

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Telephone (203) 563-0180

Fax (203) 563-0284



TOWN HALL

238 Danbury Road

Wilton, Connecticut 06897

**WILTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MINUTES**

May 1, 2013 – 7:30 P.M.

TOWN HALL ANNEX - MEETING ROOM "A"

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

Also Present: Mike Conklin, Environmental Analyst, Liz Larkin, Recording Secretary, Anne Deware, Jeff Stahl

Absent: Susan DiLoreto

- I. CALL TO ORDER – Mr. Berg called the meeting to order at 7:33 p.m.
- II. Horseshoe Pond Discussion with Anne Deware and Jeff Stahl

Ms. Deware and Mr. Stahl came to the meeting to discuss the current state of Horseshoe Pond as there is an encroachment of lily pads. Ms. Deware explained that she has been a resident of Wilton for many years and realized about 2 ½ years ago driving by the pond that the lily pads will eliminate the pond if something is not done.

Ms. Deware stated that the town purchased the land in 1986 from Mr. McGuire who created the pond by hand; but left tree stumps in place. In the 1990's, the town utilized a hydro raking technique to remove the lily pads, but the pond is shallow and the tree stumps got in the way of the rake. While Ms. Deware was researching alternatives, it was discovered that there was a similar issue in Mead Park in New Canaan so she visited the location with Pat Sesto to gain insight. This site was subject to dredging, which would be ideal for Horseshoe Pond, but would be unrealistic with a 2 million dollar cost. Ms. Deware stated that chemical intervention was proposed in the past, but denied by the prior commission.

Ms. Deware explained how she petitioned \$1,000 from the town last year to purchase a canoe and wetsuits for a working day to manually pull the lily pads. They made some good progress but it is very labor intensive and with a 6 ½ acre pond, this is a large commitment. The work day included a lifeguard from the YMCA for safety reasons, while Wilton Outdoor Sports provided canoes, and the Village Market allowed a donation jar.

Ms. Deware confirmed that she started her initiative on the pond for aesthetic

reasons, and now she is more concerned about the ecological components of the pond. She introduced Jeff Stahl, of the Pond Connection, as an expert in the field of aquatic control. She stated that they work with chemicals to offer a quick, affordable and safe application for this important community asset which is a gateway to the town center.

Mr. Stahl confirmed that he was contacted to evaluate the pond for removal of the lily pads. He stated that hydro raking would be an option for this pond if there were no stumps getting in the way. He recommends using an aquatic herbicide to reduce the density and stressed that it would not completely remove all of the lily pads. He noted that the state does not allow complete eradication with chemical means so some lily pads will be left in the shallower areas to absorb nutrients.

Mr. Stahl confirmed that his company has 1,600 acres of water under their management with 30% of that using algaecide and pesticide. He stated they use an integrated pesticide management process whereas they use the least amount of harmful chemicals at a low rate of frequency to protect the habitat. He suggested the first year of treatment consist of 3 applications which need to be completed before August as they need to be actively growing. The second year typically consists of 1 to 2 applications and year 3 is usually more for monitoring and management as needed. He added that the monitoring is important as too much sunlight on the bottom of the pond will allow other invasives to grow. He stated that years 1 through 3 carries a 40% - 60% control rate and is very hardy. It is a eutrophic pond with no deep basins so it gets warmer in the summer. His inspections take place three to five times per season.

Mr. Stahl confirmed that he is presenting his position tonight as it is a requirement that he notify the conservation commission of the proposed work. He stated he would send a registered letter with return receipt to the Conservation office which will satisfy his pre-permit requirement. He noted the approval process can take 45 days with DEEP, and they tell him what chemicals he can use and at what rate. He confirmed his position that the chemical application will help save the pond and possibly create a town attraction with fishing and other recreation in the future.

Ms. Begor asked for the breakdown of the herbicides. Mr. Stahl responded there are four chemicals that he would recommend; however there are six offices at the DEEP that dictate to him what is acceptable. The chemicals he recommends are: rodeo (glyphosate), 24D, clipper (phlomoxin), and Cutrine Plus (algaecide). He described rodeo as having the same active ingredients as Round Up. 24D is a systemic herbicide that destroys weeds. Clipper is known as the safest aquatic herbicide on the market which kills the petals and stems.

Mr. Simone asked Ms. Deware how they plan to pay for the work that the Pond Connection is recommending. Ms. Deware confirmed that they plan to contact Toll Brothers for assistance since they are building a new residential community adjacent to the pond, as well as asking for donations from Wilton residents.

Mr. Stahl stated that there are safety protocols for every application they undertake and signs are posted for no less than 24 hours even though the

chemicals are broken down in 20 minutes. He offered to conduct water testing which is not required, but would be done to address concerns.

Ms. Begor inquired where the inflow and outflow is and what affect the chemicals would have on the surrounding water bodies. Mr. Stahl confirmed that the pond is spring fed and gets some storm runoff. Ms. Deware added that the pond was mechanically frozen in hopes of killing off the lily pads which did not work.

