

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

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TOWN HALL

238 Danbury Road

Wilton, Connecticut 06897

**WILTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION  
MINUTES**

**February 1, 2012 – 7:30 P.M.**

**TOWN HALL ANNEX - MEETING ROOM "A"**

Present: Kristen Begor, Chair, Patrice Gillespie, Jeff Coppelman, Susan DiLoreto, Daniel Berg, Kim Young

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

Absent: Donna Merrill (notified of intended absence)

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

II. INLAND WETLAND REFERRALS

- a. **WET#2081(S) HALAN – 295 Newtown Turnpike** – construction of a 3-car detached garage 36 ft. from the East Branch Saugatuck River

Ms. Sesto explained the proposal to build a 3-car detached garage, based on the plans provided. She noted that the applicant was discussing a 2-car garage during their meeting so she will confirm the size they are proposing at this time. The commission noted that the stakes in the field seemed smaller than 3-car size. She noted that we had a previous application that was withdrawn as the location involved clearing mature woodlands adjacent to the river. The applicant is requesting that there be approval to build the garage at the originally proposed Alternate C location. Ms. Sesto noted that the placement should be closer to the driveway and could be pulled off the slope better.

A discussion ensued relating to the necessity of another garage on the property. It was noted that the last application included a septic as there was a bathroom proposed above the garage. This application does not include a septic request.

Topics including tree removal, stormwater management, and slopes were pursued. Ms. Sesto noted that there seem to be discrepancies with the plan and what is currently in the field that should be addressed during the hearing. Ms. Sesto added that this water body is one the healthiest in the area and the charge of Wetland Commissioners includes protecting this resource.

- b. **WET#2082(S) FOSTERHOUSE – 122 Olmstead Hill Road** – restore pond and expand existing wetlands, including B100a

Ms. Young, Mr. Coppelman, Ms. Gillespie and Mr. Berg indicated they visited the site.

Ms. Sesto explained the intent of the owner to change and expand the wetlands on this property. The proposal includes relocation of an old farm pond, pushing out the current topography, and relocating the existing pool and septic.

The commission discussed the water table and the possibility of test wells. Sedimentation and erosion controls will be in place. There would be a bond held to address the plantings. The relocation of the pond is not something the wetlands commission has seen before. Ms. Sesto will confirm the equipment access.

A discussion ensued relating to the owner getting the best possible excavator for this complicated update. Ms. Sesto noted that she viewed a video during a pre-application meeting which showed other large-scale projects and they looked very thorough. Ms. DiLoreto confirmed that Michael Van Valkenburgh is world-renowned.

### III. PLANNING and ZONING REFFERALS

- a. REG#12337, Kevin O'Brien – amend regulations for revised area and bulk requirements in Wilton Center District
- b. REG#12338, Kevin O'Brien – amend regulations pertaining to Special Permit uses in Wilton Center District
- c. REG#12339, Kevin O'Brien – 291 & 300 Danbury Road and 7 Station Road – zone change from General Business (GB) and Residential (R-1A) to Wilton Center District (WC)

Ms. Sesto described these zoning referrals as they pertain to the Crossways Shopping Center. These proposals would extend the Center District and replace the current General Business Zone designation.

The commission discussed the increase in coverage and change of use being appropriate. There were concerns relating to building height, population density, historic building considerations and re-development of that area close to the Norwalk River and a residential zone.

### IV. ONGOING BUSINESS

#### A. Parks –

Commissioners noted that they received the staff report from Mike Conklin. Ms. Sesto confirmed that Mike completed his burning in Sackett Preserve last week. Ms. Sesto also reported that the fallen tree has been completely removed from Horseshoe Pond.

Mr. Berg confirmed that he walked the perimeter trail of the Town Forest. He stated that the bikers keep the trail well-maintained. He also looked at Lion's Fields and wanted to confirm that he could blaze a trail by the river. Ms. Sesto confirmed that he is welcomed to do this and noted that many fisherman go there. She added that there is a steep slope in the back of property which has little deer browse. This may be a good place to blaze so that guests can see what a healthy forest is supposed to look like. Mr. Berg confirmed that Weir Farm is a National Park and the Weir Preserve has its own stewardship committee. Neither property is under the jurisdiction of this commission.

Ms. Coppelman reported that there is another large tree down across the trail on the Grassi property, which is almost impassable. He stated that it is a bit farther south than the other tree previously reported and that he would contact Mike to inspect the tree and make a decision as to who can safely remove it.

#### **B. Recycling –**

Ms. Begor had nothing to report.

#### **D. Work with other Commissions/Committees**

##### **Tree/Bench Committee –**

Ms. DiLoreto had nothing to report.

