

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

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TOWN HALL

238 Danbury Road

Wilton, Connecticut 06897

**WILTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES**

December 4, 2013 – 7:30 P.M.

TOWN HALL - MEETING ROOM "A"

Present: Dan Berg (Chair), Frank Simone, Susan DiLoreto, Donna Merrill

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

Absent: Kristen Begor (notified of intended absence)

I. CALL TO ORDER – Mr. Berg called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.

II. Elections

Mr. Simone MOVED to keep Mr. Berg as Chairman and Ms. Merrill as Secretary, SECONDED by Ms. DiLoreto and CARRIED 4-0-0.

III. INLAND WETLAND REFERRALS - None

IV. PLANNING AND ZONING REFERRALS - None

V. ONGOING BUSINESS

A. Parks – Mr. Conklin confirmed that he sent his staff report via email prior to the meeting. He noted that the new sign has been installed for Cherry Lane Park and that he met a neighbor that volunteered to help keep the entrance area clean and inviting to residents, with the assistance of his professional landscaper.

Mr. Conklin stated that now is a good time to replace signs and encouraged members to let him know if their park signs need attention. It was noted that Sackett needs a new sign. Mr. Conklin confirmed that the new sign at the Pin Oak entrance for Town Forest is being installed shortly by Dave Francefort, the volunteer steward of the property. There will also be a sign installed at the new Boulder Brook entrance at the Town Forest. Ms. Merrill asked if any progress has been made with the State on the Quarry Head sign. Mr. Conklin confirmed that he has been in contact with them and they are working on completing the sign, albeit slowly.

B. Park of the Month – The commission discussed removing this agenda item until the springtime when walks will resume.

C. Working Matrix – Mr. Conklin confirmed that everyone received the working log and asked for feedback on this first version. The commission asked that this document be available via Google Doc so that all members can access it. Ms. Larkin will research that possibility.

D. Town Forest Parking – Ms. DiLoreto stated that more parking is needed at the Town Forest. Mr. Conklin confirmed that the parking lot on Boas Lane is rarely used. He also noted that there is new parking at Boulder Brook and the neighbors on Pin Oak are happy to have hikers and/or bikers park at that entrance. It was decided that the new sign at the Boulder Brook entrance can include verbiage that additional parking is available at other entrances.

E. Set-Asides – Ms. DiLoreto stated that she did not agree that this commission should remove garbage from set-asides. She suggested educating the public about what set-asides are and encourage ownership. Mr. Simone suggested an article in the newsletter stating the benefits of having a set-aside. Mr. Conklin confirmed that Kent Pond neighbors have a good collaborative group that keeps that area clean and other neighborhoods could benefit from learning about this kind of effort.

F. Working Matrix – Commissioners signed up for items on the matrix:

Mr. Berg volunteered to work on the Lion's Fields property. Ms. Merrill volunteered for both the Quarry Head Trail Consolidation and the Long-Term plan for Horseshoe Pond. Ms. DiLoreto volunteered to write the article on set-asides for the Spring Newsletter. Mr. Simone volunteered to work on the planning and implementation of Spring Clean-Up Day. Mr. Berg also stated he would be interested in the scavenger hunt project.

G. Work with other Commissions/Committees

- i. Tree Committee – Ms. DiLoreto noted that the America the Beautiful grant is being wrapped up by the committee. She indicated that the tree marking bricks are being installed while more donations are being received. The Tree Committee is considering their inclusion in the Tree Festival this year as there is fundraising required and not enough volunteer time to complete this task.
- ii. Deer Committee – Ms. Merrill reported that there was no meeting in November due to a lack of a quorum. She stated

that there is a state website which shows the harvest numbers by town. Prior to Thanksgiving week, there were 103 deer harvested in Wilton. Mr. Conklin stated that more have come in during the shotgun/rifle season.

- iii. Energy/Go Green Committees – As Ms. Gillespie is no longer on the commission, these items will be removed from future agendas until further notice.
- iv. Land Trust – Ms. Merrill reported that Land Trust is pleased with the approval for the purchase of the Keiser easement. She indicated that the Land Trust is celebrating their 50th year, and their annual meeting is scheduled for January.
- v. Fairfield County Regional Conservation Partnership (FCRCP) – Ms. Merrill requested this subject be added to all future agendas. She confirmed the group has devised strategies and will assign action items to groups like this commission in the near future. She invited all commissioners to attend their next meeting on December 11th at Highstead in Redding. The goal is to create stronger commissions by strengthening conservation-minded partners while looking at connectivity across town borders.
- vi. Norwalk River Valley Trail – Mr. Conklin confirmed the trail is being built and Ms. DiLoreto noted that fundraising for the next phase has begun.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

Wood Burning Furnace – Mr. Conklin noted that he received an email asking about the town's position on wood burning furnaces. He stated that there are four of these currently in Wilton, but only three are utilized. Mr. Conklin confirmed there are state regulations that require separating distances from property lines and structures.

Mr. Conklin offered to complete some research, in conjunction with the Health Director, to draft an ordinance to present to the Board of Selectman to ban these furnaces due to smog, just like our neighbor, Ridgefield.

VII. LIAISON REPORT

Ms. Merrill noted she switched her liaison duties with Ms. DiLoreto. Ms. Merrill reported that she attended the Inland Wetlands Meeting on November 14, 2013. She explained that Mr. Chemlali presented his corrective action which included the removal of wood chip piles, and the creation of a driveway in the front of the house. The hearing was held over to the next meeting as Mr. Chemlali needed to confirm if the violation was extended over to the neighboring property, and to come back with a plan that was acceptable as mitigation for the violation as the filled wetland was part of a larger wetland system, and not a pocket wetland.

Ms. DiLoreto will be the liaison for December.

VIII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – 11/6/13 –

Ms. Larkin noted that Ms. Merrill sent some revisions to the minutes that have been completed.

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

IX. ADJOURN – Mr. Berg MOVED to adjourn at 8:38pm, SECONDED by Ms. DiLoreto, and CARRIED 4-0-0.

Next meeting will be January 8, 2014.

Respectfully submitted,
Liz Larkin
Secretary, Environmental Affairs