



# TOWN OF ELLINGTON

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**CONSERVATION COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2018, 7:00 PM  
TOWN HALL ANNEX, 57 MAIN STREET, ELLINGTON, CT**

**PRESENT:** Chairman Rebecca Quarno, Vice Chairman David Bidwell, and Regular Members Sean Dwyer, James Gage, George Nickerson, and Robert Ziefelder, Jr.

**ABSENT:** Regular Member Chris Hattin and Alternates Ann Harford and Walter Moody

## **STAFF**

**PRESENT:** Lisa Houlihan, Town Planner and Samantha Getchell, Recording Clerk

### **I. CALL TO ORDER:**

Chairman Rebecca Quarno called the Conservation Commission meeting to order at 7:00 PM at the Ellington Town Hall Annex, 57 Main Street, Ellington, CT.

### **II. PUBLIC COMMENTS (On Non-Agenda Items):**

Bernard Kelley addressed a situation with the Hockanum trail near the wetlands going towards the marsh from the Franklin Street trails. He explained that a whole section is now nonexistent and the nearby development has extended 30 to 40 feet into the trail area. Mr. Kelley contacted the project manager. Ms. Houlihan presented a plan of the Windermere Village development off of Windermere Ave. A presentation was made to show Mr. Kelley the planned unit development and future trail location. Ms. Houlihan confirmed with Mr. Kelley that the developers will be restoring the trails.

### **III. ACTIVE BUSINESS:**

1. Clean Energy Initiatives: Bidwell/Staff – Leads
  - a. December 20, 2017 email from Natalia Sudyka, Eversource Energy, dissolution of Clean Energy Communities program.

Mr. Bidwell reported that Eversource has canceled the Clean Energy Communities Program due to budget issues. Ms. Houlihan referred to the email from Natalia Sudyka explaining that one initiative left over from the program is the Bright Idea Grant, noting that Ellington is eligible for \$10,000. The Department of Public Works submitted a project application for funding to convert the school maintenance building on Main Street from oil to gas. If the project is accepted, the estimated start date is May 1, 2018 with a completion date of May 31, 2018.

Ms. Houlihan will contact Ms. Sudyka to coordinate donations to the Ellington Fuel Bank earned from the 2017 campaign. Mr. Bidwell and Ms. Houlihan concluded that the commission will have to consider alternative ways to promote energy conservation in the future.

2. Update - Hockanum River Trail Association: Harford/Nickerson – Leads

Revisiting the discussion from the last commission meeting on December 5, 2017, Commissioner Bidwell asked if there is any plan to remove the branch from the trail that has been marked with caution tape around it. Ms. Houlihan we will revisit the subject with Public Works to see if they plan on taking care of it. Ms. Houlihan will also ask if in the future a system might be established where the public can tell the town about these types of maintenance requests in email form to help get them taken care of more successfully.

3. Report - Working Farmland Preservation Program: Gage/Staff – Leads  
a. Update - Cost of Community Services Study.

Ms. Houlihan referred to an invoice for services rendered to date seeking authorization for payment, however she suggested that payment not be approved until verification of services has been satisfactorily accepted by the commission. Ms. Houlihan explained that the project is on schedule and stressed that there is no need to rush the appraisal. Commissioner Gage agreed and stated he's happy with what he has read. Chairman Quarno suggested that the committee members revisit this subject at the next meeting when everyone has thoroughly looked over the information. It was agreed to defer acting on the draft Cost of Community Services Study to the next commission meeting.

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

Commissioner Gage reported about the 37 acre Bellante property. The Northern Connecticut Land Trust (NCLT) will buy the 37 acres behind the Bellante's home. NCLT received a grant for \$38,000 from the DEEP (Department of Energy and Environmental Protection). Commissioner Gage appealed to the Town of Ellington's Board of Selectmen to see if they would contribute to this purchase. The Town of Ellington approved contributing \$30,000 to the preservation of the Bellante property purchase, but is still waiting for final approval from the Board of Finance. It's expected that the money will come out of the open space fund which currently holds \$726,000. Commissioner Gage is hoping for a closing mid to late summer. The committee praised Commissioner Gage for his efforts.

Ms. Houlihan talked about the Brady property on Kibbe Road explaining that the owners are not eager to sell and want \$555,000 for the property. The committee agreed that the asking price is a high price for the open space purchase. Ms. Houlihan talked about seeking an appraisal on the property to show the owners a more reasonable number. Ms. Houlihan talked about the Arens' property (57 acres) and the possibility of an open space purchase when it is put back on the market in March.

#### **IV. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS:**

1. FY17-18 Budget Expenditure Update

The commission reviewed the latest budget report. There was nothing to report on this topic.

2. Approval of the December 5, 2017 regular meeting minutes.

**MOVED (GAGE) SECONDED (NICKERSON) PASSED (4 YES: QUARNO, BIDWELL, GAGE AND NICKERSON; 0 NAY; 2 ABSTENTIONS: DWYER AND ZIEFELDER) TO APPROVE THE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES AS WRITTEN.**

3. Election of Officers

**A. MOVED (DWYER) SECONDED (GAGE) TO NOMINATE COMMISSIONER (REBECCA QUARNO) FOR CHAIRMAN OF THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION FOR 2018.**

**COMMISSIONER (QUARNO) ACCEPTED THE NOMINATION.  
HEARING NO FURTHER NOMINATIONS, NOMINATIONS WERE CLOSED.**

**MOVED (DWYER) SECONDED (GAGE) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ELECT COMMISSIONER (QUARNO) FOR CHAIRMAN OF THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION FOR 2018.**

**B. MOVED (DWYER) SECONDED (GAGE) TO NOMINATE COMMISSIONER (DAVID BIDWELL) FOR VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION FOR 2018.**

**COMMISSIONER (BIDWELL) ACCEPTED THE NOMINATION.  
HEARING NO FURTHER NOMINATIONS, NOMINATIONS WERE CLOSED.**

**MOVED (QUARNO) SECONDED (GAGE) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ELECT COMMISSIONER (BIDWELL) FOR VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION FOR 2018.**

4. Correspondence:

- a. Revised Charter for the Town of Ellington, effective date January 1, 2018.
- b. Board of Selectmen January 22, 2018 meeting minutes – Northern CT Land Trust and Bellante property.
- c. Connecticut Weekly Agricultural Report, December 13, 2017.
- d. Oakridge Times, Jan. 20, 2018.

**V. ADJOURNMENT:**

**MOVED (DWYER) SECONDED (ZIEFELDER) PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 8:00 PM.**

Respectfully submitted,

Samantha Getchell, Recording Clerk