

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

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TOWN HALL

238 Danbury Road

Wilton, Connecticut 06897

**WILTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MINUTES**

January 4, 2012 – 7:30 P.M.

TOWN HALL ANNEX - MEETING ROOM "A"

Present: Kristen Begor, Chair, Patrice Gillespie, Jeff Coppelman, Donna Merrill, Susan DiLoreto, Daniel Berg

Also Present: Patricia Sesto, Dir. Environmental Affairs, Liz Larkin, Recording Secretary; Alissa Smith, The Daily Wilton

Absent: Kim Young (notified of intended absence)

- I. CALL TO ORDER – Ms. Begor called the meeting to order at 7:32 p.m. and welcomed three new commissioners to the board, Donna Merrill, Susan DiLoreto, and Daniel Berg.
- II. INLAND WETLAND REFERRALS
 - a. **WET#2071(S) CHANDRA – 32 Crosswicks Ridge Road** – construction of a retaining wall and other site improvements within a regulated area

Ms. Sesto explained the proposal to build a retaining wall based on the plan provided. She noted that the lawn is not being extended and the 2 trees to be removed will be replaced. She added that the planting plan is an improvement from a wetland perspective.

A discussion ensued relating to the neighbor who installed a similar wall, but without obtaining a permit from the town. Sesto responded that depending on how long ago the wall was constructed, enforcement action may be possible.

The commission discussed that the brush piles evident in the woods should be removed and the owners should be aware that dumping in this area is not allowed.

The commission questioned drainage and the composition of the wall. These details will be requested in the Conservation Memo to Inland Wetlands.

- b. **WET#2074(S) WILTONPLAZA CONDO ASSOCIATION – 13-15 Danbury Road** – removal of contaminated soil adjacent to the Norwalk River

Ms. Sesto described the site as a former dry cleaner who spilled cleaning fluids into a catch basin and also adjacent to the Norwalk River. The State gets involved in these types of contamination issues, but approval of the Inland Wetlands Commission of Wilton is required, as well.

The “hot spot” has been determined at the dry well catch basin in the parking lot. The application proposes excavating this basin to a depth of 12 ft. The excavator will monitor the soils until they hit the target or remediation would be required.

The commission agreed that the proposal lacks detail on how the project would be handled. There is no mention of the backfill required and they would need to collect and treat any contaminated soil. Chairman Begor identified her credentials as a retired hydrogeologist and confirmed the concerns of the commission and further requesting the entire site assessment report be provided. Too little information has been provided to properly evaluate the proposal.

The second area, next to the river, has ground water concerns. Ms. Sesto described the regional flows and noted that the contamination is being carried down-stream . In order to correct this, the soils will need to be removed. This will require special equipment and temporary staging. More details are required for the commission to understand how this will take place in these tight areas.

There are five clean-up options in the report but not all options will work based on the location of the contaminates. The commission agreed that the applicant should be required to submit location specific details on how the removal will take place. Ms. Begor questioned why one type of clean up is being proposed for both areas given that the rear contaminated area may not be suited to excavation. The commission asked their memo to convey the desire for IWC to keep the hearing open until this commission can review the additional information.

III. PLANNING and ZONING REFFERALS – None

IV. ONGOING BUSINESS

A. Parks –

Park Assignments

Ms. Begor noted that this commission is responsible for the upkeep of town parks. Each commissioner was able to choose which parks work best for them. The assignments are as follows:

Bradley Park
Belknap Preserve
Cherry Lane Park
Grassi Property
Horseshoe Park
Norwalk River Park & Fields

Susan DiLoreto
Jeff Coppelman
Patrice Gillespie
Jeff Coppelman
Kristen Begor
Daniel Berg

Olmstead Hill Farm (Black's)
Quarry Head State Park
Sackett Preserve
Schenk's Island
Spencer Rice Preserve
Town Forest
Vista Road Property
Wild Duck

Kim Young
Donna Merrill
Donna Merrill
Susan DiLoreto
Patrice Gillespie
Daniel Berg
Kristen Begor
Patrice Gillespie

Ms. Begor encouraged commissioners to walk their parks regularly. If there are minor items that need correcting, the commissioner is responsible for making these corrections. If there are issues that require assistance, the commissioners were told to contact Mike Conklin for assistance.