Mr. Berg asked some clarifying questions on the chemicals used to ensure the roots are killed. Mr. Stahl confirmed that they do include agents that kill the roots and described how they perform 3 smaller treatments to ensure slower decomposition to avoid a smelly mess. Mr. Berg asked what percentage of lily pads are expected to remain in the pond after the chemical application. Mr. Stahl responded that 35% of the lily pads will remain. Mr. Berg then asked how long the pond would take after treatment to be back to where it is today. Mr. Stahl responded that it typically takes 6 – 8 years for the pond to go back to its current state, without intervention.

Mr. Conklin asked about the comment relating to stocking the pond with fish as he was concerned about the low dissolved oxygen, the acidity of the muck and the other good vegetation. Mr. Stahl confirmed that they would focus on addressing the lily pads with a specialized formula. Mr. Stahl confirmed the pond would be a candidate for aeration to break down the sludge, which would be completed in stages, but not until the lily pads are addressed.

Ms. Gillespie asked how the chemicals are introduced to the pond. Mr. Stahl stated that they use a low pressure spray pump. He added that they are not required to wear protective gear when spraying, only when mixing prior to application.

Ms. Begor asked what advice they could provide to address the public of this request as she thinks residents will ask why we are allowing chemicals in a town pond, when we do not favor use of these chemicals on private property. Mr. Stahl confirmed it is a matter of education and they can provide guidelines and examples for this purpose. Mr. Simone asked if Jeff's company provides any guarantee that the work will be done to a certain standard. Mr. Stahl confirmed that they do guarantee the work and that he does 160 permits in Connecticut in one year. Ms. Gillespie asked for further details on the chemicals so Mr. Stahl confirmed he can provide the MSDS sheets for each agent. Ms. Begor stressed that the commission will need to allow the public to make comments prior to being able to approve the activity. Mrs. Lavity stated that the town promised to maintain the pond when it was purchased and the town has let the pond fall to disrepair.

Mr. Stahl reported that New York, California and Connecticut have the most restrictive laws in the industry. He noted that 43 of the 50 states do not require a permit for this type of an application. He added that all of their applicators are trained, licensed, and insured. Mr. Stahl confirmed that he only needs to prove to the state that he presented the possibility of chemical application to the commission and that he does not need permission from the Town to apply for the permit. The commission decided to allow Mr. Stahl to provide the permit to the State DEEP, as long as the commission did not have

to give permission or approval for the application. Once the actual approved chemicals are known, the commission will discuss approval.

III. INLAND WETLAND REFERRAL

A. WET#2178(S) MITCHELL – 232 Silver Spring Road – redevelop fire damaged 4-bedroom home within an upland review area

Mr. Conklin reviewed the plan and showed where the new house is proposed behind the existing home. He confirmed that the septic system will be reused and 2,000 cu. yds. of fill will be brought onto the site. The property is shallow to bedrock and ground water so the home's basement will not be fully under the current ground surface.

Mr. Conklin noted that he would like to have the limit of lawn noted on the plan. He described the storm drainage which brings the flow over the driveway, through a stone wall and into the bio-filter swale which discharges to the wetland. Mr. Berg confirmed that the driveway is paved.

A discussion ensued relating to the location of the new home. The consensus was to ask that they investigate moving the house forward, away from the wetland, and relocate the B100a to be out of the woods. Ms. Begor inquired if they could use their old well to avoid unnecessary drilling and asked if the house could be built on the same footprint. Ms. Gillespie added that she would like to review the First Taxing Districts response to the proposal. She asked that tree savings be noted in the letter.

IV. PLANNING and ZONING REFFERALS - None

V. ONGOING BUSINESS

B. Parks

Mr. Conklin suggested Horseshoe Park as the Park of the month. Mr. Conklin noted that he and Tom Walker are walking Schencks Island on Thursday in preparation of his planned walk on Saturday for those interested in taking pictures for the Garden Club photo contest.

B. Work with other Commissions/Committees

Tree/Bench Committee – Nothing to report.

Deer Committee – Ms. Merrill noted that Howard Kilpatrick, with the CT DEEP, will be meeting with the Deer Committee in May.

Energy/Go Green Committee – Ms. Gillespie reminded commissioners that the Go Green Festival is this weekend and invited all to attend.

Land Trust – Ms. Merrill noted that the Land Trust is thinking about stewardship, mowing, and invasives on their properties.

Norwalk River Valley Trail – Nothing to report.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Berg noted that the idea of having meetings on-line per his email will not be allowed as the public would not be able to have access.

VII. LIAISON REPORT

Ms. Diloreto was not in attendance, so no report was provided.

Ms. Merrill is the liaison for May.

VIII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – 4/3/13 –

Ms. Gillespie MOVED to APPROVE the meeting minutes as drafted, SECONDED by Ms. Merrill, and CARRIED 5-0-0.

IX. ADJOURN – Mr. Berg MOVED to adjourn at 9:31pm, SECONDED by Mr. Simone, and CARRIED 5-0-0.

Next meeting will be June 5, 2013.

Respectfully submitted,
Liz Larkin
Secretary, Environmental Affairs