

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Telephone (203) 563-0180

Fax (203) 563-0284



TOWN HALL

238 Danbury Road

Wilton, Connecticut 06897

WILTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION

WEDNESDAY July 2, 2014 – 7:30 P.M.

TOWN HALL ANNEX - MEETING ROOM "A"

MINUTES

- I. PRESENT: Dan Berg (Chair), Donna Merrill, Susan DiLoreto, Frank Simone, and Jackie Algon
- II. ALSO PRESENT: Mike Conklin, Environmental Analyst; Karen Haney, Resident
- III. ABSENT: Jill Brown (notified of intended absence)
- IV. CALL TO ORDER – Chairman Berg called the meeting to order at 7:31pm.
- V. INLAND WETLAND REFERRALS - None
- VI. PLANNING AND ZONING REFERRALS - None
- VII. ONGOING BUSINESS

A. Parks Reports – Mr. Conklin reviewed the process of conducting a park inspection. This includes picking up litter at the trail head, noting any dangerous trees or other hazardous areas on the trail or in the parking areas, and clipping back brush that routinely grows into the trails. Ms. Merrill asked if park reports can be emailed to the office. Mr. Conklin responded that email would be fine for transmitting the information.

Donna Merrill explained that work was recently performed at Quarry Head State Park by herself, Bruce Beebe and two Wilton high school volunteers. They removed all of the invasive plants from the deer enclosure and painted roundup on the cut stems of the invasive plants that were left behind. Ms. Merrill reported the encouraging news that some native plant species have returned to the area.

Ms. DiLoreto asked about the storm damaged trees in Bradley Park because a neighbor had inquired about their status. Mr. Conklin explained the blown down trees affecting the trail have been removed and the blown down trees in the wooded areas will remain as-is as long as they are not a safety concern.

B. Conservation Activity Log Updates

Mr. Berg and Ms. Brown will be meeting to kick start the commission's Facebook page this summer. Ms. Merrill, Ms. Algon, and Ms. Brown are working on the Horseshoe Park pond plan. Mr. Simone noted the lily pad control project appears to be working well.

C. Work with other Commissions/Committees

- i. Tree Committee – Ms. DiLoreto mentioned that no work has been done on Japanese barberry being sold in town and the Tree Committee is hoping consumers will drive that change. Ms. Diloreto asked about the tree watering in Wilton Center. Mr. Conklin explained that he has been watering the trees with the help of the Park & Recreation Department.
- ii. Deer Committee – Ms. Merrill explained there is no news to report.
- iii. Land Trust – Ms. Merrill explained there is no news to report.

D. Regional Projects

- i. Fairfield County Regional Conservation Partnership – Ms. Merrill began to update the commission on the new draft strategic plan when Ms. Karen Haney arrived at the meeting. Ms. Karen Haney, of 94 Mather Street, wanted to speak to the commission about poison ivy. Mr. Berg asked her to explain her situation. Ms. Haney stated the town is getting overwhelmed with poison ivy along the roadsides. She got a bad case of poison ivy after weeding her lawn by hand. Ms. Haney has sprayed the poison ivy on her property but noted it seems to be an ongoing fight to control it. Ms. Haney explained that her street is overwhelmed with it now; on the trees, and on the ground. Ms. Haney's property is located between the transfer station and another private property; both of which have poison ivy. Ms. Haney is concerned that this plant is a public health problem. When she called the Department of Public Works someone told her it could not be sprayed because the Conservation Commission does not allow it.

Ms. Haney reported that she emailed the commission earlier in the day and Pat Sesto clarified the situation over the phone. Mr. Berg noted poison ivy is a native plant and is found all over the region. Mr. Conklin explained that managing vegetation in the Town's right of way is a public works issue and this commission is supportive of controlling plants such as poison ivy and giant hogweed with chemical means in certain designated areas. Ms. Haney offered to conduct research on chemical controls of poison ivy. She is concerned that this is a public health issue and that she has been personally affected by the plant. Mr. Conklin explained that this is truly a public works issue and the Conservation Commission understands the need for chemical control of certain roadside plants.

Ms. Merrill explained the FCRCP's strategic plan and the executive summary. It has a 5 year timeline for the initiatives presented in the plan. Ms. Merrill streamlined the plan in to two (2) pages to summarize the main points of the

draft strategic plan. Mr. Berg asked how this group began and Ms. Merrill explained it formed in 2008 by a conservationist of the Highstead Group. He was able to organize all of the different conservation commissions currently working in the area. Ms. Merrill began attending the meetings and has become more involved this year.

Ms. Merrill explained this group is hoping to be effective at conserving resources over a larger regional area. Ms. Merrill then handed out a summary for the plan. She reviewed the three goals of the partnership. Ms. Merrill asked the commission to take the documents home to review them and decide what the commission might want to select in the future. Ms. Merrill went through the goals and strategies on their list. Commissioners and staff were asked to review the documents and email notes to Ms. Merrill. Ms. Merrill will then organize the comments and send out a summary for review.

- ii. Norwalk River Valley Trail – Mr. Berg noted the second leg of trail work is underway. Mr. Simone noted the new signage at Merwin Meadows.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

Fall Newsletter Articles – The Commission discussed ideas for newsletter topics. Mr. Conklin will write an article about Paint Management and how paint will not be collected at this year's Household Hazardous Waste Collection Event. Mr. Berg and Ms. Brown will write something about the new Facebook page. Ms. Algon will write an article about the planned fall hikes and the planned pesticide education program. Ms. Merrill may write an article about non toxic herbicides and an article about creating backyard habitats for birds with children. Pat Sesto may want to include an NRVT update and an update on Project Lily Pad. The fall hikes will also be publicized in the newsletter.

IX. LIAISON REPORT

Frank Simone explained there is no news to report for June as there was nothing conservation related. Ms. Brown is the liaison for July.

X. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – 6/4/14

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

XI. ADJOURN – Ms. Algon MOVED to adjourn at 9:13pm, SECONDED by Mr. Berg, and CARRIED 5-0-0.

Next meeting will September 3, 2014.

Respectfully submitted,
Michael Conklin, Environmental Analyst