

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Telephone (203) 563-0180

Fax (203) 563-0284



TOWN HALL

238 Danbury Road

Wilton, Connecticut 06897

**WILTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MINUTES**

February 6, 2013 – 7:30 P.M.

TOWN HALL ANNEX - MEETING ROOM "A"

Present: Kristen Begor (Chair), Donna Merrill, Patrice Gillespie, Frank Simone,

Also Present: Mike Conklin, Environmental Analyst, Liz Larkin, Recording Secretary

Absent: Susan DiLoreto, Dan Berg (notified of intended absences)

- I. CALL TO ORDER – Ms. Begor called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.
- II. INLAND WETLAND REFERRALS - None
- III. PLANNING and ZONING REFFERALS - None
- IV. ONGOING BUSINESS

A. Parks

Mr. Conklin confirmed the commissioners received his Staff Report via email prior to the meeting. He stated that he replaced the skating sign at Kent Pond that was reported missing. He also noted there was a new foot bridge installed by an unknown party at Bradley Park. He is conducting a search to thank the person who took the time to do this; and to ensure all work that is being done is approved by staff in the future.

Mr. Conklin reported that he has received only one quote out of the required three for the tree work from Super Storm Sandy. He indicated that the town will not necessarily choose the least expensive option; but that the quality of work and extra attention are important. He would not choose a company that is not considerate to cleaning the debris in the trail, in addition to the larger trees that need to be removed. In the past, he has worked with Joe Cass from Chip Away who is less expensive and has an eye for preserving trees and promoting growth instead of removing trees that are not a danger.

Tom Reiner, who works with the Care of Trees, has offered to donate services to the commission. Ms. Merrill stated that she knows Mr. Reiner and would recommend using him. Mr. Conklin confirmed that the town would hire him for some smaller jobs that may arise to try his services.

Mr. Conklin confirmed that the town would get up to 75% reimbursement from FEMA from Super Storm Sandy. Ms. Begor asked if the town would award the storm clean up to one arborist, or spread it out based on the best quote per park. Mr. Conklin stated he would award all work to one arborist. Ms. Gillespie asked if the brush would be chipped and where the chips would be distributed. Mr. Conklin confirmed that he typically donates any excess lumber to the Woodcock Nature Center for heating and landscape purposes. He also stated that the wood would only be chipped at Schencks Island, and would be broadcast on site.

Ms. Merrill suggested rotating the park assignments so that each commissioner gets a chance to become familiar with all parks in town. Ms. Begor suggested everyone keep their parks, but that a park is highlighted monthly, and anyone interested can attend a walk with of that park with that expert. The commission asked Ms. Larkin to remind them when time passes and park reports are not received. Mr. Conklin stated that most parks, other than the Town Forest, are only a 45 minute walk. Ms. Merrill suggested that this program start next month and last for the warmer ten months of the year.

B. Work with other Commissions/Committees

Tree/Bench Committee –

The commission reviewed a report from Susan DiLoreto that was emailed to all the members. Her report stated that the storm clean-up is ongoing, and that the Norwalk Wilton Tree Festival is scheduled for May 11th this year.

Deer Committee –

Ms. Merrill reported that the committee did not meet last month, as there was no quorum. She stated the hunting season has ended as of January 31st and the final harvest numbers should be available from the state in March.

Energy Committee –

Ms. Gillespie reported that Bruce Hampson continues to work with Liz Doty at Comstock and other commercial spaces in town. She also noted there will be an ice damming workshop which relates to home energy solutions. She

added that she can tell where insulation is by the way the snow melts on a roof.

Ms. Gillespie also reported that the Board of Selectmen will soon approve the Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy Program (C-PACE). This will allow property owners to install clean energy while offsetting the cost of property taxes.

Go Green Committee –

Ms. Begor confirmed the Go Green Festival is being held on Sunday, May 5th. She noted that commissioners will need to sign up to cover the Conservation Commission table at this event. She also noted coverage would be required at the Tree Festival on May 12th. The sign-ups will be discussed at the April meeting.

Land Trust –

Ms. Merrill confirmed she is now a member of the board and the annual meeting is being held on February 8th. She also noted that Bill McKinney will hold a discussion at the Library about invasive species. She will send the details via email.

D. Regional Projects

1. Norwalk River Valley Trail

Nothing to report.

V. NEW BUSINESS

Town Wide Clean Up Day – Mr. Conklin reminded the commissioners that April 6th will be the town wide clean up day. Ms. Gillespie will check with Pinocchio on pizza coupons for free slices as they have done in the past. There was a discussion relating to using the reverse 911 system to notify residents of the clean up. Mr. Conklin noted that there may be issues with using this system for non-emergencies.

Recommendation for Susan DiLoreto to Join Tree Committee – Ms. Begor MOVED to recommend Susan for the Tree Committee, SECONDED by Ms. Gillespie and CARRIED 4-0-0.

Trail Ambassador Discussion – Mr. Conklin confirmed that he and Ms. Merrill met to discuss the possibility of starting a program whereas parks have a trail ambassador that is in charge of keeping the park free of debris and assisting with residents questions on what improvements could take place.

Ms. Merrill stated that her idea was to have ambassador parks, in lieu of a trail ambassador. She commented that instead of preserving land from the people, make it for the people. She would like to connect people to the land which is a more long run course of action. She suggested that Cherry Lane Park be the pilot for this program.

Mr. Conklin suggested that the project start small by soliciting feedback from residents. He would like to invite some residents to the meeting in March to further discuss this initiative. Ms. Merrill has a friend, Anne Jefferson, who abuts Cherry Lane and she will contact her directly. In addition, a mailing will go out to invite the neighbors and a sign will be posted at the entrance of the park.

Schedule Open Space Discussion with Pat Sesto – The commission agreed they would like to learn more about open space. They stated they are willing to work around Ms. Sesto's schedule and would welcome her anytime.

Community Redevelopment & Conservation Act (CRCA) – Mr. Conklin noted that this act would be geared towards Land Trusts, and not the conservation commission, so this will not be brought forward in this capacity.

Elections – New Chairperson – Ms. Begor stated that she would like to step down as chair and 2 other members volunteered for the position. As the full board was not present, Ms. Begor tabled this item for the next meeting for discussion.

Speak Up Wilton – Ms. Begor confirmed that Ms. Merrill will attend Speak Up Wilton on March 9, 2013, on behalf of the commission.

Drug Take Back – Ms. Begor confirmed the Dept. of Public Works website was not updated to reflect the medication return receptacle that was installed at the Police Station. Ms. Larkin stated she would contact Public Works to make the appropriate updates.

VI. LIAISON REPORT

Ms. Begor stated that she was not present at any of the meetings in January and asked Ms. Larkin if she would add the liaison assignments to the minutes as a reminder to who is next. In addition, the commission asked Ms. Larkin to prod them when it is their turn to act as liaison by calling and sending email reminders.

Ms. Gillespie is the liaison for February.

VII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – 1/2/13 –

Ms. Merrill MOVED to APPROVE the meeting minutes as drafted, SECONDED by Mr. Simone, and CARRIED 4-0-0.

VIII. ADJOURN – Ms. Begor MOVED to adjourn at 9:06pm, SECONDED by Ms. Gillespie, and CARRIED 4-0-0.

Next meeting will be March 6, 2013.

Respectfully submitted,
Liz Larkin
Secretary, Environmental Affairs

DRAFT