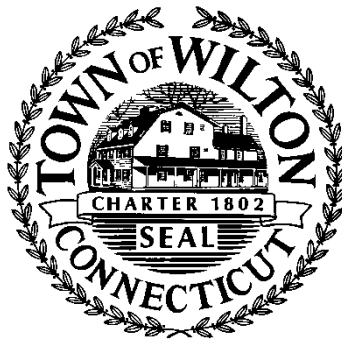


CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Telephone (203) 563-0180

Fax (203) 563-0284



TOWN HALL

238 Danbury Road

Wilton, Connecticut 06897

WILTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION

WEDNESDAY December 2, 2015 – 7:30 P.M.

TOWN HALL ANNEX - MEETING ROOM "A"

MINUTES

- I. PRESENT: Dan Berg, Chair, Donna Merrill, Jackie Algon, Frank Simone, Susan DiLoreto
- II. ALSO PRESENT: Mike Conklin, Environmental Analyst; Liz Larkin, Secretary, Environmental Affairs
- III. CALL TO ORDER – Mr. Berg called the meeting to order at 7:34 pm.
- IV. INLAND WETLAND REFERRALS - None
- V. PLANNING AND ZONING REFERRALS - None
- VI. ONGOING BUSINESS

A. Parks Reports – Mr. Berg reported that the November walk at Bradley Park was highly attended. Ms. Merrill stated that the commission should follow up with attendees from the sign in sheets that have indicated they would be willing to volunteer. Ms. Algon stated that this is a large percentage of the attendees. Mr. Conklin noted that a resident, Peter Dodds, has been in contact with him to take on volunteer projects. Ms. Merrill stated that the commission should have one person in charge of leading these volunteers and one specific initiative to concentrate on.

Mr. Conklin suggested incorporating a clean-up of Cherry Lane Park during the scheduled walk on December 20th. Ms. Algon stated that this commission has gained momentum on these monthly walks and she does not wish to integrate a work day with these walks. Mr. Conklin suggested that the clean up take place during the week for about an hour prior to the scheduled walks taking place to ensure a safe and aesthetically pleasing event.

Mr. Conklin confirmed he has been in contact with a gentleman who lives at the Ogden House who is looking for volunteer opportunities. He suggests the commission attempt to get the residents of this facility to get involved with Horseshoe Pond, Schenck's Island, and Bradley Park due to their proximity. This may also be an opportunity to teach these residents about invasives and non-native plants. Ms. Merrill stated that we may want to concentrate on one invasive such as burning bush as it is easily identifiable. Ms. Algon

added that the Norwalk River Watershed Association may be partnering with REI Sports for funding and on-the-ground work at Horseshoe Pond. Ms. Merrill added that Stop & Shop has indicated they want to get involved with volunteerism in town as well. Ms. Algon stated she has some handouts that may be helpful for these initiatives.

Mr. Conklin introduced the commissioners to a new Application for Smart Phones called Maplets which he described as a great tool for park walkers. This application makes it possible to see trail maps of town parks on your phone in the field, including a live indication of where you are on the trail as well as the direction you are headed.

B. Conservation Activity Log Updates

Quarry Head Trail Consolidation – Ms. Merrill stated there is work to be done to consolidate the trails that are off the main loop as the trails are not clearly marked. Ms. Algon reported that there are neighbors blowing leaves onto the Land Trust trails. Ms. Merrill will alert the Land Trust so a communication can be prepared. Mr. Conklin stated he would like to set up a leadership meeting with Dave Francefort and Ms. Merrill to obtain direction on what work needs to be done and then he can schedule volunteers to complete the tasks under his supervision.

Horseshoe Pond Long-Term Management Plan – Ms. Merrill confirmed she has completed the base plan with what is currently present on the property. She will concentrate on adding her ideas to the plan but noted that money will need to be raised to pay for the proposed plantings.

