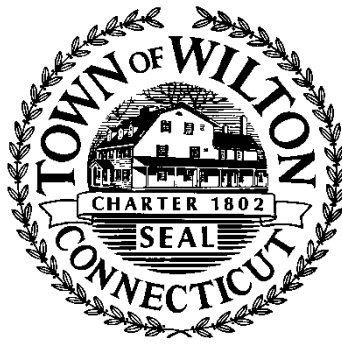


CONSERVATION COMMISSION

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TOWN HALL

238 Danbury Road

Wilton, Connecticut 06897

**WILTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

**WEDNESDAY February 4, 2015 – 7:30 P.M.**

**TOWN HALL ANNEX - MEETING ROOM "A"**

**MINUTES**

- I. PRESENT: Dan Berg (Chair), Donna Merrill, Jackie Algon, Susan DiLoreto
- II. ALSO PRESENT: Mike Conklin, Environmental Analyst; Liz Larkin, Secretary, Environmental Affairs
- III. ABSENT: Frank Simone (notified of intended absence)
- IV. CALL TO ORDER – Chairman Berg called the meeting to order at 7:29pm.
- V. INLAND WETLAND REFERRALS

**A. WET#2303(S) PRIEGER – 35 Hickory Hill Road** – construction of a new residence, septic system, and associated grading within an upland review area

Mr. Conklin laid out the plans and explained the proposal for this new home. He noted that there is a 50 ft. wooded buffer proposed and he did not find anything that would warrant any comments from Conservation.

Commissioners discussed the need to complete site walks on undeveloped parcels. Mr. Conklin explained that site walks are required for any Inland Wetlands Applications that are Significant Level Activities, even if the land is undeveloped.

Ms. Merrill wanted to go on record stating there is more CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere than at any time in the last 10 million years. It behooves us to do things to remove CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere. Trees are carbon sinks. They use CO<sub>2</sub> to build their tissues and keep it locked up until they die. (1 sugar maple sequesters 450 lbs. of CO<sub>2</sub> per year). There are 40 million acres of lawn in the US. What if we start replacing them with trees? We use 800 million gallons of gas per year to mow. Trees provide food and habitat for wildlife, so along with acting as a CO<sub>2</sub> sink, they are a winner for climate change.

The commissioners agreed that no comments are warranted for the application.

**B. WET#2299(S) ADZ CONSTRUCTION, LLC – 290 Mountain Road** – construct new home, code complying septic, and installation of storm water detention system within an upland review area

Mr. Conklin explained this property is accessed off of a long shared driveway and added that the area is currently wooded. He indicated the wetlands are located in the middle of the property, but already contains a stone wall as a physical separation between the upland area and the wetland area.

The commissioners agreed that no comments are warranted for this application.

**VI. PLANNING AND ZONING REFERRALS - None**

**VII. ONGOING BUSINESS**

**A. Parks Reports** – Mr. Conklin stated that he and Ms. DiLoreto walked Bradley Park with Deborah Lewis, an outfitter, because Ms. Lewis has volunteered to conduct trail maintenance at the park. He commented that fallen tree debris is always an issue and Ms. Lewis is happy to remove branches from the trail. Ms. DiLoreto noted that she would like some signage (perhaps on the kiosk) regarding trail etiquette. Ms. Lewis has agreed to send pictures of any issues she encounters to Mr. Conklin for action.

A discussion ensued relating to the proximity of the new Toll Brothers River Ridge Development with Bradley Park. The commission would like to hold a specific walk of Bradley for these residents to make them aware of this resource and to gain support and stewardship for this property. A potential date would be May 19<sup>th</sup>, during the day, and Mr. Conklin indicated he can lead this walk.

Mr. Conklin also noted that he and Mr. Simone will schedule the re-blazing of Belknap in the Spring.

**B. Conservation Activity Log Updates**

**Quarry Head Management** – Mr. Conklin confirmed that he has been in contact with Jessica Lubell, a native plant expert with UCONN. She agreed to visit Quarry Head in April to complete a restoration plan in the areas that were recently cleared.

**Park Walks with the Garden Club** – Ms. Algon confirmed the following walks are scheduled:

February 22<sup>nd</sup> – Cherry Lane with optional snow shoeing, led by Mr. Berg

March 22<sup>nd</sup> – Black Farm, led by Lars Cherichetti

April 19<sup>th</sup> – Merwin Meadows to include information on fishing, led by Dean Keister

May 17<sup>th</sup> – Bradley Park, by Susan DiLoreto

Ms. Algon also confirmed she did some research into renting snow shoes with no luck in this area. Mr. Conklin suggested contacting REI to see if they would partner with the commission to start a program where walkers could get a discount for purchase of snowshoes.

**Invasives Workshop** - Ms. Algon confirmed that the Conservation Committee of the Wilton Garden Club has decided to begin a lecture series rather than a one-day workshop. They will be partnering with the Conservation Commission in sponsoring the lecture series. They are planning one lecture this winter, one in the Spring, and two in the Fall.

Ms. Algon stated the first lecture is lined up with Go Green to be held on Wednesday, March 25<sup>th</sup> regarding native and invasive species. Nicole Gabelman, the new invasives coordinator with the State, will be leading this lecture.