The Park Evaluation Form should be utilized by the commissioners on each walk. It was also recommended to bring a camera and take pictures as this can help identify if a third party is required for larger issues. Ms. Larkin committed to distributing the form.

Gedney – 10 Gaylord Drive - Spencer-Rice Preserve – “corrective action” to restore town land from shed construction

Ms. Sesto reminded the commission that they walked this property a few months ago to assess the shed and driveway that were built on town property at 10 Gaylord Drive. The Gedneys removed the shed when the town acquired the property and subsequently replaced it.

Ms. Sesto has been in contact with the homeowner and he is disagreeing with the directives to remove the gravel driveway, restore plantings and add boulders to demarcate the area that is town owned. The commission agreed that another letter should be sent to restore the area as requested by a certain date, or the matter will be turned over to town counsel.

B. Recycling –

Ms. Begor reported that nothing is new except for the layout at the transfer station and all seems to be running smoothly.

D. Work with other Commissions/Committees

Tree/Bench Committee –

Ms. Sesto had nothing to report.

Energy Committee –

Ms. Gillespie reported that two committee members are attending a seminar to learn about the new financing options available for municipalities, which is included in a new state energy bill.

Go Green Committee –

Ms. Gillespie reported that the Bring Your Own Bag initiative is not working as well as they hoped. A discussion ensued about banning the single-use plastic bags which has been adopted in Westport. The commission agreed that banning the bags may be prohibitive, but a bag fee would be appropriate. The fee of 10 cents is more motivational than 5 cents.

The commission discussed the Go Green Festival that is not taking place this year as there is no one with the time to plan this event. Ms. DiLoreto suggested a scaled-down version at the Library with lectures and information available for the public.

Deer Committee –

Ms. Sesto reported that the controlled hunt has ended on the town and Land Trust properties. Otherwise, the hunting season ends on January 31st. This was not a great year for hunting as there were only about 100 harvested.

A discussion ensued relating to culling the heard which was done in Greenwich. This option is costly, but recreational hunting is not enough. The town residents collectively pay six million dollars a year in deer-related diseases, accidents, and deer proofing measures. These numbers do not account for plant and bird species that have left from the over-browsing.

The commission asked that the Deer Committee pursue sharpshooting to more effectively reduce deer density in Wilton.

E. Regional Projects

1. FFD Co. Deer Alliance –

Ms. Sesto had nothing new to report.

2. Norwalk River Valley Trail –

Ms. Sesto reported that there is a walk in Danbury on January 7th starting at 1:00pm at Tarrywile Park. She also noted that there are some workshops scheduled for the second week of February.

Ms. Sesto confirmed that any of the commissioners that want to get involved in any other town groups, such as Deer, Tree, Go Green and NRVT are always welcome. Mr. Berg asked to be involved with the NRVT.

Susan DiLoreto will be the CC representative to the Tree Committee.

V. NEW BUSINESS

1. Budget

Ms. Sesto stated that there are no updates on the budget until after the January 31st Board of Selectman meeting.

2. CT Land Conservation Council

Ms. Sesto asked the commission if anyone knew anything about this group as they are requesting a \$50 annual membership. Ms. Merrill stated that she is attending a seminar by this group in February so she will report in March whether this is something that benefits this commission.

VI. LIAISON REPORT

Ms. Begor reviewed the purpose of the liaison and the assignments were made as follows:

January	Kristen Begor	July	Patrice Gillespie
February	Patrice Gillespie	August	N/A
March	Kim Young	September	Kim Young
April	Susan DiLoreto	October	Kristen Begor
May	Donna Merrill	November	Daniel Berg
June	Jeff Coppelman	December	Jeff Coppelman

VII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – 12/7/11 –

Ms. Begor MOVED to APPROVE the December 7, 2011 meeting minutes, as amended by Ms. Larkin per Ms. Gillespie, SECONDED by Mr. Coppelman, and CARRIED 3-3-0 with the newest members abstaining.

VIII. ADJOURN – Ms. Begor MOVED to adjourn at 9:40pm, SECONDED by Mr. Coppelman, and CARRIED 7-0-0.

Next meeting will be February 1, 2012.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Larkin
Secretary, Environmental Affairs