

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

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TOWN HALL

238 Danbury Road

Wilton, Connecticut 06897

**WILTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MINUTES**

September 5, 2012 – 7:30 P.M.

TOWN HALL ANNEX - MEETING ROOM "A"

Present: Kristen Begor, Chair, Kim Young, Donna Merrill, Patrice Gillespie, Susan DiLoreto, Daniel Berg

Also Present: Patricia Sesto, Director, Environmental Affairs, Liz Larkin, Recording Secretary; Bruce Beebe, President, Wilton Land Trust

I. CALL TO ORDER – Ms. Begor called the meeting to order at 8:43 p.m.

II. Presentation by Fairfield County Regional Conservation Partnership (FCRCP)

Bruce Beebe and Donna Merrill introduced a project that is in the planning stage by the FCRCP whereas Harvard Forest would like to protect the forests of New England to safeguard green infrastructure for the future.

There are 27 existing conservation partnerships in New England, including 10 towns in Fairfield County. These partnerships will strengthen the Land Trust and create a greenway from Westchester County, through Fairfield County and up to Litchfield County. Mr. Beebe noted they have fundraisers to maintain their annual woodcutting event but no funds have been committed as of yet. The goal is geared toward 90% remaining as woodlands and the other 10 % are unmanaged wildlands to maintain streams and the forests. The Wilton Land Trust currently holds 105 properties and includes 250 acres that will be included in this partnership.

III. Allen's Meadows Invasives

Ms. Young reported that she has been contacted about invasives that are growing on the Allen's Meadows property. She had been in contact with Mr. Amaro, a Science teacher at the High School, who is willing to take a group of students out to address the Artemisia. Ms. Sesto noted that Theresa Nucci is a good resource for direction on the removal process. Ms. Begor noted that the NRWA recently took out invasives in the back corner by the pond. She added that Jamie VanAcker would need to be contacted for any work done on the property.

IV. INLAND WETLAND REFERRALS

- A. WET#2134(S) O'Brien – 1030 & 1042 Ridgefield Road** – proposed 3-lot subdivision with a common driveway that crosses wetlands, and grading within the upland buffer

Ms. Sesto noted that the driveway on the plan crosses two wetlands. She stated that the understory is healthy with a variety of trees present. Her concern is with the slope in the back portion of the property. The commission discussed how the owner could compact the development so the disturbance is not so widespread.

Ms. Sesto confirmed that the silt fence is the limit of lawn on the plan and there is a vernal pool by the stone wall. She added that the box culvert is appropriate for the wetland crossing.

- B. WET#2135(S) Pepitone – 22 Hillcrest Place** – construction of pool, patio, and grading 20 feet from a wetland

The commission discussed the large area that is being disturbed with this plan. They recommend pulling the pool closer to the house and decreasing the size of the patio while utilizing pervious materials during this construction. This would allow more room for a better restoration opportunity adjacent to the wetlands.

Ms. Sesto noted that there is no environmental assessment included in the application materials so she is not certain of the rationale of the proposal. She added that a planting plan would need to be included. The commission discussed breaking up the deck with trees and shrubs planted in wells.

V. PLANNING and ZONING REFFERALS - None

Ms. Young left the meeting due to a prior commitment.

VI. ONGOING BUSINESS

A. Parks

Ms. Begor confirmed that the commissioners received Mike Conklin's Staff Report. Ms. Merrill reported that invasives are taking over portions of Quarry Head State Park.

Ms. Sesto reported that Anne Deware ran two successful events to pull lily pads out of Horseshoe Pond and it is looking much better. A discussion ensued on what would be the best way to handle the lilies going forward. It was noted that Hydroraking failed in the 1990's. Ms. Sesto stated that draining the pond may be an option once they are able to find out what is down there.

Mr. Begor MOVED to thank Anne Deware for her time and resources for these recent events, SECONDED by Ms. Gillespie and CARRIED 5-0-0.

B. Work with other Commissions/Committees

Tree/Bench Committee –

Ms. DiLoreto reported that the Chair of the Tree Committee, Jessica Kaplan, has resigned from the tree committee as she moved out of state. There seems to be a lack of interest from other members to take on the Norwalk Wilton Tree Festival so Wilton may not be included next year.

Ms. Sesto confirmed that the contract for the America the Beautiful Grant has been signed by the Library which will assist with the maintenance of trees in the center.

Deer Committee –

Ms. Sesto reported that there are only 5 property owners that have signed up in Wilton so far this year. She hopes that more will come forward in the next few weeks. She noted that the larger parcels in town already have hunters on their property. Ms. Merrill reported that her Letter to the Editor did not make the Bulletin as she hoped. She said once this is published, and she is able to hang her flyers around town, that more people will become interested.

Energy Committee –

Ms. Gillespie provided a hand-out which is a snapshot of where the town sits in the Energy Challenge. Wilton is marginally behind Ridgefield which is in second place so there is an opportunity to pull ahead and win rewards for the community.

Go Green Committee –

Ms. Gillespie confirmed that there are plans in the works for a festival in May of 2013.

D. Regional Projects

1. FFD Co. Deer Management Alliance

Ms. Sesto stated she has nothing new to report as they are not meeting until next week.

2. Norwalk River Valley Trail

Ms. Sesto reported that the tri-town celebration was a huge success. There were approximately 100 attendees and the key officials spoke while donated food was consumed.

Ms. Sesto also noted that the trail from Horseshoe Pond is being completed shortly.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

Newsletter – The commission discussed possible articles for the Fall 2012 Conservation Newsletter. Topics include Mile-a-Minute Vine which Ms. DiLoreto said she would handle, the Horseshoe Pond work that has been completed by Ms. Deware, Invasives and Stilt Grass, Sharp Shooting, which Ms. Sesto will write, Duck Weed in ponds, mulching of leaves, NRV, Emerald Ash Borer, and animal life, which will be covered by Ms. Begor and Ms. Young.

Grupes Reservoir – Ms. Begor stated that she received an email from Mike Elliott at the Norwalk First Taxing District that Grupes Reservoir in New Canaan is in need of repair. Ms. Sesto suggested contacting Jeff Yates and Dave Havens.

NRWI Five Star Grant – Ms. Begor reported that Cindy Ingersoll, the Watershed Coordinator for NRWI received news that the five star grant was not approved. A discussion ensued on how the commission can re-configure the Merwin Meadows parking lot so that run-off is not going directly into the Norwalk River.

VIII. LIAISON REPORT

Ms. Gillespie reported that the Inland Wetland Commission met twice in July and spoke about the Fosterhouse at 122 Olmstead Hill Road. She noted that Casey Cordes was present and that there were strong requirements noted including a 5-year monitoring program due to the scope of the activity.

Ms. Gillespie stated that the Planning & Zoning Commission spoke about outdoor seating at their July meetings.

The September liaison is Ms. Young.

IX. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – 6/6/12 –

Ms. DiLoreto MOVED to APPROVE the meeting minutes as drafted by Liz Larkin, SECONDED by Mr. Berg, and CARRIED 4-0-1, with Ms. Gillespie abstaining as she was not present at the meeting.

X. ADJOURN – Ms. Begor MOVED to adjourn at 9:33pm, SECONDED by Ms. Merrill, and CARRIED 5-0-0.

Next meeting will be October 3, 2012.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Larkin
Secretary, Environmental Affairs