Park Walks – Ms. Algon stated the December walk at Cherry Lane Park will be on the 20th with Mr. Berg acting as the leader. If there is snow on the ground, snow shoes can be utilized. A discussion ensued relating to dogs being off leash at town parks. Mr. Conklin confirmed that there is no leash law in Wilton. He clarified that dogs must be within verbal control of their owners. Ms. Merrill raised the possibility of removing the trails at Bradley that cross in the middle for habitat reasons. Mr. Conklin stated that the trails were built specifically to have options for a longer walk, or a short walk, which would include the need for these middle trails.

Carry In/Carry Out Initiative – Mr. Berg stated he has done some research on signs that he thinks will be appropriate. He stated he will email his recommendations to Mr. Conklin for review. Mr. Conklin confirmed Ms. Larkin can order signs once the commission chooses what version to purchase.

GIS Trail Maps for Walkers Guide – Mr. Berg confirmed this item was covered under the Parks Reports.

C. Work with other Commissions/Committees

- i. **Tree Committee** – Ms. DiLoreto reported that the Tree Committee is writing a letter to Planning and Zoning relating to their concerns about recent tree

protections at construction sites that have failed. The committee is requesting that they are involved in the process of making decisions on trees at sites.

- ii. Deer Committee – Ms. Merrill stated the DEEP website is back up and the tally in Wilton as of last week was 91 deer harvested.
- iii. Land Trust – Ms. Merrill stated the Land Trust is still considering a formation of a steering committee.

D. Regional Projects

- i. Fairfield County Regional Conservation Partnership – Ms. Merrill reported that the Steering Committee is meeting next week. She indicated all Conservation Commissioners will be invited to a meeting on January 21, 2016 to convene on common interests, and get to know each other and the Land Trusts in our towns. She confirmed there are 23 towns invited and all but two towns have expressed interest.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

2016 Liaison Assignments – Ms. Larkin confirmed that the commissioners could keep the 2015 schedule the same, unless someone knew they were going to be away for a long period of time, in which case, the assignments should be reassigned.

Mr. Berg MOVED to continue the liaison assignments as they were assigned in 2015, SECONDED by Ms. Merrill and CARRIED 5-0-0.

Norwalk River Valley Trail – Mr. Simone asked Mr. Conklin for an update on the resident who has blocked off a portion of the newly created trail as he believes the trail encroaches on his property. Mr. Conklin confirmed the town holds a survey that clearly shows the trail is on State Property as designed.

2016 Park Assignments – Ms. Algon asked if she could be removed from the Olmstead Hill (Black's) Farm and take on Vista Road as this is much closer to her home. Mr. Berg confirmed he would take over Olmstead Hill Farm. The only park that does not have a commissioner is Spencer-Rice Preserve that is rarely visited. Once a new commissioner joins, this park can be assigned to them.

Mr. Berg MOVED to approve these revisions and the remaining assignments will stay the same, SECONDED by Ms. DiLoreto and CARRIED 5-0-0.

VIII. LIAISON REPORT

Ms. DiLoreto was the liaison for November and reported there were no conservation related applications, so she did not attend any meetings.

Ms. Merrill is the liaison for the month of December.

XI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – 11/4/15

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

- XII. Equal Work from Commissioners** – Ms. Algon raised concern that the same 3 commissioners are continually leading the walks being scheduled and asked that each commissioner lead a walk in their assigned park. Ms. DiLoreto stated that she is not able to lead walks on the weekends due to her schedule. Mr. Simone stated he would lead a walk in one of his parks. Mr. Berg stated he does not mind leading walks in other commissioner's parks. Mr. Conklin suggested asking environmental people to be involved in these walks such as Wilton Outdoor Sports and REI. Ms. Merrill confirmed we have done this with Trout Unlimited, Dean Kiester, and Lars Cherichetti. Mr. Berg stated it would be great to get different perspectives at repeat park walks such as birders. Mr. Simone suggested using the willing volunteers for the walks as well.
- XIII. ADJOURN** – Mr. Berg MOVED to adjourn at 8:51pm, SECONDED by Ms. Algon, and CARRIED 5-0-0.

Next meeting will be January 6, 2016.

Respectfully submitted,
Liz Larkin, Secretary, Environmental Affairs