



TOWN OF ELLINGTON

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**CONSERVATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, AUGUST 2, 2016, 7:00 P.M.
TOWN HALL ANNEX, 57 MAIN STREET, ELLINGTON, CT**

MEMBERS

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

ABSENT: 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 August 2, 2016 regular meeting of the Conservation Commission to order at 7:00 PM.

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

III. ACTIVE BUSINESS:

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

Lisa Houlihan, Town Planner, reported that a marketing letter for the Energize Connecticut Initiative was created by Eversource and will be delivered town-wide this week. She also noted that she has been in discussions with the Farmers Market regarding a booth to promote the Energize Connecticut Initiative, and suggested that the contractors partnered in the program could alternate weeks at the market. The commission was in general agreement that more exposure at the market would be beneficial.

Chairman Quarno asked if there is any material to provide to the contractors. Ms. Houlihan stated that she would speak to Eversource about printed materials and decorations for a booth.

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

Ms. Houlihan read an email from Commissioner Harford which outlined the maintenance on poison ivy on the trails, along with meetings with the First Selectman regarding trail improvements and finding additional volunteers.

Ms. Houlihan expanded further upon the meetings with Commissioner Harford, the First Selectman, and Bruce Dinnie regarding possible improvements to the trails and marking the trails more effectively, including the use of GPS systems.

Commissioner Bidwell noted that the Boy Scouts need to accumulate service time and may be a valuable resource as volunteers for trail maintenance.

Ms. Houlihan reiterated the First Selectman's desire to create a more expansive trail system, including the Batz Property and trail within the center of town.

Commissioner Nickerson noted that the lack of volunteers has had a negative impact on the productivity and comradery of the Ellington Hockanum River Trail Committee.

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

Ms. Houlihan reported that the CT Department of Agriculture is still working on the access issue for the properties under consideration on Jobs Hill Road.

Ms. Houlihan then reported that the CT Department of Agriculture is only interested in a portion of the Spielman property on Middle Road due to an approved subdivision in East Windsor which drains onto the property. Ms. Houlihan presented a map of the area and added that the CT Department of Agriculture asked if the town would be interested in splitting the purchase 50/50, instead of 75/25. She also read from an email from Katherine Winslow, CT Department of Agriculture, which asked about the priority of this property and whether the Dzen's have been approached about preserving their adjacent land.

After some discussion, the commission agreed that the property would not be a high priority for preservation when considered with the new information from the CT Department of Agriculture. It was also agreed that the property would be more desirable if considered with the Dzen property. Commissioner Gage agreed to reach out to the Dzens about potential preservation of their property.

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

Commissioner Gage reported that he looked into his file on the Brady property on Somers Road, and recalled a difference of opinion on the value of the property. He noted that the road access to the state forest would be beneficial.

Commissioner Bidwell noted there are a number of dumpsters near the Hockanum River Trail on the Family Stations property on Penfield Avenue. Ms. Houlihan stated that she would report it to the Zoning Enforcement Officer.

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS:

1. FY15-16/16-17 Budget Expenditure Update: Staff - Lead

Ms. Houlihan reported that she has been in discussions with the Finance Department regarding the reimbursement from the bridge grant and the possible use of those funds for donations to other organizations.

2. Approval of the July 5, 2016 Regular Meeting Minutes.

MOVED (GAGE), SECONDED (ZIELFELDER) AND PASSED (BIDWELL ABSTAINED) TO APPROVE the July 5, 2016 Regular Meeting Minutes as written.

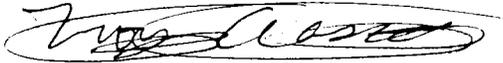
3. Correspondence:

- a. Mohamed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund 2016 Grant Application

V. ADJOURNMENT:

MOVED (QUARNO), SECONDED (BIDWELL) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 7:56 PM.

Respectfully submitted:



Troy M. Ciesco, Recording Clerk