Ms. Algon stated the second lecture is lined up for May 19<sup>th</sup> with Michael Dietz, of UCONN, on low impact development and stormwater management.

Mr. Conklin asked Ms. Algon if she needed anything from this commission for these talks. She stated she would like to have an article in the Spring Newsletter regarding these sessions. She confirmed she would publicize in the Wilton Bulletin and added that the Fall lecture will focus on pesticides.

**Horseshoe Pond Long-Term Management Plan** – Ms. Merrill confirmed she, Ms. DiLoreto, and Ms. Algon have started a sub-committee relating to the changes this commission would like to complete at Horseshoe Pond. She stated they met to create a mission statement and brainstorm the ideas into four subcategories. These are: Stewardship, Aesthetics, Education, and Recreation.

Mr. Conklin suggested breaking the stewardship into short-term and long-term goals. Ms. Merrill provided the commission with some background of the pond from a past neighbor who lived there in 1960 when Mr. McGuire flooded the area to create an ice skating pond. Mr. Conklin stated he could create a GIS Map for display in the library once the improvements are underway.

Mr. Conklin asked the commission if items like this project can be communicated prior to the meeting to be more efficient with our time. He suggested sending written updates to Ms. Larkin on the Monday prior to our monthly meeting. He asked that any action items required by staff or the commission be noted at the bottom of these reports so that Ms. Larkin can add the item to the agenda for discussion and resolution as needed.

### **C. Work with other Commissions/Committees**

- i. Tree Committee – Ms. DiLoreto confirmed the Tree Committee is starting a significant tree list for the town. The trees on this list will be aged, historic, or rare trees and will be a tool for the town to ensure these trees are protected.

Ms. DiLoreto stated there are three trees that will be planted on Arbor Day which is April 24<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Brennan will read the Arbor Day Proclamation and a Tree Steward will be named.

Ms. DiLoreto stated the Norwalk Tree Festival will be on May 16<sup>th</sup> and asked if this commission would like to have a table at the event. Ms. Algon confirmed she can work the table. The commission discussed the lack of attendees from Wilton for this event. Ms. DiLoreto will check with the Tree Committee to see if they are attending the event and then this commission will make a decision.

- ii. Deer Committee – Ms. Merrill stated that there were several parks that opened up for the first time for hunting: Cherry Lane, Wild Duck, and Bradley Park. She confirmed no deer were harvested in Cherry Lane. She stated that the DEEP is delayed with the final harvest count so we do not have a final number as of yet.
- iii. Land Trust – Ms. Merrill stated that the Land Trust annual meeting will be at the Wilton Library on February 19<sup>th</sup>. She also stated that Frank Gallo is conducting a talk at that meeting about birding.

#### **D. Regional Projects**

- i. Fairfield County Regional Conservation Partnership – Ms. Merrill indicated that members are stepping forward to spearhead the project to convene conservation commissions. She also noted that the H2H landowner outreach is ongoing.

### **VIII. NEW BUSINESS**

- i. Liaison Schedule for 2015 – Ms. Larkin gave the commissioners an opportunity to revise the 2015 Liaison Schedule. Commissioners agreed that it can remain as is.
- ii. Spring Newsletter Articles and Deadlines – Mr. Conklin confirmed that he is doing an article about local fishing. He explained he will format this article as an interview which he is conducting with Jeff Yates of Trout Unlimited.

Ms. Merrill stated that she would write an article relating to the importance of trees and adapting for climate change.

Ms. Algon will complete an article on the walks and talks she is organizing.

Ms. DiLoreto noted she has an existing article she wrote previously for the Tree Committee that may be appropriate. She will look into this possibility.

The due date for the articles is March 7, 2015.

- iii. Town-wide Clean Up Day Schedule – Mr. Conklin confirmed that the timing of the event needs to be scheduled outside Easter weekend and school vacations. March 28<sup>th</sup> is the date that works best for the commission. Mr. Conklin confirmed he will contact the group that had suggestions after last year's event.
- iv. Participation in Wilton Go Green Festival – Mr. Conklin noted that the Go Green Festival is scheduled for May 3<sup>rd</sup> this year. Ms. Algon confirmed that she can be available for a table at this event. Ms. Merrill also confirmed she can take a shift. Mr. Conklin will speak to Ms. Berktau about grouping our table with the NRWA so Ms. Algon could be at both stations.

**IX. LIAISON REPORT**

Mr. Simone was not in attendance to make a report. Mr. Berg stated he would take Mr. Simone's P&Z Meeting on Monday, February 9<sup>th</sup> in Mr. Simone's absence as he is the liaison for February as well.

**X. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – 1/7/15**

Mr. Berg MOVED to APPROVE the meeting minutes as drafted, SECONDED by Ms. DiLoreto, and CARRIED 4-0-0.

**XI. ADJOURN – Mr. Berg MOVED to adjourn at 9:30pm, SECONDED by Ms. Algon, and CARRIED 4-0-0.**

Next meeting will be March 4, 2015.

Respectfully submitted,  
Liz Larkin, Secretary, Environmental Affairs