

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

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TOWN HALL

238 Danbury Road

Wilton, Connecticut 06897

**WILTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MINUTES**

March 7, 2012 – 7:30 P.M.

TOWN HALL ANNEX - MEETING ROOM "A"

Present: Patrice Gillespie, Acting Chair, Susan DiLoreto, Daniel Berg, Donna Merrill

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

Absent: Kristen Begor, Kim Young, Jeff Coppelman (notified of intended absence)

I. CALL TO ORDER – Ms. Gillespie called the meeting to order at 7:33 p.m.

II. INLAND WETLAND REFERRALS

- a. **WET#2089(S) GREEFF – 37 Cobbs Mill Road** – reconstruction and expansion of a house 10 ft. from wetlands, with associated site improvements including dredging a pond

Ms. Merrill, Ms. DiLoreto, and Mr. Berg indicated they visited the site.

Ms. Sesto described the application for the home to be reconstructed and expanded while creating an enhanced landscape. She noted that Mike Conklin drafted a memorandum for the Inland Wetlands Commission based on discussions out at the site. The two items of interest are encouraging the property owner to enhance the riparian buffer between the watercourse and the rain garden and recommending organic lawn care. The commission asked to include expansion of the fern plantings to the north of the house to fill the area between the lawn and stream.

Ms. Sesto noted that the original application included the dredging of a pond, but this piece has been withdrawn per the revised plans.

Ms. Sesto explained the current site conditions. She stated that it is a well-wooded and the applicant would like to remove some trees to bring back the historic grass line. She confirmed that the soils are well-drained. She noted pervious pavers are proposed on a portion of the driveway and the wetlands commission requested the sub-base details to make sure it is installed properly.

A discussion ensued relating to future owners knowing how to keep the site

ecologically sound. Ms. Sesto noted that the first homeowner has to sign a form acknowledging they received the packet of environmentally responsible lawn care, but after that, there is no formal process for subsequent homeowners. Ms. Merrill and Ms. DiLoreto stated that they would like to incentivize the owners to use organic land care due to the proximity of the watercourse. Ms. Gillespie noted that the Norwalk River Watershed Initiative has a publication that may be helpful. Ms. DiLoreto and Ms. Merrill will collaborate to upgrade the existing lawn care packet available from the Environmental Affairs office.

The commissioners agreed that strong partnerships should be cultivated with town groups and residents so that they know the commission is available for advice and assistance. There was a discussion that the conservation page on the town website can be enhanced to facilitate these partnerships.

III. PLANNING and ZONING REFFERALS - None

IV. ONGOING BUSINESS

A. Parks –

Commissioners noted that they received the staff report from Mike Conklin. All commissioners confirmed they will attend the clean-up day which is being held on March 31, 2012. Ms. Gillespie added that she is expecting Pinocchio Pizza to offer a free slice of the pizza to participants, or a whole pizza for a family, as they have generously done in the past.

Ms. Merrill reported that she attended a recent meeting regarding the dam at Quarry Head State Park with Nick Lee, Bruce Beebe, and Nancy Faesy. They discussed repairing the broken dam so that the pond would come back. Ms. Sesto stated that there is a lack of consensus on what the repairs would entail. Ms. Merrill suggested petitioning the state for funds to help with this project. Ms. Sesto confirmed that this is a state park where the state has fiscal responsibility and the town has management responsibility. Ms. Sesto added that the pond is silted in and will likely not be deep enough to make it worth fixing the dam. Ms. Merrill stated that she would do some more research on this project.

Ms. Sesto recapped the extensive work the Goodwins have historically sponsored at Quarry Head and the generosity that continues with Terry Goodwin. The commission would like to formally acknowledge the work that Terry Goodwin has completed at Quarry Head. Mr. Berg MOVED for staff to send Terry Goodwin a thank you letter, SECONDED by Ms. DiLoreto and CARRIED 4-0-0.

Ms. Gillespie reported that she is scheduled to remove a piece of metal from Wild Duck Reserve next week, with the assistance of Mike Conklin, and the Department of Public Works.