##### **Energy Committee –**

Ms. Gillespie reported that at a recent meeting, she presented once again her findings of energy consumption in the 20 town buildings that are paid for by tax payers. The annual cost is 2.3 million dollars; the electricity data was taken from 2010 and the oil data is from 2009. The energy commission has suggested to the town that one person be responsible to review all energy bills within the town to ensure savings are being realized wherever possible. She added that energy costs should be reduced with the future availability of natural gas to town facilities.

Ms. Begor mentioned that there is a fiber optic line that will soon be installed at Merwin Meadows, in the same path where the sewer sits.

##### **Go Green Committee –**

Ms. Begor reported that the committee is looking to provide a town program in lieu of the Go Green Festival this year as many are disappointed this has been cancelled.

## **Deer Committee –**

Ms. Sesto reported that Westport does not allow recreational hunting. They may be the first town that allows culling deer outside the traditional hunting regulations. This could be a good precedent for Wilton as recreational hunting is not enough. If Westport has a successful cull, Wiltonians may be more inclined to implement this program.

## **E. Regional Projects**

### **1. Norwalk River Valley Trail –**

Ms. Sesto reported that the second round of workshops start February 16<sup>th</sup> at the Gilbert Bennett School in Georgetown at 7:00pm. Anyone can attend that is interested in being a part of the routing evaluation. The proposed routes and workshop schedule can be found on the website <http://www.nrvt-trail.com/>. Technical Memo #4 holds the latest information from Alta Planning and Design, who conducted the study.

## **V. NEW BUSINESS**

### **1. Community Garden at Sackett Preserve**

Ms. Begor reminded the commission that creating a community garden at Sackett was discussed at a previous meeting. She noted that there are groups such as Wilton YMCA and Deloitte that like to help with these types of projects.

A discussion ensued relating to the existing community garden at Allen's Meadows with their success and shortfalls. Ms. Begor suggested a board to decipher what is necessary to create and maintain a community garden. Ms. Sesto stated that this cause would require a "champion" to see it through. She added that Westport has a new garden which looks great so their model may be a good vision for Wilton.

A discussion ensued about polling people via a newspaper article. It was decided it would be best to speak to the different groups and engaged individuals in town to get the word out, and when the time is right, and the right people are in place, this project would come to fruition.

### **2. Newsletter**

Ms. Sesto asked the commission to consider what articles they would like to include in the Spring 2012 edition. Ms. Gillespie will write about the Neighbor to Neighbor initiative.

Ms. Begor stated that the Garden Club is holding a photo contest she would like to write about, to capture natural resources in Wilton. There will be different categories such as best view, best reading spot, best nighttime scene, etc. There will be a student category and an adult category. Submissions are due by October 20, 2012 and will be exhibited at Gilbert and Bennett School. The top twelve photos will be used to create a

calendar.

Mr. Coppelman suggested writing an article in each newsletter that spotlights a town park. There was discussion about hosting walks in parks so that residents can become more familiar with what each park has to offer.

Ms. Begor stated that the newsletter can include a guest corner for other town groups that we support such as Trout Unlimited, Garden Club, Norwalk River Valley Trail and Go Green. She added that the farmer's market relocation to route 7 may be a good article.

Ms. DiLoreto suggested an article on eco-turf as a good alternative to seed as it is shade tolerant and great looking.

The commission discussed timing for the annual clean-up day and the schedule for completing the newsletter in hopes that the clean up could be publicized in this edition. Due to the school breaks and Easter Holiday, the newsletter will need to be sent the last week in April but clean-up day will be March 31<sup>st</sup>. Therefore, the Clean-Up Day will not be included. Articles are due by March 7, 2012.

#### VI. LIAISON REPORT

Ms. Begor reported that she went to both Planning and Zoning Commission meetings in January. There was a discussion relating to changing the affordable housing regulations.

Ms. Begor also reported on the Wetlands Commission meeting that she attended where Wilton Plaza Condo Associates is proposing to remove contaminated soils adjacent to the Norwalk River. She stated that the applicant was asked to provide historical background on the site as this was not provided in the original submission.

The February liaison is Ms. Gillespie but she is not available for the last part of the month and asked if she could switch with anyone. She stated she would contact Ms. Merrill to confirm her availability to cover.

#### VII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – 1/4/12 –

Ms. Begor MOVED to APPROVE the January 4, 2012 meeting minutes, SECONDED by Mr. Coppelman, and CARRIED 6-o-o.

VIII. ADJOURN – Ms. Begor MOVED to adjourn at 9:33pm, SECONDED by Mr. Coppelman, and CARRIED 6-o-o.

Next meeting will be March 7, 2012.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Larkin  
Secretary, Environmental Affairs

