



TOWN OF ELLINGTON

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**CONSERVATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, JULY 5, 2016, 7:00 P.M.
TOWN HALL ANNEX, 57 MAIN STREET, ELLINGTON, CT**

MEMBERS

PRESENT: Chairman Rebecca Quarno, James Gage, Robert Zielfelder, Jr., George Nickerson, and Alternate Walter Moody (in audience)

ABSENT: Vice Chairman David Bidwell, Sean Dwyer, and Alternate Ann Harford

STAFF: Lisa M. Houlihan, Town Planner and Troy M. Ciesco, Recording Clerk

I. CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Rebecca Quarno called the July 5, 2016 regular meeting of the Conservation Commission to order at 7:02 PM.

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS (On Non-Agenda Items): NONE

III. ACTIVE BUSINESS:

1. Open space recommendation for S201603 – Sandra Gottier, owner/Todd Gottier, applicant, for a 3-lot resubdivision on property located at 34 Minor Hill Road, APN 150-034-0000 in an RAR (Rural Agricultural/Residential) Zone.

Russ Heintz of Tarbell, Heintz and Associates was present to represent the application. He described the existing conditions and the area surrounding the 16.5 acre parcel. He pointed out the small pocket of wetlands a considerable distance from any activity, and requested a fee-in-lieu-of open space due to the lack of abutting open space and limited value of a conservation easement on this property.

Commissioner Zielfelder asked about ridgeline protection requirements. Lisa Houlihan, Town Planner, noted that there are no protected ridgelines in Ellington. Ms. Houlihan also recommended a fee-in-lieu-of open space.

Walter Moody, 32 East Shore Road, commented on the existing environmental conditions in the surrounding area.

MOVED (QUARNO), SECONDED (GAGE) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO RECOMMEND THE ACCEPTANCE OF A FEE-IN-LIEU OF OPEN SPACE for a 3-lot resubdivision on property located at 34 Minor Hill Road, APN 150-034-0000 in an RAR (Rural Agricultural/Residential) Zone.

2. Open space recommendation for S201604 – Michael Brunelle, owner/applicant, for a 2-lot resubdivision on property located at 20 Frog Hollow Road, APN 062-008-0000 in an RAR (Rural Agricultural/Residential) Zone.

Mark Peterson of Gardner Peterson and Associates was present to represent the application. He described the property and the location of the existing home and stated that the applicant is proposing a resubdivision into two lots of 0.9 acres and 4.5 acres, respectively.

Chairman Quarno asked if the land is currently farmed. Mr. Peterson said that it is for now, but will likely not be in the future. He further explained that the property is flat, with no wetlands, and surrounded by other farmland. He requested a fee-in-lieu-of open space since there are no open space parcels abutting the property.

Ms. Houlihan also recommended a fee-in-lieu-of open space.

MOVED (ZIELFELDER), SECONDED (GAGE) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO RECOMMEND THE ACCEPTANCE OF A FEE-IN-LIEU OF OPEN SPACE for a 2-lot resubdivision on property located at 20 Frog Hollow Road, APN 062-008-0000 in an RAR (Rural Agricultural/Residential) Zone.

3. Discussion - Energize Connecticut Initiative: Dave Bidwell/Staff - Leads
 - a. Clean Energy Communities, Path To Becoming Silver & Gold

Ms. Houlihan reported that the mailer created by Eversource has been endorsed and signed by the First Selectman and will be sent to property owners. She also explained that she met with the three contractors identified as partners in the initiative and reported positive discussions with all three. She noted that all were willing to attend the Ellington Farmers Market and conduct additional outreach programs.

Ms. Houlihan stated that the Bright Idea Grant money has been allocated, so the light bulb exchange may need to be tabled for future consideration.

There was a brief discussion on the possibilities for advertisement of the September 17th Farmers Market and the Eversource booth, along with other outreach possibilities.

4. Update – Hockanum River Trail Association: Ann Harford – Lead

Commissioner Nickerson reported on the ongoing maintenance of the trail and that he spoke to the First Selectman regarding the role of the Department of Public Works in certain trail maintenance activities.

Ms. Houlihan stated that she spoke with the First Selectman, the Parks and Recreation Director, and Commissioner Harford about a number of possible passive recreation initiatives, including the Batz property and a trail from the Senior Center to Arbor Park.

Discussion ensued regarding passive recreation opportunities and the benefits of a stewardship program.

5. Report - Working Farmland Preservation Program: James Gage/Staff - Leads

Ms. Houlihan reported that the application for the Luginbuhl property on Jobs Hill Road is currently under review by the Connecticut Department of Agriculture.

6. Report - Open Space Preservation Program: James Gage – Lead

Commissioner Gage described the current projects underway by the Northern Connecticut Land Trust. He also noted the potential of a parcel on Kibbe Road to consider for open space purchase, and indicated its value as an access to the state forest. The commission generally supported an inquiry into this property; Commissioner Gage stated that he would reach out to the owner.

There was a brief discussion on coming up with a way to compare the value of different aspects of a property to past purchases when considering an open space purchase.

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS:

1. FY15-16 Budget Expenditure Update: Staff - Lead

BY CONSENSUS, THE COMMISSION AGREED TO DONATE THE REMAINDER OF THE FY 15-16 FUNDS EVENLY TO THE CONNECTICUT LAND CONSERVATION COUNCIL AND THE NORTHERN CONNECTICUT LAND TRUST.

2. Connecticut Land Conservation Council: 2016-2017 membership renewal

BY CONSENSUS, THE COMMISSION AGREED TO APPROVE THE 2016-2017 MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FOR THE CONNECTICUT LAND CONSERVATION COUNCIL.

3. Approval of the June 7, 2016 Regular Meeting Minutes.

MOVED (GAGE), SECONDED (ZIELFELDER) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE the June 7, 2016 Regular Meeting Minutes as written.

4. Correspondence:

- a. Agenda from June 10, 2016 "Planning for Agriculture in CT" Webinar
- b. Legislative update and 2016 Training & Education Program schedule from the Connecticut Land Conservation Council dated June 17, 2016

V. ADJOURNMENT:

MOVED (QUARNO), SECONDED (NICKERSON) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 8:08 PM.

Respectfully submitted:



Troy M. Ciesco, Recording Clerk