage caused by the early snow fall. Commissioners need to walk their parks and assess the damage. Dave Francefort has already started clearing Town Forest. Small chainsaw work can be tackled by Mike Conklin and a commissioner. Dave Hapke relayed his recent outing with Conklin in Cherry Lane Park. When chainsaws are in use, the buddy system must be employed.

Larger trees or more complicated work will be hired out.

Sesto reported letters to the owners of Gaylord Drive properties abutting the Spencer Rice Preserve were sent. The letters indicate a deadline by which time the violations need to be addressed. This deadline doesn't come due for another week or so.

C. Recycling –

Hapke reported that no major developments have been realized of late given the preoccupation with storm cleanup since the summer.

D. Work with other Commissions/Committees

Tree/Bench Committee –

Sesto reported on the Committee's success in receiving an urban forestry grant. The grant's keystone piece provides matching funds for maintenance to private property owners who have trees with a public functions.

Energy Committee –

Patrice Gillespie reported on recent activities. No major changes were noted.

Go Green Committee –

No new developments to report.

E. Regional Projects

1. FFD Co. Deer Management Alliance –

No information to report on. Sesto reported Wilton's Deer Committee has the hunts underway and are meeting with success in association with getting property owners matched with hunters.

2. Norwalk River Valley Trail –

No developments to report on

V. NEW BUSINESS

1. **Commission Vacancies**

With the term limit of Hapke and Nick Lee coming in December, the commission will be down three members. The First Selectman and the Republican Town Committee have been contacted to strongly convey the need for new commissioners. This dialogue presents an opportunity to seek particular skills and inclinations from commissioner candidates. Sesto reported on her experience in Ridgefield, where the commission doesn't have staff and fill vacancies based on the commission duties that need someone to fulfill them.

Sesto expressed her opinion that the commission is light on members looking to do field work. Many years back it was common for commissioners to undertake trimming and light work in their parks coincident with monthly inspections. This is no longer the foundation of the commission and someone with this inclination would be helpful.

Hapke directed the qualifications to focus on professional backgrounds that serve the commission. He noted the loss of Lee as an arborist and the previous loss of a landscape architect with Kate Throckmorton's retirement detracted from the commission's ability to provide credible input on various projects.

In addition to professional expertise, the value of commissioners that represent other key organizations in town was discussed.

The commission concluded with a desire to communicate to the town committees the desire to have commissioners with an aptitude for fieldwork, technical skills drawn from the professions of Landscape Architecture, Arborists, and/or landscape professional, representation from the Wilton Land Conservation Trust, and/or crossover representation from other town committees.

Mr. Lee left the meeting.

2. **Budget**

Sesto retold the message conveyed at the staff budget meeting. Departments are being asked to cap their budgets at a 1% increase. This means the discretionary portions of the budget will have to absorb contractual or otherwise uncontrollable increases.

Sesto orally reviewed the budget line items that affect this commission. She disclosed that the Finance Department has not given the final numbers associated with contractual obligations, so she can't provide the figure that has to be cut. Hapke asked how the commission can have meaningful discussion on this without a document detailing their discretionary expenditures or the amount to be cut. Members agreed the discussion could not be fruitful without this information and asked staff to provide it.

VI. LIAISON REPORT

In the absence of the October liaison, Sesto reported on the activities of the IWC. The IWC continues to struggle with incremental permitting. Two of the active applications represent the latest in a series of permit applications spanning more than ten years. The applicant for Portofino was directed to return with an aggressive mitigation plan and the Walnut Place applicant will await the opinion of the outside consultant.

VII. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Sesto had no further information to add regarding the department's activities. She was asked to provide a report on the ongoing medication collection for December's meeting.

VIII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – 10/19/11 –

No minutes were available for review.

IX. ADJOURN – Ms. Begor MOVED to adjourn at 9:37pm, SECONDED by Patrice Gillespie, and CARRIED 4-0-0.

Next meeting will be December 7, 2011.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Sesto
Director of Environmental Affairs