



STATE OF CONNECTICUT – COUNTY OF TOLLAND

INCORPORATED 1786

TOWN OF ELLINGTON

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CONSERVATION COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES TUESDAY, APRIL 3, 2018, 7:00 P.M. TOWN HALL ANNEX, 57 MAIN STREET, ELLINGTON, CT

PRESENT: Chairman Rebecca Quarno, Vice Chairman David Bidwell, and Regular Members James Gage, George Nickerson, and Robert Zielfelder, and Alternate Ann Harford.

ABSENT: Regular members Chris Hattin and Sean Dwyer.

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): None

III. ACTIVE BUSINESS:

1. Clean Energy Initiatives: Bidwell/Staff – Leads
 - a. Sustainable CT – Master Action List

Lisa Houlihan, Town Planner, reported that the Board of Selectmen (BOS) have not taken any formal action pledging to become a Sustainable CT town yet. They are interested in the program. Ms. Houlihan referred back to the Sustainable CT Master Action List. The Commission confirmed during the last meeting they would look over the Master Action List and identify what they could do to actively complete some of the goals on the list. The BOS have to create a committee for the Sustainable CT program. Ms. Houlihan expects the BOS haven't taken action because the budget is the priority at the moment. Ms. Houlihan confirmed there is an annual deadline for reporting completed actions, and stated that there is not one specific commission or group in town that can manage the program. There are actions that cover economic development, facilities, conservation, park and recreation, arts and culture, etc. Ms. Houlihan confirmed that a collaboration of efforts is needed to manage the program. Commissioner Bidwell agreed this is a good initiative. Ms. Houlihan is willing to be the contact person for the town, but cannot be solely responsible for the project. Chairman Quarno suggested the Commission carry the matter to the next meeting noting the absence of some members last month. Commissioner Bidwell says he'd like to see other departments take on some of the goals and actions they are already doing and then to see what is left. Chairman Quarno introduced changing the topic to Sustainability Initiatives on the meeting agenda for next month. Commissioner Bidwell confirmed that Sustainable CT includes Clean Energy Initiatives.

Ms. Houlihan confirmed there is no update with the free 10k solar install from the 2017 Solarize Ellington Campaign.

Ms. Houlihan referred to the Home Energy Solutions (HES) Campaign and let the Commission know that two of the three donation checks have been received: \$350 from EES and \$175 from Fox Heating. She is waiting for a check from Aiello for \$525. The money from these donations goes to the Ellington Fuel Bank and the total is \$1050.

2. Update – Ellington Hockanum River Committee: Harford/Nickerson – Leads

Commissioner Harford noted volunteers have walked the West Road trail and reported that dead tree limbs and litter have been removed. Landscaping around the bridge in Vernon should be done when the weather clears, and there is a sidewalk planned from Stop and Shop to the bridge. On Wednesday, April 25, 2018, there will be a regional trails committee meeting open to the public showing a video of the construction process of the bridge. Commissioner Harford would like a notice sent seeking people to volunteer to help remove the knotweed from trails on Wednesday's starting May 1st to June 15th. Volunteers meet behind the Golden Diamond Exchange on West Road from 9:00AM to 10:30AM. Ms. Houlihan says she will get the information out by highlighting the minutes, posting them online and sharing them with the Trails AdHoc Committee. Commissioner Nickerson asked Commissioner Harford if there will be a path installed leading to the bridge. Commissioner Harford confirmed they're trying to stay away from installing steps and there's a plan for a ramp winding up towards the bridge. She confirmed the area is going to be professionally landscaped.

Commissioner Harford talked about a ditch next to the Windermere Avenue trail kiosk that is potentially dangerous. Bushes that once formed a boundary have been cleared in the area leaving a dangerous opening. She suggested that clearing be limited and that a small fence be put up for precautionary measures.

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

Ms. Houlihan led the topic telling the Committee that she sent a formal email to the Department of Agriculture (DOA) explaining that the offer for Farmland Preservation with Anselmo/Dwire/Hoffman was declined. The DOA has not replied yet. Chairman Quarno asked if there could be another mailing sent to land owners because of the success there has been in the past. Commissioner Gage says he's had a meeting with Seth Bahler, Oakridge Dairy, and they might be interested in formally preserving more land the future. Ms. Houlihan says she will bring a draft letter to property owners to the next meeting for the Committee to endorse.

Ms. Houlihan sent the edited draft study to Paula Stahl, including an Acknowledgment page and a Message From The Commission. Ms. Houlihan presented both of these drafts to the Commission for round table discussion and possible edits. Ms. Houlihan heard from the Assessor today and reviewed her changes. The Commission endorsed the two pages. Ms. Houlihan will follow up with Ms. Stahl for a final draft.

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

Commissioner Gage stated there is nothing new to report on this topic.

Ms. Houlihan received a call from Pam Moriarty, realtor, regarding the Arens' property. Mr. Arens is still interested in discussing an open space purchase with the town and asked Ms. Moriarty to tell the Committee he plans on being in touch. The past appraisal amounts were noted.

ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS:

1. FY17-18 Budget Expenditure Update

Nothing to report under this topic.

2. Approval of the March 6, 2018 regular meeting minutes
MOVED (GAGE) SECONDED (QUARNO) PASSED (4 YES: QUARNO, GAGE, NICKERSON, AND ZIEFELDER; 0 NAY; 2 ABSTENTIONS: BIDWELL AND HARFORD) TO APPROVE THE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES AS WRITTEN.
3. Correspondence:
 - a. Public Information Meeting - Connecticut Department of Transportation, Monday, April 16, 2018, 6:30pm, Ellington Town Hall, for bridge reconstruction over Charters Brook (Bridge No.02668) on Route 140 in Ellington.
 - b. Northern Connecticut Land Trust – Landmark Newsletter February 2018

Commissioner Gage attended the Connecticut Land Conservation Conference. He explained the workshop he attended on solar farms.

- V. ADJOURNMENT:
MOVED (HARFORD) SECONDED (BIDWELL) PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 7:54PM.**

Respectfully submitted,

Samantha Getchell, Recording Clerk