Mr. Berg is interested in blazing a trail at the Norwalk Park and Fields (aka Lions Fields). Ms. Sesto suggested that he contact Mike Conklin to facilitate proper blazing and get assistance with any chainsaw work that needs to be completed.

B. Recycling –

Nothing to report.

D. Work with other Commissions/Committees

Tree/Bench Committee –

Ms. DiLoreto reported that the Tree Committee is currently updating the maintenance list of trees in the center. Ms. Sesto added there is a grant for said maintenance. This grant includes assisting two property owners with shared cost for tree care to address trees in need of repair. Ms. DiLoreto also reported that the Arbor Day celebration and the Norwalk Wilton Tree Festival planning is underway. The Tree Festival will take place at Cranbury Park on May 19th and there will be a tent for this commission. Commissioners were encouraged to attend.

Energy Committee –

Ms. Gillespie reported that there is meeting at the end of March where the long-range energy plan will be presented to the town for the twenty town buildings.

Go Green Committee –

Ms. Gillespie reported that the committee's 2012 event, in place of the Go Green Festival, will be a green homes tour. The tour will take place from 1pm to 5pm on May 20, 2012. There are 3 homes in Wilton and 1 in New Canaan. Space is limited.

Deer Committee –

Ms. Sesto had nothing to report.

E. Regional Projects

1. Norwalk River Valley Trail –

Ms. Sesto reported that the second round of workshops are completed and were well attended. The consensus was that the trail route is pretty good. At this time, the project is turning from planning to implementation.

Ms. Sesto noted that the NRVT is looking to update the logo. Ms. DiLoreto provided names of graphic designers she has used in the past that may be hired to create a logo that will better serve the vision of the trail.

Ms. Gillespie inquired if Phil Goff of Alta was contacted relating to bird disturbance at the Allen's Meadows property. Ms. Sesto will follow up with him to confirm they do not disturb birding in this area.

V. NEW BUSINESS

1. CT Land Conservation Council - \$50 Annual Membership

The commission had received a request for membership to this group and needed more information to ensure this annual fee would behoove this commission. Ms. Merrill recently attended a meeting with this group and reported that they are lobbyists that have an umbrella over state conservation groups. Her impression was the Council is geared towards serving land trusts, primarily. As the town is already a member of the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities, membership was not recommended at this time.

VI. LIAISON REPORT

Ms. Gillespie reported that she went to the Inland Wetlands Meeting on February 9, 2012 where there were no conservation related discussions. She also attended a Planning & Zoning Meeting where the zone changes for Crossways were discussed.

Ms. Merrill covered Ms. Gillespie's duties for the last Planning & Zoning meeting in February. She reported that Ms. Gillespie's statements from the previous meeting made an impact on the P&Z Commission. They were speaking of adding a restaurant and creating attractive apartments so that there is around-the-clock use of the property. The alternative would be a "box store" which would be undesirable in this location.

Ms. Sesto acted as liaison for the last Wetlands meeting in February. She reported that there was a presentation by Michael Van Valkenburgh for the Fosterhouse property. She confirmed that construction access is shown on the plan and added that there was a concern about guaranteeing quality consultants stay with the project. Ms. Sesto also reported that the Halan application for 295 Newtown Turnpike has been withdrawn.

I. DIRECTORS REPORT

Ms. Sesto provided a brief description of the status of the Gaylord Drive violations. The situation will be turned over to town council.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – 2/1/12 –

Ms. Gillespie sent clarification to Ms. Larkin regarding her report of the energy commission from the 2/1/12 minutes. Ms. Larkin confirmed she would make the changes requested to the final copy. Ms. Gillespie MOVED to APPROVE the meeting minutes as amended, SECONDED by Mr. Berg, and CARRIED 4-0-0.

III. ADJOURN – Mr. Berg MOVED to adjourn at 9:35pm, SECONDED by Ms. DiLoreto, and CARRIED 4-0-0.

Next meeting will be April 4, 2012.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Larkin
Secretary, Environmental Affairs